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**Idaho Press-Tribune**

Nampa, Idaho

**Tuesday June 6, 2017**

**by Erin Bamer**

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# ‘IT’S AN ORCHESTRA’

## *New Saint Alphonsus features state-of-the-art technology*

NAMPA — Scott Christensen, regional director of medical imaging at Saint Alphonsus Medical Center, flew to Raleigh, North Carolina, to see some of the state of the art equipment the new Saint Al’s facility in Nampa would soon feature.

“We will be the Raleigh, North Carolina, of the Northwest,” said Joshua Schlaich, spokesman for Saint Alphonsus.

The new hospital is still under construction — but not for much longer. The first patients can receive treatment starting June 19, and they will be treated to a medical experience unlike any they have received before.

From a visitor’s first steps into the hospital, they can access registration and learn how to get wherever they need to go. A color coding system keeps things organized. Each floor is designated a specific color, as well as the desks for each department.

The organization of departments was also decided with the hospital’s future patients in mind. Saint Alphonsus Nampa President Karl Keeler said older hospitals separated its departments out for the convenience of its staff, which meant patients sometimes had to travel all across the building to get the treatment they needed. But in this new facility, related departments are placed together, so patients only need to take a few steps to get from one doctor to another.

One example of this is the emergency care unit, which is next door to the CT scanners. Christensen said it is common for patients who come to the emergency room to be in need of CT scanning, now just a hallway away.

Those CT scanners, as well as much of the other equipment at the new facility, is state-of-the-art machinery from Samsung, Siemens and Toshiba. Samsung named the new Saint Al’s a Luminary Site — the only one in the entire Northwest. Being a Luminary Site basically means the hospital features top technology of the time, technology that Nampa has not been exposed to before.

The CT scanners can take 640 slices, or pictures, of a patient’s brain in about 30 seconds. This is a big difference from CT scanners of years before. Christensen said when he first started 30 years ago, he and other doctors were thrilled if they could get a CT scanner that was a single slice operation.

The X-ray machine will expose patients to about 20 to 25 percent less radiation than typical X-ray machines. They also operate faster than other machines, as doctors can pre-program them based on the injury as they go to meet their patient in the waiting room.

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The operating rooms include big screen televisions with crystal clarity so doctors will have the ability to see exactly what they're doing down to the tiniest details during surgeries. Some even have multiple screens in one room, so the doctor can look at what is happening on the television from whatever angle they are in.

Each room, including patients' bedrooms, is larger than average. This will make a big difference to doctors during surgery, Christensen said, as elbow room is sometimes a luxury in older facilities.

"It's a beautiful thing," Christensen said. "It's an orchestra."

The people of Saint Al's don't want their patients or their families to feel the anxiety that sometimes come when you go into a hospital. Instead, the building feels more like a hotel.

Two healing gardens on the first and second floors allow patients and their families to enter a relaxing environment. All of the art on the walls comes from Idahoan artists. The hotel cafeteria has chefs that make food so good that Christensen said police officers even come in just for breakfast on Fridays.

"I visit patients all the time," Schlaich said. "And they always rave about the food."

Natural light from the hundreds of windows fills almost every room of the facility, including areas of the emergency room.

"Usually, when you work in an emergency room, you never see the light of day," Keeler said.

That daylight can be a distraction for patients, who many times aren't in a hospital for the happiest reason. Other distractions, like colorful lights on the ceiling of CT scanning rooms, allow patients to take their mind away from the reason they went to the hospital originally.

"Your focus is on the patient, which is really why you wanted to come to this place in the first place, because you wanted someone to care for you," Christensen said.

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