

American Falls remodels its hospital out of the 1960s

Over the next two years, Power County Hospital will shed its 1961 ambience to line up with modern sensibilities in a \$14.95 million renovation and 15,000-square-foot expansion that will reconfigure the American Falls hospital for the future.

Some early 1960s floor tiles and ceiling panels are already in the scrap heap, and three of the 10 inpatient rooms are being modernized. Seven other rooms will be modernized later, with 1960s-era two-bed rooms being converted to single-occupancy rooms, each with a bathroom, hospital administrator Dallas Clinger said.

The hospital will renovate the existing emergency room and add a second ER along with relocating the nursing station closer to the ERs.

“Our nursing station now is a maze, almost, it’s a labyrinth to get to the ER,” Clinger said.

The radiology department still has the 1960 floor tiles with 1980s X-ray equipment that was digitized in 2010. The renovation will bring new floors, new walls and new X-ray equipment, he said.

“We’re reconfiguring rooms to match what we need for 2018 medicine,” Clinger said. “We tore off a stairway this morning (on July 3).”

The Power County Hospital District, an independent district, chose to remodel the 1961 structure because building a new hospital was estimated at \$25 million to \$30 million, he said.

Seventy percent of voters approved a \$14.95 million bond in May 2017 election to finance the extensive remodel of the 40,000-square-foot hospital that started in May and will continue to September 2020.

“We already have excellent doctors,” said Kristen Jensen, executive director of the Great Rift Business Development Organization in American Falls. “It will be nice for them to have updated equipment and modern rooms. It will just enhance the entire experience.”

A new transformer and power lines have already been installed.

The project also includes a rooftop helicopter pad on a new garage to put the helicopter on the same level as the second-floor emergency room.

Myers Anderson Architects of Pocatello is the architect. Construction Services Inc. of Pocatello is the general contractor.

Power County Hospital has two doctors and two nurse practitioners. The hospital’s emergency room treats about 1,650 patients a year and the hospital houses about 400 to 450 inpatients a year. The hospital has no operating room.

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