St. Luke’s breaks ground on new Nampa hospital

Health system will invest $96M to create a 76-bed hospital

NAMPA — St. Luke’s Health System officials broke ground on a new $96 million hospital in Nampa on Wednesday that will provide expanded health care options for Canyon County and bring more of St. Luke’s services to the area.

The new building will be located near the corner of Midland Boulevard and Cherry Lane and is an expansion of St. Luke’s existing medical plaza. The project will create a three-story, 76-room hospital. It’s expected to open in fall 2017.

St. Luke’s officials say the new hospital is necessary to meet the needs of Canyon County’s growing population and to meet the demand from residents to have St. Luke’s services closer to them. The health system currently operates hospitals in Boise and Meridian.

“This is all about how we provide services to folks close to home, and that whole idea of access is pretty fundamental to the building of this hospital,” said Skip Oppenheimer, chairman of the board for St. Luke’s.

The facility is one of two new hospitals under construction in Nampa. Saint Alphonsus Health System is also building a new hospital at Interstate 84 and Garrity Boulevard that will replace its existing hospital on 12th Avenue Road. Once those are complete, Canyon County will have three hospitals — St. Luke’s and Saint Alphonsus in Nampa and West Valley Medical Center in Caldwell.

David Pate, CEO of St. Luke’s Health System, said the new medical centers will mean more options for patients in Canyon County and competition that will lead to better care.

“Idaho and Canyon County are blessed to have great health care choices, and that’s a good thing,” he said. “It drives each of us to constantly improve.”
those health care choices available in Canyon County is personal for Kathy Moore, St. Luke’s west region CEO. Moore is a graduate of Caldwell High School and pointed out her parents in the crowd at the groundbreaking ceremony. They still live in Canyon County.

“It’s really important for me to bring choice to them and to bring care closer to home for all of those who choose to be cared for by St. Luke’s,” she said.

NEW SERVICES AT ST. LUKE’S NAMPA

The new St. Luke’s hospital will provide additional pediatric and cancer services in Nampa, which are two things that St. Luke’s is well known for, Pate said. That includes a neonatal intensive care unit with 14 rooms. The NICU will be the first in Idaho to have family suites, so families can stay with their babies, said Paul Lodge, chairman of St. Luke’s Canyon Community Council.

The Nampa hospital will be the third St. Luke’s location to offer 3D mammography, which is the most sophisticated technology for early detection of breast cancer, Lodge said. An average of two patients per week across the three current locations — Boise, Meridian and McCall — are diagnosed in the early stages of breast cancer with that technology, which is saving lives, he said.

In addition to those new services, physicians who specialize in intensive care in Boise will be able to treat patients in Nampa without making the commute, thanks to St. Luke’s telehealth.

“They can provide advice and an extra set of eyes and help remotely so that we could care for people here in the intensive care unit, but have access to these specialists in Boise to provide additional help,” Pate said. “I think that’s going to be a big theme of all of this is making the services that we have been known for and that have been available in other parts of our system available right here in Nampa, so it’s very exciting.”

The hospital will also be connected to St. Luke’s electronic health records system, so patient records can be accessed in any of St. Luke’s facilities across the health system, he said.

The existing St. Luke’s medical plaza opened in 2012 with an emergency department, laboratory, diagnostic and imaging services, plus office space and outpatient services. Patients at the Nampa facility who require hospitalization currently have to be admitted elsewhere, and St. Luke’s sees the impact of that at its Meridian hospital.

“We know at our Meridian hospital that nearly a third of those patients come from Nampa and Caldwell, and so that tells us that there are people who want to access St. Luke’s services, but they’re having to come all the way to Meridian to get that,” Pate said.

The emergency department at the Nampa medical plaza has outperformed expectations and continues to see additional patients each year. More than 18,000 patients were seen in the ER in 2014, and St. Luke’s expects that number to increase to 21,000 this year, Oppenheimer said.
Those were all driving factors in building the new hospital, along with the projection that Canyon County’s population will increase to 241,000 people by 2024. The population is currently about 203,000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

To help identify the community’s current and future health care needs, St. Luke’s formed the 16-member Canyon Community Council two years ago. It’s chaired by Lodge, a Canyon County resident and rancher. St. Luke’s relies on that council for input on what those needs are, Oppenheimer said, and it will continue to evaluate what services are needed to better serve each individual patient.