New med clinic at Orofino will ease the strain

A new clinic is being built at Orofino by Clearwater Valley Hospital.

Patients waiting for physicals can hear Life Flight helicopters landing at Clearwater Valley Hospital and the sirens of ambulances racing toward the emergency room.

Removing people from that sometimes chaotic environment for routine care is a goal of moving the Orofino medical facility's clinic, adjacent to the hospital, to a new location about a half-mile away, said Ashley Steinbruecker, a spokeswoman for the hospital.

"The new clinic will be away from that kind of distraction," Steinbruecker said. "It will be open and have high ceilings and a lot of natural light."

The new facility is set to open in February at 1055 Riverside Ave., Steinbruecker said.

The single-story, 21,000-square-foot building will have 24 exam rooms, seven more than the present clinic that opened in 1995.

In the past decade, the average number of patients the clinic sees monthly has risen from about 900 to 2,200, Steinbruecker said.

"The environment right now is a cinder-block building. It's very cramped and privacy is not abundant."

The new building will be staffed with eight physicians, three physician assistants and one nurse practitioner.

Services that will be offered at the clinic include physicals for athletics, wellness, pre-employment and truck drivers, as well as mammography, blood pressure checks and immunizations.

The $5.2 million project is being paid for by a tax-exempt bond from the Idaho Health Facilities Association issued to Washington Trust Bank, which is handling the loan.

What happens to the old clinic, which is 13,808 square feet at 301 Cedar Ave., hasn't been decided.

"Planning for this is still in progress," Steinbruecker said.