

# CHILLICOTHE'S HEDRICK MEDICAL CENTER COMES TO FRUITION

by Ike Holland

**O**n a cold sunny day in

February 2014, the late Congressman Jerry Litton's Charolaise ranch was transformed into the new city of Chillicothe Hedrick Medical Center. The opening of this facility made it a historic day for the city government and for the community with a big impact to Northwest Missouri. This new facility was envisioned and built during dire economic times, but the vision

of city officials and St. Luke's Health System made a successful public and private partnership happen.

As national, state and local governments continue to tighten their belts, the city of Chillicothe was determined to build a greatly needed new hospital facility. The previous hospital was in desperate need of repair, from the essential building utilities to the layout of the facility. The former hospital had three major renovations over the last 50 years that led to inefficient use of space. With changing technology, the layout of departments made it very burdensome to provide the best processes possible. The community is and was proud of the service that Hedrick Medical provided, but the new facility would increase its ability to provide excellent service into the 21st Century.

The community and City Council wanted a facility without putting the local government finances in the hole or taxing the local citizens. By using the Chillicothe Industrial Development Authority (IDA), the financing process was possible. IDA's are a statutory corporation that is permitted by the state of Missouri. Further, the usage



**The new hospital spans approximately 80,000 square feet. The new facility will increase Chillicothe's ability to provide excellent service into the 21st century.**

of the IDA and revenue bonds are not considered a debt obligation of the City and it maintains its healthy financial standing. Next, a partnership with St. Luke's Health System was formed to make financing a reality. Lastly, the local private trust foundations contributed to make the initial down payment and the purchasing of the land happen.

It was due to these three previous events that allowed for the sale of revenue bonds and a long-term contract with St. Luke's that built a city hospital without any tax increases or usage. The terms of the medical contract includes leased payments that would cover the annual debt service on the loan. Also, St. Luke's would cover any maintenance issues and any improvements over the length of the lease contract, thus reducing and/or eliminating costs to the City.

The new hospital spans approximately 80,000 square feet, with two surgery suites featuring two procedure rooms and two operating rooms. The emergency department has two trauma rooms and five exam rooms. The new helicopter pad and enclosed entry for ambulances improve

the process and efficiency of the delivery of patients. There are 25 patient rooms with private restrooms, showers, ICU rooms, and labor, delivery and postpartum rooms that overlook a beautiful view of the city of Chillicothe Green Hills Golf Course that adjoins the property. The specialty clinic has 10 exam rooms and five procedure rooms. A state-of-the-art rehabilitation

service will also be housed within the building for the growing needs of the community. Outdoor patio seating with a modern design make the cafeteria the place to eat and socialize for the employees and families that visit. Lastly, Hedrick will provide the latest in 3-D mammography - the most advanced technology to detect breast cancer. This technology is only available in a handful of hospitals in the state.

Located next to the hospital is a 5,000-square-foot medical office building that includes family doctors and the Women's Clinic. This convenient location of services will provide for efficient medical care for the community and support to the hospital. This facility is operated by Hedrick and is part of the partnership with the City. The total cost of the project was approximately \$41 million dollars, with an estimated \$28 million for the hospital and the remainder for the land and medical office building.

Kansas City-based JE Dunn Construction and Hoefer Wysocki Architecture were the builders and designers, along with Adams Consulting guiding the project for the City. St.

Luke's spent time and money to ensure the design of the facility met its needs. The former hospital was designed for inpatient care as the primary service; the new design incorporates the latest designs for outpatient care, rehabilitation, screening, privacy concerns and specialty services. The City also spent roughly \$150,000 for improvements to the streets, water drainage and access points.

Plans are in process for a "Healing Garden" that will be located in the back of the hospital. With the backdrop of the beautiful city golf course, this garden will provide the beauty and serene setting for concerned family members and usage by the patients. This project should be completed by the end of the summer of 2015. Local foundations, citizens and Hedrick are financing and raising funds for this unique garden.

"This facility is beautiful and state of the art," said the Mayor Chuck Haney. "Further, it was made possible by the vision of the people of Chillicothe, and will continue to be innovative and essential."

The Mayor continued, "It is by looking at all possibilities and by partnering with private organizations,



using creativity and innovation, that local governments can achieve goals not thought possible in the past."

The City Council is proud of the new facility, and will use this project as a lesson that local governments must plan and be part of the catalyst alongside private enterprise to improve the quality of lives in communities. This new hospital will provide jobs, help create sister businesses, provide the newest technology and enhance positive growth in the City as well as

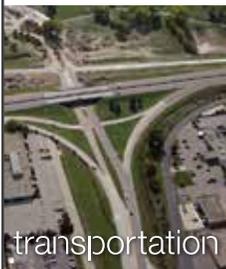
the County. Demographics project a growing population over the age of 65 and essential medical care will be part of the equation where this group of retirees will live. The City wants to keep and recruit this population, as it will provide jobs and growth that all cities require and seek to ensure a bright future for all.

A smooth transition of patients and services occurred six months ago and now the facility has already made a big impact on the community. The



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number of patients going for services has increased, the timeliness of emergency services has improved, and satisfaction of the new facility is very high. When speaking with the employees of Hedrick, they mention the ease of use of the new layout; the increased morale of everyone who enters; and the joy of being in a modern building adds to the quality of service they provide.

In the last three years, the City (9,500 pop.) and the community continue to do amazing projects to enhance the community's quality of life. The City completed a new addition to the fire department, completed a renovation of the pool creating the modern Chilli Bay Water Park; and is currently building a new fire training tower and facility. The school district added a new football and track stadium, financed by private donations that can match or beat many larger school districts. Visitors that come to visit our downtown murals are amazed at the accomplishments of this small town.

It is called "Innovation" in Chillicothe. □

**Ike Holland** is the City Administrator for Chillicothe. He has been in city and county management for 12 years, serving in Colorado prior to his move to Missouri. He is a Colorado Certified Emergency Manager and received his Master's in Public Administration from the University of Colorado.



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