



SHENANDOAH VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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Adding More Services:

The New Rockingham Memorial Hospital

by Cammie Tutwiler, SVEC Writer

Achieving the right mix of health services to best benefit a community can be a challenge. In Rockingham County and the surrounding areas, by combining current services with the new facilities planned at Rockingham Memorial Hospital, it seems the requisites for success will be met.

"RMH is committed to offering a broad range of healthcare services to meet the community's needs. That includes placing satellite facilities to reach populations that are medically under-



served," said Debra Thompson, director of Corporate Communications at RMH. "For example, we opened East Rockingham Health Center near Elkton about 10 years ago in response to a shortage of medical care in that area at the time. We have done the same thing in the Mount Jackson and New Market communities."

Thompson said that RMH works to respond to the healthcare needs of the region and the community by broadening outreach activities, such as health screenings, and integrating medical services with other providers, specifically physicians' offices.

She noted that a number of years ago, a survey of the community was done, and the two main healthcare concerns at the top of the list were heart and cancer care.

"We built the cancer center about 20 years ago to address the need for comprehensive cancer care in our community," Thompson said. "Over the years we've continually expanded our heart program, and with the addition of open-heart surgery in January 2008, we now offer a full array of cardiac services, from diagnostics, to treatment, to rehabilitation. There's little reason for anyone to leave

Above: Construction on the facility started in June 2006, with a planned opening date of June 2010. • **Opposite:** The new Rockingham Memorial Hospital is a six-floor facility situated on 254 acres. • **Below:** The location before construction.

the area to access high-quality heart or cancer care because those services are available right here."

Addressing the community's need is one of the catalysts for the new hospital campus.

"Our community continues to grow, and we have to expand, too, to meet the ever-growing demand for services. We are so excited about what we will be able to provide to the community with our new campus," she said. "All of a sudden, with a 254-acre campus, we are not restricted geographically, and starting from the ground up, we have been able to create a hospital to provide care the way we think it needs to be provided today and in the future."

The new hospital, a \$280-million project that sits on a 254-acre campus, is a more than 620,000-square-foot facility.

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“RMH is much more than a hospital, but this new hospital is the flagship of our organization and is critical to our mission and the care we provide our community,” Thompson said.

Dennis Coffman, director of Facilities Planning & Development for RMH, said when locations were considered for the hospital, as many as 65 sites were evaluated.

and IVs from bumping up and down,” he said.

The rooms, which are all private, are 30 feet bigger than the largest patient room in the current facility, with more space on the nursing side of the bed and a family zone, which is an area for family members to stay and be part of loved ones’ care.

On the outside, a white roof was used



CAMMIE TUTWILER PHOTOS

“Site criteria were developed, including the roads around the area, water and sewer availability, access to a major artery of transportation, public transportation, and the county’s comprehensive plan was also considered,” he said.

In the redesigned patient rooms, the bathroom doors swing out of the patients’ way, and rails line the walls, everywhere a patient would walk. Coffman described the features as “evidence-based design” — meaning that the characteristics of the room were based on what prior evidence indicated as necessary.

There is a nightlight in every patient room, and the threshold strip, the transition from the actual room to the bathroom, has been eliminated.

“We made a conscious effort in design to prevent people from stumping toes

for energy savings. Coffman said it was about a \$600,000 savings over a traditional roof, and should be more energy efficient.

“(In parking lots) we concentrated the cone of light to the ground lower, with more poles. We did a light study, and the light doesn’t bleed off of intended areas. We wanted the right levels for people to feel safe walking to their car after dark,” Coffman said.

Also on the exterior of the new hospital’s campus, in conjunction with James Madison University, RMH is working to enhance wetlands on the property, to make them a feature of the campus. Additionally, Coffman said, they are working with a local farmer to figure a rotation of plantings for the land.

Though the facility is a large, complex

The patient rooms and bathrooms at RMH were created using “evidence-based design.”

project, Coffman’s enthusiasm is obvious.

“To me, it’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. It’s awesome to be able to participate in this, to think that I was a part of it to help bring it together, it’s just awesome,” he said.

Rockingham Memorial Hospital is a member/owner of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative.

Construction Start Date: June 2006

Planned Opening: June 2010

Parking Places:

New Facility: More than 2,000

Current site: 1,100

Number of Floors: 6 (lower level and 5 stories)

Total number of inpatient beds: 238, all private

Current: 270

Complete project cost: \$280 million

Campus size: New site: 254 acres

Current site: 18 acres

