



Newport Hospital and Health Services

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New Advanced Care Facility Unveiled to the Public

NEWPORT – Friday, June 28 celebrated the ribbon cutting and long-anticipated public unveiling of River Mountain Village Advanced Care (RMVAC). The ceremony opened with statements of appreciation by Newport Hospital and Health Services (NHHS) CEO, Tom Wilbur. Ribbon cutting honors were extended to Michele Page, previous NHHS Director of Residential Care and the driving force behind the initial RMVAC vision. Page, a registered nurse, expressed heartfelt appreciation to community supporters of the project. Approximately 350 people toured the new facility that will eventually house up to 72 of the area’s most frail residents.

River Mountain Village Advanced Care was supported by a facility expansion bond approval by Public Hospital District #1 voters via special election April 2016. The UTGO \$10M bond has a 20 year term. Recent estimates, which included completion of the 4th neighborhood, placed the overall budget around \$12.2M, or approximately \$260 per square foot. The District funded anything beyond the original \$10M bond with cash reserves.

Initially, the approximately 54,000 square foot facility will accommodate 54 residents, with an additional neighborhood of 18-beds ready for expansion. NHHS anticipates the growing

need for residential care and wanted the ability to expand. The same services will be offered “in-home” for residents needing advanced, or “enhanced,” levels of care.

Consumer demand for more private space, increased regulatory costs for long term care services, and limited availability for Medicaid clients spurred the District to find a solution that was supported with the community’s help. As early as 2014, NHHS started the conversation about building a new building to replace the current nursing home (long term care). The nursing home opened in 1967 and though NHHS has maintained it well for nearly 50 years, it no longer meets community needs. Technically, there is nothing wrong with the current facility; however, existing building would not meet new building codes for nursing home or assisted living facilities. So, NHHS looked at an entirely new model of care for those residents with greater daily needs (than those in more independent assisted living).

According to Susan Schwartz, RN (NHHS Director of Residential Care), all long term care residents are expected to move into the new facility. The services provided today in long term care are similar to services provided in an assisted living facility that is designed and staffed to treat residents in need of a higher level of care. Pending final approval and State contract, residents will move in to River Mountain Village Advanced Care by August 1, 2019.

ZBA Architecture designed the expansive residential care facility, and construction was completed by Kilgore Construction, Inc. under project Superintendent Mike Frank. Hammond Facility Consulting Services worked tightly with hospital district administration throughout every aspect of the project. Each of these companies operates out of Spokane, WA.

In show of appreciation for the community’s support, the RMVAC design team chose to line the halls with history. The entire facility is decorated with more than 60 local historical

photos, a massive collaboration managed by Hadley Stratton, WSU summer intern with Newport Hospital and Health Services. “It’s more like walking through a gallery,” said one local woman. The photos were reprinted from private citizens, the Kalispel Historical Archive, Pend Oreille County Historical Society, Preserving Priest River History, and Pend Oreille County Library District’s Washington Rural Heritage collections. Rev. Becky Anderson (1st place), Sue Mauro (2nd Place) and Keith Campbell (3rd Place) won the photo contest for their historical submissions.

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