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Health center accomplishments, goals set at annual meeting

There have been some dark days for Hoopeston Regional Health Center but officials say successes in 2005-06 will lead to much brighter days.

"I started looking at our successes and the more I looked, the more I got," said CEO David Elliott Thursday at the annual meeting for the board of directors.

Elliott, who will mark his first year at the helm on Oct. 1, cited a more cooperative effort among the board, committees, senior management and staff as one of the main reasons for the turnaround.

The last year saw the loss of Dr. Daesun Oh and Dr. Travis Crawford but also the addition of Dr. Daniel Blizzard and, most recently, Dr. Hilary Frescoln who joined the staff this month.

Additionally, physician's assistant Melia Shipman, a Hoopeston resident, came home to practice at Charlotte Ann Russell Medical Center.

Elliott listed other accomplishments for the year, including:

- Medical staff seeing nine additional patients per day at Charlotte Ann Russell Medical Center.
- The opening of a new clinic in Cissna Park. Open two half days, the clinic is proving popular and hours may be extended. The clinic boosts the number of patients seen by lab and radiology departments at Hoopeston Community Memorial Hospital.



Hoopeston Regional Health Center CEO David Elliott, right, details some of the year's accomplishments at the center's annual meeting Thursday.

• Country Terrace, adult independent living center, was previously occupied at 80 percent. In the last year, however, occupancy is at 100 percent with waiting lists for one bedroom and studio apartments.

• The addition of orthopedic surgery, mental health and women's health services and MRIs at the medical center, along with existing urology, cardiology, podiatry and surgery services and the Well-Baby Clinic.

• A SHARP award from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for the facility safety program. The award was one of only 16 in the state.

Construction was a major area that showed improvement over the last year. The construction project, which was halted three or four years ago, is back in action. In the last year, several projects have been undertaken. All infrastructure upgrades are expected to be completed by Christmas 2007, Elliott said.

See ACCOMPLISHMENTS on other side

**Alice, Peter, Eric, Melissa and Vincent
invite you...**



We at Hoopeston Area High School have been busy surveying our peers about their concerns and needs for Hoopeston and their hopes and dreams. We want to be part of the solution and we invite you to join us for an interactive town hall meeting.

Hoopeston Town Hall Meeting

6:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 25

City Hall Council Chambers

301 W. Main St.

Snacks provided

Accomplishments continued from other side

While expanding services, the health center has cut costs and attempts to hold the line on spending. The center received a \$27,000 rebate from the Illinois Compensation trust because of its excellent experience in the area of Workers Compensation, Elliott said.

Also, more work is being done with less staffing. Due to cuts, all employees were able to receive a raise this year for the first time since 2002, he said.

Board finance committee chairman Dick Read agreed that money has been a dark issue. "We know the ugly," he said. "We know the bad very well. We're just starting on the threshold of good."

This year's numbers are promising. In 2006, the health center performed \$22 million in business, up from \$18 million last year, Read said.

While that amount was billed, officials know they will not receive that much. Last year, 38 percent of patients were on Medicaid and 21 percent on Medicare. This year, the number has increased to 42 percent on Medicaid and 25 percent on Medicare, Read said.

For each Medicaid patient seen, the health center re-

ceives 62 cents of every dollar. The reimbursement rate is lower for Medicare patients, at only 40 percent.

For patients with health maintenance organization (HMO) coverage, the reimbursement rate is 76 cents on a dollar. Last year, 27 percent of patients had HMO coverage.

Also, last year the health center wrote off \$500,000 in bad debt/goodwill accounts, Read said.

Payroll went from \$6.9 million last year to \$7.3 million this year. "This hospital means a lot to a lot of families in this town and a lot of other communities," he said.

Employees put money back into the community, as does the money paid to local businesses for services. "We're trying to put as much money back into the community as we can," Read said. "We do a reasonable job at that."

Aside from putting money into the community, the health center is also trying to get more feedback -

positive and negative - from citizens and officials have started a Community Outreach Committee to monitor the pulse of the community. Board member Dave McFadden is chairman of the committee which is made up of three board members, three members of management staff and six members from the community, including Molly Culbert, Vera Keller, Ryan Anderson, Marilyn Moore, Bill Crusinberry and Ann Swartz.

The open annual meeting is another way for the health center to reach out to the community. Board meetings do not fall under the Illinois Open Meetings Act so the board decided to hold an open annual meeting. At future such meetings, nominations for the board will be decided but because of the timing, that did not happen at this year's meeting.

The health center is currently advertising for new board members. Three of the nine seats are up for renewal this year. The terms of Read and Dr. John

Obituaries

ST. PETER—Judy St. Peter, 87, of Watseka died at 11 a.m. Sunday, Sept. 17, 2006 at Iroquois Memorial Hospital, Watseka. Funeral services will be at 1 p.m. Thursday at Segur-Knapp Funeral Home, Watseka. Burial will be in GAR Cemetery, Watseka. Visitation will be 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Thursday at the funeral home. Memorials are suggested to a charity of the donor's choice.



Mrs. St. Peter was a sister to Larry Comstock of Hoopeston and Richard Comstock of Rossville.

STURM—Marvin Walter Sturm, 83, of Watseka died at 10:37 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 13, 2006 at Iroquois Memorial Hospital, Watseka. Funeral services were at 10:30 a.m. Saturday at Faith Lutheran Church, Watseka. Burial was in Oak Hill Cemetery. Visitation was 4-7 p.m. Friday at Segur-Knapp Funeral Home, Watseka and one hour before services at the church. Memorials are suggested to the church or charity of the donor's choice.

Mr. Sturm was the father of Jan Sturm, former Hoopeston Area High School teacher.

Police News



A **22-year-old** Hoopeston man reported Sunday that someone broke into and damaged his vehicle while it was in the 600 block of West Penn.

A **39-year-old** Hoopeston woman reported Sunday that someone damaged her vehicle while it was at Hoopeston Midget Football field at McFerren Park.

A **42-year-old** man reported at 1:56 a.m. Sunday that someone attempted to start a fire in the 400 block of West Lincoln. The aggravated arson report is still under investigation.

A **23-year-old** Hoopeston man reported Sunday that someone tried to break into his vehicle while it was in the 200 block of West Lincoln.

An **employee** of Casey's General Store, 1022 W. Penn, reported at 1 p.m. Sunday that someone failed to pay for gas.

Weather



Mostly cloudy today. High 60. Tonight, partly cloudy. Low 38. Tomorrow, mostly sunny. High 63, low 42.

For current weather conditions, call Hoopeston Weather Service, (217) 283-6221.

Timmons are up and board member Connie Wilson is not seeing re-election to the group.

Candidate selection is expected to take place later this month.

Board president Russ Leigh said this is a good time to be a board member. "I believe we're positioning ourselves for the future, although I didn't always think so" he said. "I can see bright things here. We're not that far from being a modern facility and offering services you can't find anywhere else."

Leigh admitted the board has made mistakes but that members have learned from them. "We don't always make the right decisions," he said. "Sometimes, we're wrong."

One thing the board is not wrong about is the staff. "One thing you always hear is 'I got great care here,' Leigh said. "That's a compliment to our staff. That's what it's all about folks."

There are larger hospitals but none that provide the level of caring available locally. "Nobody, nobody does it better than HRHC," Leigh said.

Classifieds

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