



WETZEL COUNTY HOSPITAL

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

From: **GEORGE COUCH, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**
Date: **FEBRUARY 8, 2010**
Phone: **304-455-8111**

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT OPEN HOUSE HELD

New Martinsville, WV – It will be more than just Super Bowl Sunday for Wetzel County Hospital when an open house was held for the expanded and renovated Emergency Department. “Emergency care in Wetzel, Tyler and Monroe Counties will be greatly enhanced with the opening of this major expansion of our emergency department. This is a great day for Wetzel County Hospital, our employees and the citizens of the area,” said George Couch, Chief Executive Officer.

Pending West Virginia Fire Marshall and Office of Health Facility Licensure and Certification approval, the first phase of the Emergency Department could be open for business as early as Tuesday, February 16. Couch reported that six beds and all of the primary services of the new Emergency Department area will be in operation as part of the first phase. Phase two includes the complete renovation of the old Emergency Department, which will add the final six private treatment rooms.

Marge Knight, R.N. and Chief Nurse for Emergency and Outpatient Services noted that the new Emergency Department has been expanded from 1,750 square feet to 6,300 square feet. It will have its own entrance and large waiting area; reception desk; trauma room; cardiac room; gynecology room; orthopedic/suture room; isolation room; decontamination room; three triage rooms; four treatment rooms; physician office; medication room; clean and soiled utility rooms; private patient bathrooms; and coffee bar.

Other features of the new Emergency Department include a decontamination area; public and staff bathrooms, staff break room, a family room for counseling or bereavement; large nursing station;

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upgraded ambulance bay and an office for hospital security staff that is located to control after-hours access to the hospital.

The hospital's mobile M.R.I. trailer area has also been relocated and now includes the areas first enhanced open M.R.I. service. Final improvements to the hospital's helipad area, as well as in the construction of a helicopter hanger and crew quarters are being made to accommodate the areas first hospital based 24-hour per day emergency helicopter service, which is a joint venture with Air Evac Lifeteam.

"We are excited to complete this first phase of this project and look forward to serving the residents of our area with the newest and one of the best equipped emergency and trauma centers," said Bill Grimm, Chairman of the Wetzel County Hospital Board of Trustees. "The top priority for the Wetzel County Hospital Board of Trustees, Management and Medical Staff has been the renovation and expansion of our Emergency Department."

"We have taken great strides as a small rural hospital in providing high quality emergency, inpatient and outpatient services. Many of our services and technology exceeds that of hospitals in the Wheeling and Parkersburg area. There is no reason for anyone to leave our area for radiology, lab, rehabilitation or general in-patient surgery and acute care. Even if your doctor orders labs, therapy or radiology at another hospital, you can bring your order here and be assured that our services meet the highest standards of care and service," added Marge Knight.

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services recently re-designated Wetzel County Hospital as a Level IV Trauma Center. Wetzel County Hospital is the only trauma-designated facility in Wetzel County and one of only 13 hospitals in West Virginia to receive a full three-year designation.

To earn the designation, the hospital must have the necessary equipment and resources for trauma cases. Hospital staff must constantly review trauma cases, which enables staff to provide care based on the best practices of trauma centers across the country.

Also, the hospital must staff radiology, lab, surgery and other departments to immediately treat trauma patients. Doctors and nurses must pass advanced trauma classes to provide patients with the latest procedures. All Emergency Department nursing staff at Wetzel County Hospital are credentialed in Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS); Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS); Neonatal Advanced Life Support (NRP); and advanced Trauma Nurse Core Course (TNCC).

Partial funding for the emergency department project came through a Grant from the United States Department of Health and Human Resources, Health Resources and Services Administration, in the amount of \$853,062 secured with the assistance of United States Senator Robert C. Byrd. The

balance of the funding came from the refinancing of Wetzel County Hospital's long term bonds by Wesbanco Bank along with the cooperation and assistance of the Wetzel County Commission and Wetzel County Building Commission.

The funds secured by Senator Byrd have helped significantly in the first major refurbishing of the facility since 1979, when the hospital opened its doors. For 28 years, Wetzel County Hospital has been working with the same emergency room facility, but with increased patient loads and more challenging cases such as increased incidents of drug abuses and overdoses; all-terrain vehicle (ATV) accidents; chemical exposures; mining disasters; and other industrial accidents, the facility is in need of upgrades.

"Emergency care has changed dramatically over 28 years. In order to effectively deal with the complicated cases that enter the Emergency Room, the hospital must have the most effective tools and equipment to ensure up-to-date emergency health care," Byrd said.

"For too long, the health care providers at Wetzel County Hospital have had to jump over major hurdles to provide quality health care to those who walk into its Emergency Room," Byrd said. "I am proud to have worked with my colleagues to secure this funding. I know that we are making a critical and fundamental investment in the health and welfare of Northern West Virginians."

"We are deeply grateful to Senator Byrd for his dedication and commitment to this project," added Marge Knight, R.N. "With our advanced skills and the quality of our Emergency Department Physicians and Staff we will now be able to provide the most modern and advanced equipment and technology, which will in turn enhance the quality of care to the citizens served by Wetzel County Hospital."

The project was designed by Kreps and Zachwieja Architects from Charleston West Virginia and R.C. Construction of Charleston, West Virginia is the General Contractor.

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