

THE Pulse



KOSSUTH REGIONAL HEALTH CENTER - FALL 2008

KRHC moves forward on three story addition



AN ARTIST'S RENDERING of the three story addition at KRHC, showing the southeast side of the building.

Kossuth Regional Health Center is moving forward with plans for a \$13.5 million project that will build a three-story addition onto the hospital, bringing a wide range of improvements to the overall facility.

The project will add the necessary space for private inpatient rooms and add bathing facilities to each room. Several other key infrastructure issues will be addressed, such as improvements to the cafeteria, updating the air system in order to bring it up to fire code, replacing old pipe and electrical panels and enhancing the sprinkler system in the patient rooms.

"We see this as our golden opportunity to transform our inpatient floor from a facility designed for the 1950s into a space that will meet the needs of our patients both today and 25 years from now," said hospital administrator Scott Curtis.

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NEW PHYSICIAN TO JOIN STAFF IN 2009



Dr. Rachel Venteicher, a family medicine resident at Mercy Medical Center in Mason City, will join the Kossuth Regional Health Center medical staff in the summer of 2009.

"We are so pleased that Dr. Venteicher will be joining us at Kossuth Regional," said KRHC administrator Scott Curtis. "Working with the Mercy residency program has introduced us to excellent

physician recruits in the past, and I have no doubt that we've found another standout. We're thrilled to have her on board."

Dr. Venteicher grew up in Titonka and is looking forward to being back in the area with her husband, Brett, and daughter, Alaina.

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IT'S A MIRACLE!

Less than one year ago, doctors told Darren Tietz that he may never walk again.

A few weeks ago, he took a 13-mile bike ride. Last Thanksgiving, Darren couldn't feel his legs. Today he climbs stairs with ease and walks with a normal gait.

A miracle? Divine intervention may have come into play, but KRHC physical therapist Shane Meschke credits good old hard work with how Darren, quite literally, got back on his feet.

"The only way Darren got to where he is today is because of his own hard work. When he came in we had hopes...but we didn't have set expectations of how things would end up," said Meschke.

Darren's story began the week before Thanksgiving last year, when he experienced some ongoing back pain. Eventually, the pain became unbearable.

"I couldn't stand up, I couldn't lay down. I didn't feel like I had slept at all that night, but I must have closed my eyes at some point because when I came to, my legs were numb," Darren said.

A trip to the emergency room didn't solve the mystery. He was treated with a muscle relaxant and scheduled an MRI for a few days later. Meanwhile, the pain and numbness continued.



Darren Tietz of Algona.

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FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR



*"Change is the law of life.
And those who look only
to the past or present are
certain to miss the future."*

– John F. Kennedy

We have made some fantastic improvements at Kossuth Regional Health Center over the last couple of years.

We've updated and expanded our clinic space, changed our hospital front desk and waiting area, implemented new computers systems, added new staff and relocated our specialty clinic area...and that's just to name a few.

We have now embarked upon the process of moving forward with another big change – the building of a three-story addition onto the southeast side of the hospital. This project will focus on the oldest part of our facility – our nursing floor. Although we've made significant changes to other parts of our clinic and hospital, the nursing floor is nearly identical to how it looked nearly 60 years ago when it was known as St. Ann's Hospital, operated by the Sisters of Mercy.

A lot has changed in the world of medicine since then, and the time has come for Kossuth Regional Health Center to transform our facility into one that meets our patient's needs now and well into the future. The nursing floor needs infrastructure changes, such as a new heating, cooling and ventilation system, as well as changes to the rooms. Most rooms have two beds, no shower or bath and aren't big enough to house the medical equipment needed for treatment. The building project would add enough space to make all the rooms private, add bathing facilities for each patient and bring many other necessary changes to our third floor.

Other areas of the hospital will also be positively affected by this change. The cafeteria will receive an update and additional space, purchasing will be revamped, and many other first floor offices will be improved. This project will bring about a lot of change, but we are ready to embrace it.

The population of Kossuth County has changed, too, in the last 60 years. While the population of our county peaked years ago, the average age of our population is increasing. This will greatly affect the growth and development at KRHC, as people over 65 are four times more likely to utilize health care services. Currently we have more than 100,000 patient encounters every year at KRHC. As this number continues to grow, we need to prepare for what lies ahead while serving the current needs of our patients on a daily basis.

If you, your service club or other organization would like to find out more about the upcoming building project at Kossuth Regional Health Center, please contact me about our new KRHC video. We have lots to share with you about our plans for this exciting addition to our facility. For more information or to request a viewing of the video, please contact me or Nancy Grangenett-Besch, KRHC Foundation Director.

–Scott Curtis, KRHC CEO/Administrator

Three story addition approved

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"Equipment has changed, services have changed and people's expectations of health care have changed over the last 60 years," Curtis said.

Kossuth Regional Health Center's designation as a "critical access" hospital will help provide additional reimbursement that will assist with a large portion of the costs of the building project. Critical access hospitals are small, rural hospitals preserving access to primary care and emergency services that meet the needs of the community. The main benefit of this designation is cost-based reimbursement for the patients associated with Medicare or Medicaid.

"Our status as a critical access hospital, our growth as a health care facility and the needs of the population in this region all factor into making this the right time to make these changes" Curtis said.

A November groundbreaking is anticipated for the project.

KRHC

To Go 

Bringing wellness to you

HyVee in Algona
Thursday, Sept. 25
7 to 9 a.m.

Walk in wellness tests
Call 515-295-2451 for
more information.

KRHC AUXILIARY CARD CLUB A GREAT "DEAL" OF FUN



A traditional activity of the Kossuth Regional Health Center Auxiliary is the card club, which plays regularly for seven months from September to April.

"We are always welcoming new couples," said Delores Besch, Auxiliary card club coordinator.

The schedule is made in August, so if you are interested in joining contact Delores before next year. The club operates as a round robin, couple vs. couple tournament, with one couple hosting. There is a small fee for joining the card club. It costs \$10 to become a member and it is \$1 per month to play.

There are both daytime and evening leagues.

"We currently have 16 nighttime couples and 18 daytime couples playing," said Besch.

The money that the card club collects for fees is used to fund Auxiliary projects taking place within KRHC. So far the Auxiliary card club members have raised a total of \$472. This past year they helped fund a medicine cabinet for patient's medications.

If you are interested in joining the Auxiliary 500 card club contact Delores Besch for more information.

–Lindsay Harms, KRHC intern

Volunteers: a valuable resource at KRHC

Many people are often curious about the Auxiliary volunteer program at Kossuth Regional Health Center. The program at KRHC provides opportunities for people to share their talents and time in a meaningful and rewarding way.

Volunteers assist the staff in order to enhance and support the hospital's commitment to quality patient care. In many cases, volunteers serve as a personal and human element in an often high-tech environment, adding a personal dimension to patient and family visits. By allowing volunteers to assist staff with some tasks, staff can more easily attend to the medical care.

Volunteers also serve as the ambassadors and liaisons between the hospital and the community. This program allows volunteers to become familiar with staff in nearly every department and learn about the new projects and services happening at KRHC.

Some volunteer opportunities include transporting patients within the hospital, greeting and directing visitors from the front desk, answering phones, assisting with clerical duties and providing information to patients in the waiting rooms.

As the hospital expands, so will the need for volunteers.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer at Kossuth Regional Health Center, attend a volunteer orientation session. You will need to complete a TB test and a health screening. After attending a new volunteer general training session, you will also receive some on-the-job training in a particular volunteer position.

The Auxiliary's volunteer program needs YOU. For more information about becoming a volunteer at KRHC, please contact Shelly Harms at 515-295-2451.

-SanDee Voss, Vice President of the KRHC Auxiliary

Volunteer Classes for Hospice of the Heartland

Hospice of the Heartland will hold a two-day class for volunteers entitled "My Gift to Myself." Anyone wishing to take the volunteer class is asked to pre-register by calling 515-295-4430 or 1-800-603-8433, ext. 433 to sign up by October 1.

The sessions will be held at the Kossuth Regional Health Center Conference Room C, in Community Health from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday, October 10 and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, October 11. Lunch will be provided.

Topics for the sessions will include care giving through coping with grief, spiritual aspects and the volunteer self. For more information contact Marilyn Nielsen, coordinator of hospice volunteers, at 515-295-4430.

Venteicher to join staff in 2009

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"I love being close to family, and I am especially looking forward to working with the fantastic physicians and staff at Kossuth Regional Health Center," she said.

Before coming to Kossuth Regional Dr. Venteicher must complete her residency in Mason City, where she is the chief resident at Mercy Medical Center. She did a recent one-month rotation in the Algona clinic during the month of August before returning to her residency program.

"We would love to have her on staff full time right away, as she's made a great impres-

"I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT WE'VE FOUND ANOTHER STANDOUT. WE'RE THRILLED TO HAVE HER ON BOARD."

SCOTT CURTIS, KRHC ADMINISTRATOR

sion on our staff and patients already," Curtis said. "But first she needs to complete her residency program. We're looking forward to having her as part of our medical staff in the fall of

Auxiliary Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

- Active member \$5
- Inactive member \$10
- Lifetime member \$50 (one time fee for those 65 and older)

Please check your areas of interest:

- Craft Show Bake Sale (baking or selling)
- Painting or decorating
- Tag Day
- Gift shop sales clerk
- Blood mobile
- Bridge or 500 Round Robin
- Float design / planning
- Hospital appreciation coffee
- Annual garden tour
- Board of Directors
- Clerical support (mailings, computer work, etc.)
- Pediatrics Orientation Day tours
- Festival of Trees/ Christmas fundraiser
- Dine with Flair
- Front Desk Hospitality

Please send to:

KRHC Auxiliary
Pam Wymore, Membership
PO Box 355
Algona, IA 50511

2009."

Venteicher obtained her undergraduate degree in biology with a minor in chemistry at the University of Northern Iowa and then attended Des Moines University – Osteopathic Medical Center for her medical training.

Her professional interests include obstetrical care, women's health and preventative medicine. For more information about KRHC call 515-295-2451 or go to www.krhc.com.