



The Villages Regional Hospital is pictured by a security video camera.

Contributed photo

TVRH

From 17

That's double the hospital's current staff, Menton said.

Those new employees include nurses, pharmacists and imaging technicians, he said.

"The exciting thing is (the new staff) these tend to be (a) higher educated, professional group that will benefit the community," he said.

The third floor of the hospital will be a shell, ready for future expansion.

This anticipated progress comes on the heels of the hospital's January opening of its surgical intensive care unit.

All aspects of the hospital is expansion are either on or ahead of schedule, Menton said.

The hospital still must get approvals from the state and the county for certificates of occupancy, he said. But he foresees no problems there.

Hospital officials broke ground on the expansion in December 2005. The first portion includes the new surgical ICU and more than 400 parking spaces.

The rest of the project will be done in phases with a target completion date of between August and November. Originally, the projected completion date was November, but the target date keeps getting moved up because of rapid progress by the contractors, hospital officials said.

"The exciting thing is (the new staff) tend to be (a) higher educated, professional group that will benefit the community."

Tim Menton

The Villages Regional Hospital's chief executive officer

In January 2006, Leesburg Regional Medical Center sold \$75 million in tax-exempt bonds for the expansion of TVRH.

LRMC guarantees the bonds will be paid back, Menton said. Revenue to pay off the bonds will come from expansion of The Villages' hospital, he said.

Both hospitals are part of the Central Florida Health Care Development Corp.

The project will more than triple the number of beds from 60 to 198 and add three floors to the facility, which faces U.S. Highway 27/441.

On top of the surgical ICU, the expansion also will include additions to the laboratory, kitchen, radiology, materials management, emergency department and intensive care unit.

It will also add a three-story patient tower, cardiac catheterization/special procedures suite, two operating rooms and a

Focus on a new downtown

The Villages may get third downtown

"They (Villages officials) knew Wildwood was going to be their neighbor and they wanted Wildwood to prosper."

Ed Wolf

Wildwood mayor

BRAD BUCK

Staff Writer

WILDWOOD — The anchor of The Villages' southern end has moved west with a proposal in the works to build a new downtown.

Villages officials asked the Wildwood Commission last month whether the city would annex what would be the retirement community's third downtown, tentatively called Brownwood.

The proposed downtown would be built north of State Road 44, east of the city.

The city would provide water and sewer to the area, under the terms of a nearly eight-year-old agreement between the two.

Wildwood Mayor Ed Wolf said the arrangement will pump new economic blood into Wildwood.

"They (Villages officials) knew Wildwood was going to be their neighbor and they wanted Wildwood to prosper,"

Wolf said.

Brownwood would be the largest of the retirement community's three downtowns, the other two being Sumter Landing and Spanish Springs. Development plans specify construction of nearly 10,000 houses in most of the two-year phases of development. Slightly more than 7,000 are slated for construction in the final two years.

Villages officials have said the new downtown would provide a hearty economic boost to the city of 5,000, which has experienced a decline in the last 40 years after the withdrawal of the once-thriving railroad industry from the area.

Villages officials have provided few specifics on the development, but said it would include a similar mix of stores to Sumter Landing, including an eight-screen movie theater.

City Editor Bill Koch contributed to this report.

EVERYTHING
CLICKS WITH U.S.
The Daily Commercial
www.dailycommercial.com
352-365-8200