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Baylor breaks ground on new Waxahachie Medical Center

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By ANDREW BRANCA Daily Light staff writer

The cold weather did not prevent groundbreaking ceremonies for the new Baylor Medical Center at Waxahachie from taking place on Wednesday afternoon. Cars lined the Interstate Highway 35E service road as people made their way to the event.

Hospital board trustee Dr. Leroy Fenton opened the ceremony in prayer asking for God's blessing on the site and thanking him for the health care providers that do such a wonderful job for the hospital.

Following Fenton's prayer Board Chairman Bob Dyess addressed the crowd that was huddled together under a large tent on the cold, blustery and wet afternoon.

Dyess said plans are for the new hospital to open in November 2014 on the 100th anniversary of the Waxahachie Sanitarium, which was later renamed the W.C. Tenery Hospital.

The new facility will be six stories tall with the sixth story left unfinished. The hospital will have a 129-bed capacity.

The site of the new hospital is at the former location of the Saint-Gobain manufacturing plant that closed its doors in 2009.

The new hospital will feature oncology services in addition to regular hospital services.

Patients coming to the new hospital will receive the same high level of service and treatment from the new cancer center that they do at other Baylor hospitals. The cancer center will be in a separate building to distinguish itself from the rest of the hospital, but will be connected to the rest of the hospital.

The new hospital will also have a dedicated obstetrics unit.

Dyess said Baylor is proud to be a part of Ellis County and will be proud to be a part of it for the next 100 years.

Board trustee Albert Black thanked and recognized the local leaders that helped to make this new hospital a reality. Black said Baylor has an excellent history of service in Waxahachie but there is a lot of work ahead.

"This day has been long coming," Black said. "On a day like today for us to have this type of crowd, a standing room crowd, for us to have this type of reception on a cold day lets us know that we have something very, very special ahead of us."

Baylor Health Care President and CEO Joel Allison said he is thankful that this day has arrived. Allison thanked members of the board and local officials that have made this a reality.

"What a great day in the life of Waxahachie. It is truly my pleasure on behalf of the Baylor Care System Board to bring you a warm, warm welcome. It maybe cold outside but it is warm in here. It is warm because of the excitement and the enthusiasm and the energy that is going on around here," Allison said. "We are going to have a brand new, state of the art and technologically advanced system of care through this new facility. We are all excited about that."

Allison said there has been tremendous growth in Ellis County and as the county grows so will the Baylor Hospital System. This has been also a great partnership between the city of Waxahachie and all the other communities around here, Allison said.

State Rep. Jim Pitts spoke about how the new hospital will be a key to the future of the growth of the community.

"I have a lot of memories of Baylor Hospital. When I first moved to Waxahachie a long time ago it was W.C. Tenery Hospital. My first job was an attorney in Waxahachie. My wife, when it became Baylor Hospital, was on the board," Pitts said. "Now we stand on the cusp of a new era of health care in Ellis County. Knowing how vital good health care is to any community we should be all especially grateful to the Baylor Health Care System that they are investing in the very future of Waxahachie and Ellis County by building this state of the art facility here. So much of the future growth of Waxahachie will be tied to having Baylor Hospital standing as the monument to the faith that the Baylor Hospital System has in our city."

Baylor Medical Center at Waxahachie President Jay Fox said breaking ground on the new hospital today would not have been possible without the work of so many people past and present. While the hospital will be moving into a new facility and closing out the old one, it will be the start of the 100 years for Baylor Medical Center of Waxahachie in Ellis County, Fox said.

Fox recognized the hospital board members for their hard work, dedication and countless hours they have put in. Fox also thanked the Waxahachie City Council and the city staff for working with them on every step of this process.

Fox said Baylor Medical Center at Waxahachie would not be where it is today without its tremendous staff that is made up of volunteers, doctors, nurses and other health care professionals that take care of the patients each day.

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