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Concrete work for the new 68,000-square-foot Markdale hospital is well underway. The new \$69 million hospital is being built on land donated by Grey County behind its Grey Gables long-term care home. DENIS LANGLOIS

# Markdale hospital build 'proceeding quite well'

DENIS LANGLOIS

Work for the new \$69 million Markdale hospital is well underway.

Grey Bruce Health Services officials expect the foundation to be finished in August. Work on the exterior walls is slated to begin by year's end.

"Construction is proceeding quite well thus far. We hope to have the facility open in 2023 to the public," John Kurvink, GBHS's vice-president of performance and financial strategy, told Grey County council.

Kurvink and GBHS president and CEO Gary Sims updated county councillors during a committee-of-the-whole meeting on June 10.

Sims said he feels fortunate to be leading the hospital corporation when the long-awaited project has begun, and to see concrete being poured for the building.

"In amongst all the other things that have happened this year, this is a bit of a bright star," he told council.

It was 24 years ago that the former Grey-Bruce District Health

Council – a precursor to the larger South West Local Health Integration Network – recommended a new hospital for Markdale.

GBHS officials met in 2000 with regional Ministry of Health officials to begin the process to build the facility.

Two years later, the Centre Grey Health Services Foundation launched a \$12 million community fundraising campaign for the project.

It would take another 12 years for the province to approve capital funding for the build.

The province announced earlier this year that the project had received final approval and the contract to build the new facility was awarded to Bird Construction.

Workers arrived on-site to begin construction March 1.

"This has been an over 20-year exercise that the organization and community have gone through to get this hospital," Kurvink said.

The new 68,000-square-foot Markdale hospital will have an around-the-clock emergency room, along with eight examination and treatment rooms, four in-patient rooms, a procedures

room, laboratory and outpatient clinics, such as memory, mental health and diabetes clinics.

"All indications are with a new, modern facility, with all this ambulatory care space, it's going to really help recruit professionals to the area and hopefully, in terms of economic development, it's going to spur additional economic development for the county," Kurvink said.

The new facility will also have palliative care, physiotherapy, diagnostic imaging, spiritual care, a cafe, flex space on the ground floor for future expansion and will house the foundation's office.

Kurvink said all the excavation work for the new hospital is complete and the sanitary sewers have been installed. Roadways to the site are finished.

He said the plan is to finish the building's roof by spring 2022, the elevators by autumn 2022 and the building by spring 2023.

It will take several months after construction is complete to move hospital operations from the current hospital to the new building, he said.

So, the goal is to have the hospital open to the public by the end of 2023 or early in 2024.

About 90 full and part-time staff work at the Markdale hospital. That includes two permanent physicians and six to eight locums who cover the emergency room, which records around 12,700 visits annually. About 84 per cent of the patients who use the hospital are from Grey County.

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Thanks  
Ken  
&  
Gary