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Gulf Coast Medical Center To Launch \$21.6 Million Renovation

Hospital officials have announced that Gulf Coast Medical Center will kick off construction for a \$21.6 million hospital renovation and redesign project in Fall 2007.

“I am excited to begin work on much needed improvements that will modernize the hospital and allow our staff to provide more efficient services in an attractive setting,” said Donnie Frederic, CEO of Gulf Coast Medical Center. “Our plans represent a significant step forward, and when work is completed we will have a hospital capable of meeting the needs of our communities for years to come.”

The capital improvement project includes renovation and expansion of the Emergency Department, the Ambulatory Surgery Unit, the Endoscopy Suites and the Women’s Services Department. The Medical/Surgical Unit’s patient and visitor areas will receive an overall facelift, including the replacement of patient beds and room furniture. Additionally, the hospital’s exterior will receive a complete “re-skinning” that will give it a contemporary appeal.

“This is the largest capital project approved by the Company to date for any of its hospitals,” said Charles Miller, CEO of Signature Hospital Corporation. “This decision simply validates the faith we have had in Wharton’s future since we acquired the hospital last year. It is also a reflection of our enthusiasm and desire for a long-term commitment in this dynamic community.”

Frederic said the improvements will be implemented over 24 months to minimize disruption to existing hospital services. The initial six months will be designated for planning, followed by 18 months of actual construction.

(more)

In December 2006, Gulf Coast held a series of focus groups to obtain feedback from area residents about the hospital and potential healthcare needs in the region.

“We are taking the community’s input to heart and have already acted on several issues discussed in the recent focus groups,” said Frederic. “These improvements will bring our hospital up to date and provide a better experience for the patients, while at the same time ensuring our medical staff has access to state-of-the-art technology.”

With these positive changes to the facility, hospital leaders plan to continue the recruitment of additional medical staff. Gulf Coast Medical Center has recently recruited three family practice physicians, two internists and a general surgeon to its ranks.

“Wharton and the surrounding communities are growing rapidly, and people have a choice of where they can go for their medical care,” said Frederic. “We want Gulf Coast Medical Center to be their first choice.”

Gulf Coast Medical Center is a regional healthcare provider serving Wharton and the surrounding six counties. As the largest comprehensive medical center between Houston and Victoria, Gulf Coast Medical Center offers in-patient services that include obstetrics and gynecology, coronary care, intensive care and surgery. Outpatient services include cardiac rehabilitation, cancer treatment, rehabilitation therapy, and a sleep disorder lab.

Gulf Coast Medical Center is operated by Signature Hospital Corporation. In addition to Gulf Coast, Signature currently owns the 115-bed Pampa Medical Center in Pampa, Texas and the 79-bed Medical Park Hospital in Hope, Arkansas. The Company has reached agreement to acquire the 325-bed St. Joseph’s Hospital in Parkersburg, West Virginia and plans to assume ownership on or about May 1. Signature is currently based in Dallas, Texas but is relocating its corporate headquarters to Houston in April, 2007.

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