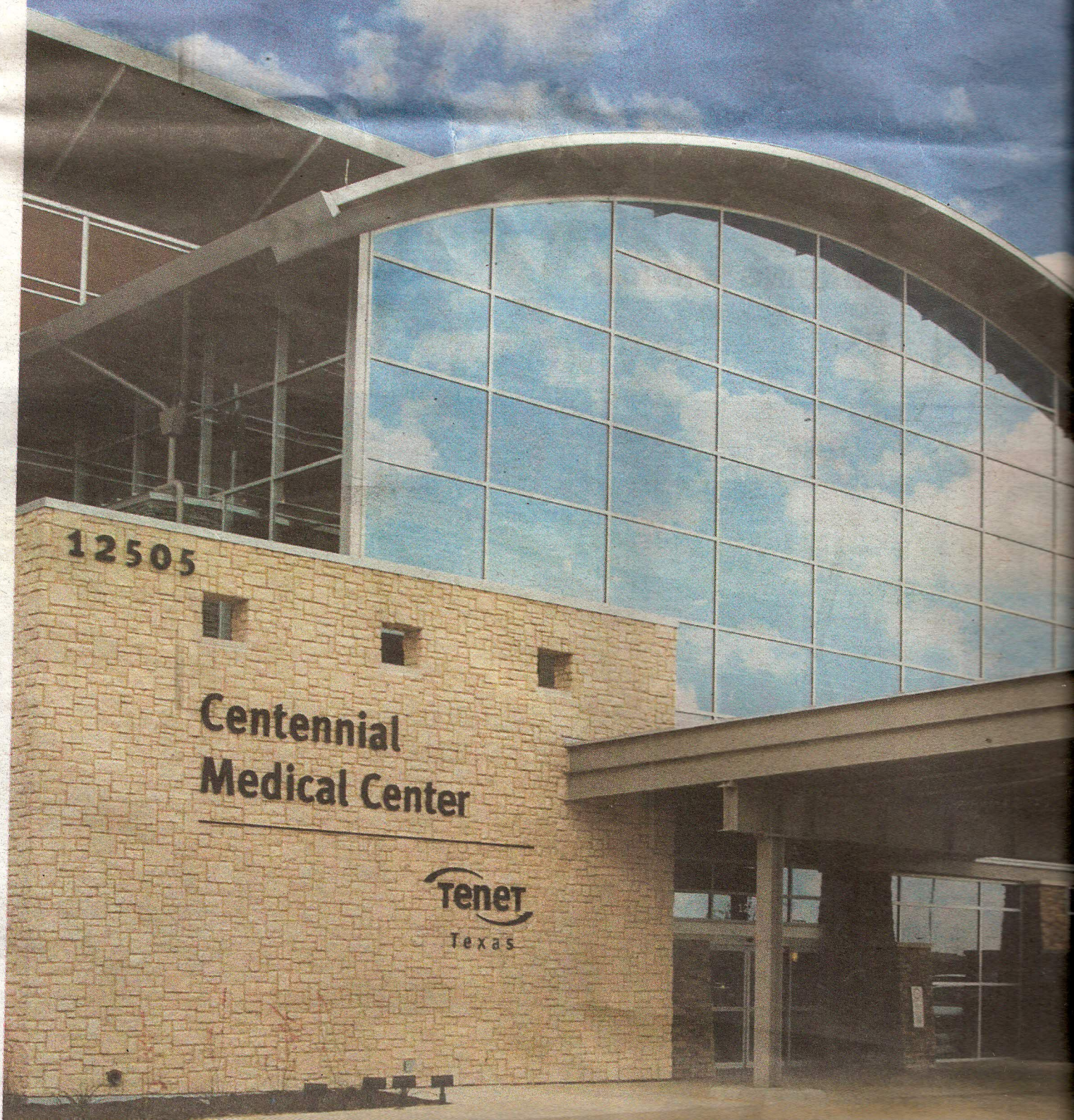


Centennial Medical Center

Grand Opening



Hospital plans to grow with Collin County

BY REGINA L. BURNS

On Tuesday, residents of Frisco, McKinney, Allen, and North Plano will have a long-awaited full-service, acute-care, 118-bed, advanced hospital.

Yet even before it opens its doors, the facility is preparing to expand.

"This hospital is designed to grow,"

Centennial Medical Center CEO

Lynn Mergen said. "We won't get taller — we'll unfold from within.

We actually have three patient wings that are shelled in. When we need them, those wings can grow the hospital to 190 beds," he said.

Centennial, part of Tenet Texas, offers "healing hospitality" by design. The \$125 million facility, built by RTKL Associates, Inc., is bathed in warm, vibrant colors and includes grand fireplaces, a coffee bar, two technology bars and residential-style patient rooms, among other amenities.

Located on 40 acres at State Highway 121 and Coit Road, Centennial includes two 72,000-square-foot medical office buildings, an ambulatory surgery center, an advanced intensive care unit and a 24-hour pharmacy. The facility will provide Women's and Children's Services, Inpatient Medical/Surgical Care Services, Therapeutic Inpatient Services and Patient/Community Education Services. In addition, the hospital will offer a broad scope of diagnostic imaging and operate in a totally filmless environment with full-service physiological diagnostics.

More than 300 employees and over 350 physicians are expected to be on staff by the summer. That's also when the hospital plans a series

separate lounges.

"Patients have one lounge for changing clothes, and pass-through lockers," said Susan Austin, director of imaging services. "Robes will be provided with patient gowns, and technologists will escort patients."

The hospital's Women's and Children's Services department will offer obstetrics, pediatrics and gynecological services on the

second floor. Centennial has nine labor and delivery recovery rooms, a 32-bed nursery and a 14-bed neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). Children from newborn to 12 years will be admitted to the hospital's second floor.

Susan Julian, director of Women's and Children's Services, said the nurseries are under heavy security and only staff members

with appropriate identification will be able to access the area.

Centennial Medical Center will be Tenet Texas' fifth acute-care hospital in the Dallas area. Frisco Mayor Mike Simpson said he is thrilled about the new hospital.

"We are excited to have Centennial Medical Center opening in our fast-growing city," Mr. Simpson said. "As families move to Frisco, they are looking for good hospitals and health care because of the impact they have on their quality of life. Our senior population also is growing at a fast pace and this full-service facility can be utilized by all of our citizens. Its location will provide excellent service to Frisco and surrounding cities. Centennial has shown its dedication to being a good corporate citizen in our community even before the hospital's official opening."

Centennial is positioned to serve an increasing Collin County population. Tenet built there because families and businesses continue to stream into the area. But Mr. Mergen isn't taking anything for granted. He said patient satisfaction is an essential element, and he will track departmental effectiveness through Tenet's Target 100 campaign. An independent firm will randomly select patients to interview after they have been released. Their comments will be scored from zero to 10. The program's goal is 100-percent customer satisfaction among patients, employees and physicians, he said.

In addition to dedicated service, patients will find an array of health care specialists at Centennial, including experts in cardiology, open heart and vascular surgery, general surgery,



PHOTOS BY STEVE REED

Susan Julian, director of Women's and Children's Services, shows off the 14-bed, neonatal intensive care unit (NICU).



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More than 300 employees and over 350 physicians are expected to be on staff by the summer. That's also when the hospital plans a series of community education programs/events.

Mr. Mergen, 36, who lives with his family in Frisco, has shepherded the project since its beginning, and says he's pleased to be serving the fast-growing community.

"It's great to see this hospital come to fruition and to know that we are going to help so many people in this community," he said.

Centennial features a 12-bed intensive care unit. Its four operating rooms include sophisticated technology. The hospital's imaging department features some of the latest digital technology. Women can receive digital mammograms at Centennial, making it one of the first Texas medical facilities with all digital imaging capability. Other benefits for imaging patients include faster service and privacy-oriented,



PHOTOS BY STEVE REED

Susan Julian, director of Women's and Children's Services, shows off the 14-bed, neonatal intensive care unit (NICU).



The bright, open nurses' station is the hub of the Women's and Children's Services area.

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In addition to dedicated service, patients will find an array of health care specialists at Centennial, including experts in cardiology, open heart and vascular surgery, general surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics, internal medicine, oncology, neonatology, perinatology and orthopedics.

Construction is now under way to expand State Highway 121 into a six-lane freeway, with an additional six lanes of parkway from U. S. Highway 75 to Interstate 35. This expansion is scheduled to be completed after Centennial opens its doors.

In the meantime, Tenet will relocate its corporate headquarters from Santa Barbara, Calif., to Dallas. The company's Dallas office is already one of its largest corporate sites with more than 700 employees.

Tenet is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol THC.

— REGINA BURNS IS A FREELANCE WRITER IN DALLAS.

ER gears up for efficient, quality care

Visits to the fictional television show's set notwithstanding, most folks don't care to spend a lot of time in an emergency room.

Which is why Jennifer Thomas, director of emergency services, is determined to shorten the length of time patients have to spend in the hospital's ER.

"The ER is not a place where people want to hang out," she said. "We want to be under the national average for the length of an ER stay."

The hospital's paperless documentation system is one tool that may help ER personnel achieve that goal.

"We have a documentation and tracking system that allows us to track the care and throughput of patients [patient flow through the hospital]," said Cindy Slaydon, chief nursing officer, chief nursing officer.

"Not only is it a clinical documentation system for the nurses and physicians, but it's a clinical care patient tracking system that assists in efficiency of operations in the emergency department."

Operating efficiently also can speed up the process.

"The more efficiently the nurses operate, the more time they have to spend with patients," said Ms. Thomas. "It also gives us the opportunity to get things through the system — so any time we can speed things

Another "edge" the hospital has is an entire group of board-certified emergency medicine physicians.

up makes the wait time shorter. "The technology gives you that little edge that sometimes makes a difference," Ms. Thomas said. Another "edge" the hospital has is an entire group of board-certified emergency medicine physicians. "Being board-certified in emergency medicine brings physicians who specialize in the care and treatment of emergency patients," said Ms. Slaydon, who oversees all aspects of nursing operations, including inpatient and outpatient services. In addition, the facility will "have a staff of qualified nurses and support staff to manage 21 beds," she said. "It's a good size ER for a hospital this size."

To facilitate faster communication with patients' primary care physicians, a summary of their ER visit will be faxed directly to their physicians after an ER visit. And patients can take comfort in knowing they're being cared for by a team of professionals who are people-oriented.

"Every person in this department is part of a team," Ms. Thomas said. "Everyone is excited about being in a new place. Everyone is taking ownership, and that's nice. We really are happy to be part of

the emergency room has a staff of board-certified emergency medicine physicians and experienced nurses, according to Jennifer Thomas, director of Emergency Services.



PHOTO BY STEVE REED

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Emergency Services

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this community. We want to make sure people are confident in our ability to care for them, in case they do have an emergency. Many of us live nearby and I think that's a comfort for people."

Centennial CEO Lynn Mergen said the hospital is focused on serving the patient to

the best of its ability and has transfer agreements with other hospitals.

"Whatever we can't handle, we'll stabilize the patient and then transfer the patient to a more appropriate facility, like a tertiary trauma center," he said.

Ms. Thomas, who has been involved with the hospital's development for the past six months, said Centennial's ER will initially have one physician on call, and one mid-level provider (physician's assistant or nurse practitioner).

"We're going to start off slowly," she said "and we'll staff up as we need to from



This examination room in the ER features an ENT chair, which is designed for ear, nose and throat exams, as well as a crib for babies.



PHOTO BY STEVE REED

While they wait, visitors to the emergency room can relax on comfy, upholstered chairs.

the physicians' group we're using. As we grow, we have many physicians readily available," she said.

Ms. Thomas, who worked at Parkland Hospital's ER for 10 years, isn't worried about an increasing number of patients.

"The volume difference will be astounding — we will see less people here," she said. "Of course, the demographic is different. Most of the things I'm going to see here will be things I'm sure I've seen in the past," she said.

"At Parkland, we took care of everything from coughs and colds to gunshot wounds," Ms. Thomas said. "I've crammed more into 10 years than people see in their whole careers."

"I live in Frisco and that's why I chose to come to Centennial," she said. "I have a vested interest in making this department run well. Patients will be my neighbors and my friends."

— REGINA BURNS

OR outfitted with newest equipment and dedicated staff

Centennial Medical Center's operating-room cameras are ready to speed patients along their road to recovery.

"We have advanced technology for surgeons," said Carol Blalock, director of surgical services. "And we've tried to match their desires and needs."

The OR will have 27 nurses, along with operating-room technicians, transporters, housekeepers, anesthesia technicians, endoscopy technicians, sterile processing and distribution technicians and supervisors.

Ms. Blalock said all of her staff members are experienced, and many of them live in Frisco.

"There's [been] no major hospital here and a lot of them had to travel for their jobs. They're very excited," said Ms. Blalock, who has been an OR nurse for 27 years. "Starting off in a new place with a new staff is very exciting."

"We lived in a little trailer for six months," she said. "I helped with hiring, purchasing equipment, writing job descriptions and compiling policies and procedure."

In-patient and outpatient surgery will be available. Surgery suites will be used for gynecologic, orthopedic, urologic, general and vascular procedures, as well as for neurosurgery.

The ORs feature minimally invasive technology supported by full clinical information systems. A separate, same-day surgery center will be available later this summer to complement the hospital's operating rooms.

All of the ORs are fitted with flat-screen monitors, which means nurses won't have to move equipment, reducing the chance of personal injury or equipment damage. Each room also has a cam-

era, allowing surgeons to consult colleagues while working.

"Let's say the general surgeon and the gynecologist are operating. They can put the camera on whatever the disease process

we can pull up X-rays and tests so the surgeon can view them right there in the room."

In typical hospitals, patients must often wait on the operating table during



PHOTO BY STEVE REED

The OR features advanced technology for surgeons, according to Carol Blalock, director of surgical services.

is and shoot it where they are working,"

Ms. Blalock said. "A surgeon doesn't have to leave the room to view slides nor to do consultations in another room. We can pull up the image on the flat screen; and

the consultation process.

Ms. Blalock said a password-protected system helps patients receive the correct drugs and the right dosage. Computerized documentation helps ensure that the

patient's record is accurate and complete.

Centennial's technology allows a patient to be tracked from pre-admission testing into the operating room and through recovery.

"When the nurse enters the information, it will carry on to various departments through the hospital," said Ms. Blalock.

She said GI doctors can use technology called EndoWorks.

"This actually embeds pictures into the patient's report," said Ms. Blalock. "It's a beautiful, colored picture. So if there was a tumor or polyp, you could see the growth right there and it would be printed with the report. The picture is then placed in the patient's records."

She said each department at Centennial has built its own computerized scheduling system from the ground up.

"We have a computerized scheduling system and there's an interface into SIS [Surgical Information Systems]," she said. "We have to build the system and enter all the materials we use and the preface cards. We have to build all of our personnel into the system. Every department had to build these systems — it's been a huge task and everyone has done a wonderful job."

After working as a staff nurse for 18 years, Ms. Blalock opened a surgery center in another state before moving to Texas, where she worked in several different capacities.

Since being hired at Centennial, she only has a short commute from her McKinney home.

"I'm thrilled to be so close to home and to bring my skills and expertise to this new hospital," she said. "We're all excited and ready to start serving the community."

— REGINA L. BURNS