

Hutcheson Medical Center begins major renovation

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Hutcheson Medical Center will kick off the start of a major renovation of the North Georgia hospital on Wednesday at 10 a.m.



Charles Stewart,
Hutcheson
Medical Center
CEO

Members of management, along with board chairman Stan Porter, will don hardhats and sledgehammers to kick off the renovation. The ceremony will be held in the lower main lobby, the first area scheduled for a facelift.

Bids have been accepted for the lobby project and plans are being finalized for the next phases of renovation.

Hutcheson Health Foundation is assisting with funding of the project with a \$516,000 donation. Hutcheson Auxiliary has also pledged support of \$40,000 for furniture replacement.

A \$35.5 million tax-exempt loan was completed on May 27 and an additional \$12 million tax exempt lease line will soon be complete, allowing the medical center to acquire several upgrades in technology and equipment.

Hospital officials made the original announcement in February of its initial plans and have been working with Regions Bank and Morgan Keegan to secure the loans and lease line.

"We are very excited to be at this point," said Charles Stewart, president and CEO of Hutcheson. "Our staff is anxious to bring these improvements to the community."

This is the largest loan the hospital has been involved with in the history of Hutcheson. Refinancing of current debt, a major renovation of the main hospital campus and the purchase of new equipment is included in this refinancing process.

Starting with the main hospital lobby, renovations will continue into common areas and patient rooms over the next year. In addition to the renovation, all new patient room furniture and seating in the waiting rooms will be purchased.

About Hutcheson Medical Center

Hutcheson Medical Center is a 300-bed hospital in Fort Oglethorpe. It has served Dade, Catoosa and Walker counties, as well as the Chattanooga area, for more than 50 years. It has more than 1,300 staff members and more than 200 physicians.

With the tax-exempt lease line the hospital plans to purchase several new pieces of high-tech equipment, including a CT scanner, MRI, equipment for a new cardiac catheterization lab, and patient monitoring equipment.

"We currently provide all the diagnostic equipment available, but this is an area that is constantly changing with new technology. This financing program will allow us to provide the newest, most advanced services available to our patients," Stewart said.

The hospital does not expect the financing plan to have any impact on the current charge structure.

"This bond issuance and lease line, an improving bottom line, a dedicated and loyal staff, excellent physicians and our solid growth plans for the future are a reflection of 'the new Hutcheson' that is taking shape," Stewart said. "Hutcheson is fulfilling its mission of serving as a true community hospital.

"This is an exciting time for Hutcheson, and we hope the community shares in our excitement. We invite everyone to stop by in a few months and see the changes taking place in their community hospital," he said.