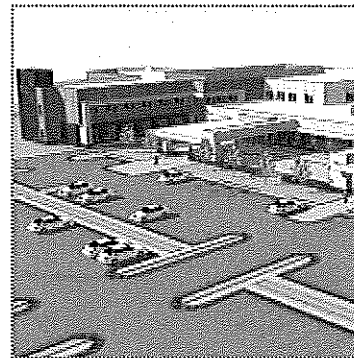


New Madison Hospital, Despite Battle

by Adam Lynch
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Madison County will soon have a new hospital. The Madison County Medical Center hosted a Sept. 10 groundbreaking ceremony for Madison River Oaks Hospital, a 67-bed hospital covering more than 110,000 square feet. The facility will contain traditional features such as an ICU and ER, as well as a pharmacy, a physical therapy center and a woman's health clinic.



COURTESY HEALTH MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES

The groundbreaking actually represents a relocation effort by the Madison County Medical Center. Health Management Associates Inc. owns the facility, along with other River Oaks facilities, and is expected to open the new building in late 2011. Developers sited the location along the Nissan Parkway, not too far from I-55. The relocation costs \$42 million.

"The economic impact a new hospital will bring to the area is needed now more than ever," said Health Management Associates President and CEO Gary Newsome in a statement. "New hospitals bring with them a great multiplier effect; including the addition of pharmacies, new physicians and employment opportunities in the community."

Canton Municipal Utilities General Manager John Wallace also said in a statement that the area would benefit from the new addition to I-55: "There is no question that we need a new hospital, and those of us in public service and economic development are 100 percent for this project."

The State Health Department voted to approve the relocation effort in 2005, though St. Dominic–Jackson Memorial Hospital sued to stop the relocation, arguing that the certificate of need Madison County Medical Center filed with the State Health Department did not meet the criteria set out in the State Health Plan, which serves to prevent the unnecessary duplication of services. More importantly, however, St. Dominic argued that the project proposed by HMA is not a relocation and replacement, but a much bigger project designed to stifle competition in Madison County.

St. Dominic appealed to Hinds County Chancery Court, which affirmed the State Health Department's decision. St. Dominic then appealed that court ruling to the Mississippi Court of Appeals, which also decided in favor of the state health department and HMA.

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