

JOURNAL

MADISON COUNTY

Wednesday, December 09, 2009

EDITORIAL/St. Dominic's Madison

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St. Dominic's proposal to build a \$121 million hospital in Madison is rapidly gaining prominent support.

Chief among supporters is Madison Mayor Mary Hawkins-Butler.

From City Hall and the chamber of commerce to every day citizens, public support is mounting for the proposed facility just east of I-55 and north of where the Reunion interchange will be constructed.

Hospital executives last month launched a major public relations campaign to garner support and, among other things, unveiled a web site, mystdommadison.com, that is a useful resource for those interested in supporting the project, which still has to gain approval from the state Department of Health.

St. Dominic is seeking approval to move 71 beds from its Jackson campus to a total 443-acre campus in Madison that would span both sides of Parkway East and eventually include medical offices and an activities center, among other things.

One of the testimonials on the web site is from the mayor.

"St. Dominic's Madison campus will address the need for better primary care and emergency services for Madison residents and those in surrounding cities and communities," says Hawkins-Butler.

She says the cooperation between St. Dominic's and the city of Madison is "a testimony to the future for regional development," and we agree.

A new hospital would be good for the resident of south Madison County and this proposal won't diminish services in Jackson. As a matter of fact, St. Dominic executives say services in Jackson will improve.

St. Dominic's long-range plan also calls for a significant investment in the Jackson campus, its tertiary, or referral, facility for the region.

If the Madison campus is approved, St. Dominic's expects to invest an estimated \$150 million over a 10-year period to expand and renovate its Jackson campus to accommodate services and technologies required to meet the needs of more critically ill patients with complex diseases.

St. Dominic has long been a friend of the city of Madison and Madison County, particularly because of St. Catherine's Village, a premise retirement village with a national reputation for excellence.

Health care needs in Madison County are growing. Health Management Associates recently broke ground on a new \$42 million facility scheduled to open in 2011 off of Nissan Parkway in Canton.

Public support is critical to gaining state approval for St. Dominic's Madison hospital, so residents need to continue to voice their approval. A new Madison hospital is a win-win for citizens.

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