

St. Dominic's asks residents to support facility

By STEVEN G. WATSON
Associate Editor

MADISON — The incoming president of the chamber of commerce used her acceptance speech last week to urge support for St. Dominic's proposed \$121 million hospital just north of the city.

St. Dominic is seeking approval to move 71 beds from its Jackson campus to Madison east of Interstate 55 along Parkway East and north of the proposed Reunion interchange.

St. Dominic's officials say the facility will provide Madison County's growing population better access to quality health care.

A Certificate of Need (CON) has been filed and the state Department of Health will hold a hearing in February.

In the meantime, St. Dominic's officials are seeking community support for the project and they are receiving it.

Incoming Madison the City Chamber of Commerce President Donna Sims, who is a member of the hospital's board of directors, used most of her acceptance speech to say it's high time south Madison County had its own hospital.

"I just think it's a good thing for this community," Sims said. "You can talk to different people who have had to be transported to hospitals in Jackson and you can sometimes spend 30 minutes in transit.

Sims, president of BankPlus' Madison/Ridgeland Banking Center, said during the annual chamber banquet Thurs-

day night, "We feel like we need to talk to those in charge and let them know not only do we want this project, but we'll support it if it comes here."

Sister Mary Dorothea Sondgeroth, president of St. Dominic Health Services, said in an interview Wednesday, "St. Dominic's has a long history of providing a Christian ministry of healing and serving the healthcare needs of people living in Madison County."

She said the Madison facility would be an extension of the mission and "we remain committed to delivering the medical and emergency services resi-

dents there so desperately need

close to home."

The hospital has launched a website asking residents to speak out in support of the project.

At www.mystdommadison.com residents can download petitions to sign with the hope of swaying the state Department of Health when the CON is reviewed in February.

St. Dominic-Jackson Memorial Hospital president Claude W. Harbarger said that, unlike during previous CON requests, this time they are reaching out to residents who have voiced their desire for improved access to medical and emergency services.

"We're urging people to make their voices heard and make this critical need clear to state regulators," Harbarger said.

This is the third time St. Dominic's has attempted to open a hospital in Madison. See HOSPITAL, page A6

Hospital

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County, but hospital officials point out this is a "relocation" of beds from Jackson and won't mean additional beds as in previous attempts.

The only hospital in Madison County is the 67-bed Madison County Medical Center in Canton run by Health Management Associates (HMA). They recently broke ground on a new \$42 million facility scheduled to open in 2011 off of Nissan

Parkway south of Canton.

Plans for the new St. Dominic's facility call for a 60,000 square foot building with 65 beds for acute medical/surgical and intensive care and 6 labor and delivery suites.

As a full-service facility, it will also provide surgery and recovery, imaging and laboratory and outpatient services.

The facility would also have a Level 4 emergency room.

