

# Officials break ground at Kernersville hospital



Journal File Map

By John Hinton | Journal Reporter

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KERNERSVILLE - Officials with Forsyth Medical Center broke ground yesterday for the Kernersville Medical Center, a new 50-bed hospital that should spur economic growth in the town, officials say.

About 250 people gathered for the groundbreaking ceremony at the site where the hospital will be built -- off Macy Grove and Wishbone Farm roads in eastern Kernersville next to the Forsyth-Guilford county line.

The hospital will cost \$84 million to build and is expected to bring more than 300 jobs and a \$17 million payroll to Kernersville.

After the ceremony, Mayor Dawn Morgan said that many Kernersville residents support a hospital being built in town.

Residents will have immediate access to its emergency room and its physician specialists, she said.

The hospital, which is scheduled to open by 2010, will have 46 acute-care beds, a four-bed intensive-care unit, four operating rooms, an emergency department with 14 treatment rooms, imaging services and laboratory and pharmacy services.

The hospital will serve residents in Kernersville, Walkertown, Belews Creek and Union Cross, said Gabrielle Causby, the president of Kernersville Medical Center.

"The Kernersville area is experiencing rapid growth, with a majority of residents already choosing Forsyth Medical Center-affiliated facilities for their health-care needs," Causby said in a statement.

In December 2007, the board of aldermen annexed the hospital property and nearby land for a medical business park and approved a new zoning district. The hospital will be on 70 acres, with an

additional 121 acres available for retail shops, restaurants, an industrial park and a housing development.

Morgan and Alderman Kevin Bugg said that the hospital should spur economic growth.

"Communities, especially ones our size, with a hospital tend to attract employers," Bugg said. "It will be a huge magnet for this area."

In May 2006, the medical center first proposed building a hospital in Kernersville and it applied for a certificate of need with state health officials.

High Point Regional Health System objected to the hospital's initial planned location -- N.C. 66 South near Bishop McGuinness High School -- as being too close to its High Point hospital. High Point Regional dropped its opposition in June 2007.

After at first denying the proposed Kernersville Medical Center, state regulators approved the application in July 2007. More than 5,000 Kernersville residents sent letters to the N.C. Division of Health Service Regulation supporting the hospital.

Wayne Mabe, a member of the Kernersville Medical Center's foundation board of directors, said he's happy that the town will have a hospital. He said he hopes that the medical-business park will be developed like the one across the street from Presbyterian Hospital in Huntersville. He described that as a well-landscaped project with commercial and residential development.

■ John Hinton can be reached at 727-7299 or at [jhinton@wsjournal.com](mailto:jhinton@wsjournal.com).