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Published Tuesday, May 10, 2005

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St. John's forges ahead

Following master plan, hospital moves entrance while inpatient tower rises.

By Kathleen O'Dell
News-Leader

Starting today and for the next three years, visitors and patients heading to St. John's Hospital in Springfield must enter through a temporary, east-side door near St. John's Hammons Heart Institute instead of the former south main entrance on Cherokee Street.

The temporary main entrance, marked with a large blue awning, will serve as the primary entry for the estimated 5,000 people who enter St. John's front doors each day.

Workers are completing a new inpatient tower fronting on Cherokee Street, hospital officials said. The 315,000-square-foot addition will contain about 350 beds.

The inpatient tower is one component of St. John's multi-year, \$360 million master sites plan to improve and renew St. John's facilities, spokeswoman Cora Scott said.

Vehicles and pedestrians can approach the new entrance from two directions:

- From National Avenue, travel east on Seminole Street and turn north on Kickapoo Avenue. That takes travelers on a new loop road directly



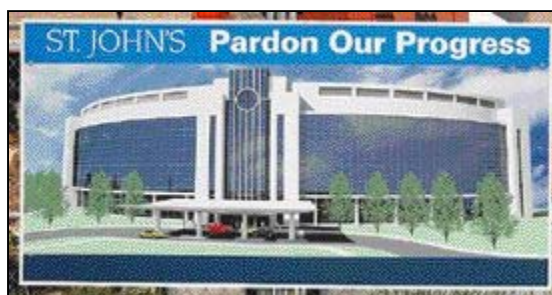
Construction workers from DeWitt and Associates relocate a flag pole to the temporary entrance at St John's Hospital. A flurry of activity was taking place to get the entrance ready for today.

Dean Curtis / News-Leader



CURRENT St. John's Hospital, as seen from Cherokee Street, is in the middle of a long-term construction plan.

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ENVISIONED This rendering shows how the entrance will look when construction of the new addition is finished.

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to the hospital — through the campus, across Cherokee Street to a one-way circle drive on the east side of the building.

- From Fremont Avenue, turn west on Cherokee Street to the temporary circle drive.

A construction fence on Cherokee will block access from National to protect travelers from the construction site.

The new temporary entrance includes a multi-lane drive for patient drop-off and pick-up, and a gated drive for shuttle service to and from the south parking lot.

Shuttle service will operate from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Visitors, patients and employees can catch the shuttle at one of five covered shuttle stops located throughout the parking lots south of Cherokee.

Guest services representatives will be available at the entrance and inside the new temporary lobby to direct visitors to elevators and other facilities, said Scott. Maps will also be available.

The cafeteria, gift shop and admissions will be a longer walk from the temporary entrance than visitors are accustomed to, she said.

St. John's master plan includes the new Emergency Trauma and Imaging Center, which opened Feb. 1; St. John's Surgery Center, which opened last year; a three-story multi-specialty clinic in Nixa, which opened May 2; improvements to St. John's Clinic-Smith Glynn Callaway south of the main campus; St. John's Radiosurgery Center, featuring the non-invasive CyberKnife, set to open this summer; a 20,000-square-foot addition to St. John's Sports Medicine & Physical Therapy building, which will begin opening with outpatient physical therapy this summer with total completion this fall; and a loop road connecting new and existing St. John's facilities on the main campus.

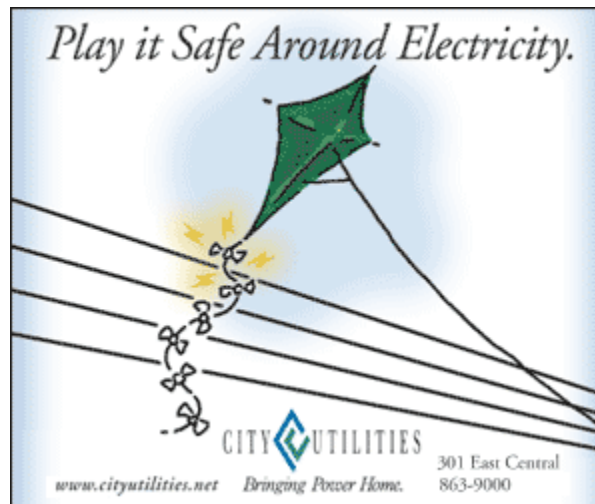


The Mercy Cross, dedicated to the Sisters of Mercy, has been relocated to the temporary entrance on the hospital's east side, which will be in use as of today.

Dean Curtis / News-Leader

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St. John's officials had one unexpected development: workers dismantling the south-side entrance uncovered a 1952 time capsule placed when the entrance was completed. Scott said hospital officials had lost track of the exact site until workers found it.

Officials are still inspecting the contents.

They have yet to retrieve another time capsule placed during St. John's 1993 centennial celebration. That capsule lies beneath part of the main walkway.



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