



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department Of Agriculture Rural Development
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EMBARGOED UNTIL MARCH 27, 2004

GOTHENBURG—COMMITTED TO QUALITY MEDICAL CARE AND EDUCATION

Gothenburg, Neb., March 27, 2004 – Gothenburg hospital and school officials cut the ribbon for the official grand openings held today at the Gothenburg Memorial Hospital and the Gothenburg Public School. The two projects totaling close to \$16 million will benefit patients, medical staffs, students, and school faculty through enhanced facilities and services.

"The medical project brings us from a 1960's facility to a 21st century healthcare provider," stated Dr. Carol Shackelton, Gothenburg Memorial Hospital Board of Directors President. "This was only made possible by the support of the USDA Rural Development. We greatly appreciate their assistance that allowed us to dramatically improve our facility which was in dire need of updating."

The Gothenburg Memorial Hospital improved its medical facilities and services through a nearly 7,500 square foot addition, renovation of approximately 15,900 square feet of existing ancillary and support area space along with the purchase of needed medical equipment. This accomplished through an USDA Rural Development loan of over \$2.5 million joined by contributions of \$750,000 from the Gothenburg Memorial Hospital Foundation and \$400,000 from the Gothenburg Memorial Hospital District. The loan will be repaid over 40 years at 4.75 percent interest. The addition houses a surgery suite, endoscopy room, a labor-delivery-recovery-postpartum unit, a cardiac rehab unit and five exam rooms for visiting physicians and emergency patients.

"USDA Rural Development is pleased to have assisted the hospital in their expansion and renovation endeavor," stated Glen Gatz, rural development specialist for USDA Rural Development in Nebraska. "The service area of the hospital has been designated as medically underserved and in need of additional medical professionals. The hospital improvements will help to address these issues by allowing for increased medical services benefiting the nearly 4,000 rural residents that the hospital serves."

Gothenburg Public School improvements totaling nearly \$12.3 million will provide for a quality learning environment. An 113,400 square foot Junior/Senior Public High School was built to replace the existing high school facility that dated back to 1927. Renovations were made to 14,000 square feet of the Dudley Elementary School and updates completed to 24,000 square feet of the community building. Assistance in raising funds for the enhanced school structure came from an \$11.3 million bond that was promoted through a grassroots effort led by "Schoolbuilders" comprised of GIC, Chamber and community volunteers. The bond passed in 2001 and the school project moved forward.

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The new High School offers an Industrial Arts area comprised of two shops and two classrooms as well as a CAD lab. The two-story Academic area is composed of an office suite, foods lab, media center; six computer, three science, and two business labs; a distance learning lab, and 18 general purpose classrooms. The 512 seat Performing Arts Center, deemed the heart of the project, offers large band and vocal classrooms and an Arts area complete with production and display areas, natural light and a separate kiln room. A multi purpose room adjoined by a 1,100 seat auxiliary gymnasium makes up the Activities area. Included in the project was the demolition of the existing Junior/Senior High School including the removal of asbestos and the addition of 350 parking stalls. Additionally, an eight classroom addition was constructed at Dudley Elementary to replace a portable third grade building. These classrooms house Speech, Title I and the High Abilities programs. The renovation side of the project brought needed upgrades to Dudley Elementary's mechanical and fire safety systems to meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. Mechanical system upgrades as well as the removal of asbestos were also performed on the community building along with the conversion of classrooms into locker rooms and the upgrading of existing locker rooms.

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