

Out with the old ...



and in with the new.



Magoffin County gets new health department

By Katherine Belcher
Public Information Coordinator

A dream more than 10 years in the making became a reality on Friday as the residents of Magoffin County turned out in force to celebrate the opening of a new health department in Salyersville, Ky., on Friday.

More than 250 people waited in line for a chance to tour the facility and hear about the long, hard journey that brought the project to fruition. For a community without a hospital and struggling with a lack of medical professionals, it was a special day indeed.

“This is great compared to what we had. Our people deserve this, our community deserves this type of facility,” said Dr. Charles Hardin, a physician who sits on the health department board and also serves as Magoffin County Judge-Executive. “This is a perfect example of what can happen when federal, state and local governments listen and do what the citizens want. It’s wonderful to look at my colleagues and have them say, ‘They’ve got the best facility in the area.’”

Moving the health department from its old, outdated and inadequate facility to a new building that will improve and expand services was the brainchild of Bertie Salyer, Public Health Director for Magoffin County. The former health department building is 47 years old and unable to adequately meet the needs of the community. The new building will consolidate operations into a single location and expand services to the community.

“This facility was worth waiting on. The vision



RD State Director Tom Fern, center, opens the new facility with Dr. William Hacker, State Commissioner of Public Health and Bertie Salyer, Magoffin County Public Health Director.

came from the vision of the staff of the health department,” said Salyer. “There are so many people responsible for making this project a reality ... we came together as a community.”

With the new facility complete, county officials expect patient volumes to expand by 25 percent. The building will provide improved service for 4,000 active patients and increased access to care for 1,000 additional patients.

The project will create as many as nine new positions within the building, which will house a clinic, health education center, office space and records storage. In addition to medical services, the new health department will offer services for disaster response, those who are

indigent and early childhood development.

Although she had a lot of help over the years from many others in the community, those who work directly with Salyer say she was the driving force behind the project and made it happen.

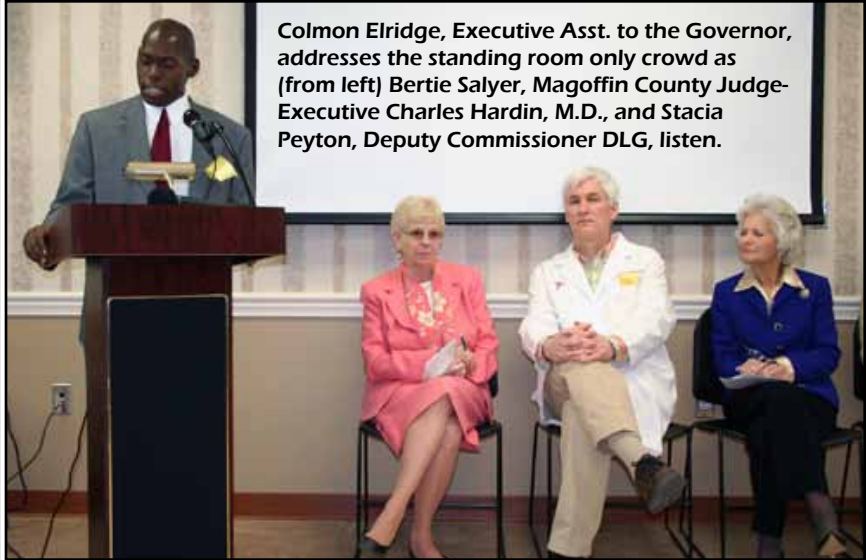
Sandy Runyon, Director for the Big Sandy Area Development District, worked with Salyer and the health department’s board members to secure the \$2.8 million needed to fund the project.

Money for the project came in the form of a Rural Development (RD) Rural Housing Service (RHS) Loan for \$883,500 and grant for \$100,000. An additional \$1.85 million dollars came from additional funding sources, including an applicant contribution of \$350,000.

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Hundreds lined up for a look at the new facility.



Colmon Elridge, Executive Asst. to the Governor, addresses the standing room only crowd as (from left) Bertie Salyer, Magoffin County Judge-Executive Charles Hardin, M.D., and Stacia Peyton, Deputy Commissioner DLG, listen.

“There’s no project that could better serve more people for a better cause,” said Runyon. “Bertie K (Salyer) is persistent, but in a good way. She doesn’t let you forget there’s a need to be filled. This dream would not have happened had it not been for Bertie Salyer.”

Tom Fern, State Director for Rural Development in Kentucky, congratulated Salyer, health department board members and community leaders for their hard work, cooperation and persistence in seeing this project completed.

“Our mission is to help provide quality health care to people in rural communities,” said Fern. “It takes everyone working together in concert to make great things happen. I look forward to helping you with great projects in the future.”

USDA Rural Development administers and manages

more than 40 housing, business, and community infrastructure and facility programs through a network of 6,100 employees located in 500 national, state and local offices.

These programs are designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America. Rural Development has an existing portfolio of more than \$130 billion in loans and loan guarantees.

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