

Duncan Wing Wows Gathering of Close to 1,000: Alton Memorial Hospital Celebrates Ribbon Cutting for New Patient Wing

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(Alton, IL) – The weather was perfect March 10, but almost 1,000 people at Alton Memorial Hospital that day preferred to be indoors. That’s because they wanted to get a long look at the Duncan Wing, the 89,000-square-foot bed tower that celebrated its grand opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The beauty of the building’s exterior has been apparent to anyone who has visited the AMH campus during the past year. On March 10, however, the public was welcomed inside for the first time as the Duncan Wing prepared for its first patients just a few days later.

“The Duncan Wing is absolutely stunning,” said Paul Lauschke, chairman of the Alton Memorial Health Services Foundation. “Anybody you talk to on the street will say that. When you come up the driveway it is just the most beautiful building. And now everyone sees how beautiful it is inside.”

But it’s more than just looks. The Duncan Wing has 76 private inpatient rooms equipped with the latest patient care technology. The hospital’s Surgical Care Unit (12 beds), Intermediate Care Unit (32 beds) and Medical Care Unit (32 beds) will be moved into the new wing by the end of March. Six observation rooms will also be available on the ground floor. Each room is geometrically set up to enhance patient safety, including fewer steps to the bathroom and patient visibility to nurses in the hallway.

Patient lifts are available in every inpatient room and Patient Touch Technology, the very latest in patient education, will be available to patients at every bedside. The educational tool is unique to every patient and can be used by simply touching a computer screen to receive specific information on a medical condition as well as information about area weather, restaurants and hotels.

“This is a very important day for BJC and for Alton Memorial Hospital,” said Steve Lipstein, CEO and president of BJC. “The Duncan Wing includes just about everything we know about health care at BJC. I applaud everyone at Alton Memorial who worked so hard to make this day possible.”

AMH President Dave Braasch, who has worked at the hospital for 30 years and has been president since 2007, said the Duncan Wing is the continuation of a legacy that began when Eunice Smith and her sister, Ellen Hatch, provided the land for the original hospital in the 1930s.

“The Duncan family continues the promise of the Smith family for providing the best health care in the area,” Braasch said. “Health care is certainly different now than it was 70 years ago. But it boils down to people taking care of people. That’s the history of Alton Memorial Hospital and that’s the future of Alton Memorial Hospital. I thank everyone for being here to celebrate both our past and our future.”

Alton Mayor Tom Hoechst thanked AMH and BJC for providing so many construction jobs during the past two years and also pointed out that AMH is among the city’s largest employers.

“When people consider moving to a community they look at the crime rate, the schools and health care,” Hoechst said. “The Duncan Wing ensures that Alton has a facility that should attract the best physicians.”

When AMH held its groundbreaking ceremony on Jan. 25, 2008, many in the community and even some employees had a hard time picturing exactly how the new wing was going to fit on the campus. Now they can hardly remember how things looked before the Duncan Wing.

“It’s unbelievable that was only two years ago,” said Sandra Van Trease, BJC group president. &