VANCOUVER BUSINESS JOURNAL
The Key to Southwest Washington Business
LOCALLY OWNED & OPERATED | APRIL 8, 2011 | VOL. 17. ISSUE 14 | $2.50

Hospice agency planning new facility in Vancouver

Salmon Creek project to provide construction and health care jobs

BY NICHOLAS SHANNON KULMAC | VBJ

Community Home Health & Hospice (CHHH), a community-based nonprofit agency that serves Washington and Oregon families, is just months away from breaking ground on a new, larger facility in Vancouver.

At 136th Circle and Salmon Creek Avenue, the new facility will include space for existing clinical staff who currently visit patients in their home, a ten-bed in-patient hospice facility, support center, administration offices and a memorial garden.

CHHH Community Relations Director Marykay Morelli said the project is needed to keep up with the agency's rapid growth.

"Over the past six years our services in Clark County have increased by more than 500 percent," said Morelli. "We also know that the primary population we serve (70+ years old) in Clark County is projected to double in size between 2010 and 2030. So we're definitely expanding to meet the growing need for our services."

CHHH has been operating out of a leased space since 1988. That will all change once the new facility is finished at the end of next year.

"We recognized that now is an opportune time to go from leasing to owning," explained Morelli. "You look at real estate prices and the cost of money... it's an investment and pays off in the long run."

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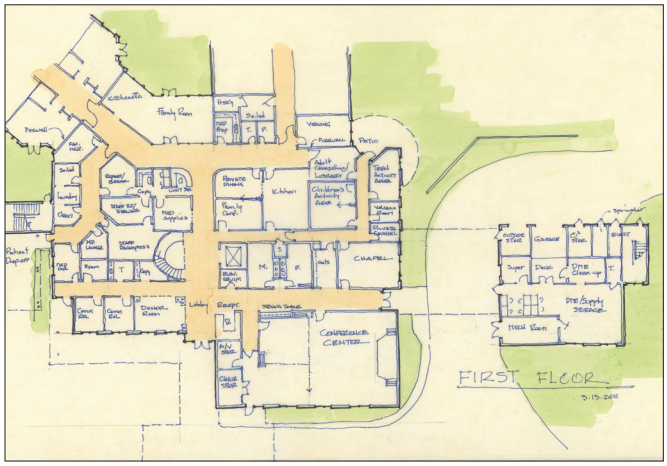
>
> Marykay Morelli, Community Home Health & Hospice community relations director



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A "first floor" layout of Community Home Health & Hospice's new facility.

According to Morelli, a key factor in CHHH's decision to move forward with construction of a new facility, was the county's development fee holiday, which was passed by commissioners last fall in an effort to promote economic activity.

"The fee holiday was a critical factor," she said. "We are very grateful and appreciate the commissioners for doing that. It's definitely stimulus."

Morelli said the project will create 70-80 construction jobs (beginning in January) and roughly 30 health care jobs; it's projected to have a total economic impact of $1.5 million this year and $4.6 million in 2012.

"Its really a win for the community in terms of jobs," she said. VBJ