

On the Cusp of Construction

Deschutes Rim Clinic Foundation Board

The final pieces are falling into place. In August, construction on the new Deschutes Rim Health Clinic will start. Around the same time, the ceremony to celebrate ground-breaking will take place. We will soon have an owner's rep to oversee construction, local engineers are at the ready to provide advice, and the financing plan will soon be in place to give the green light to GO. Information on the ground-breaking and construction can be found on the Deschutes Rim Clinic Foundation website: www.deschutesrimclinicfoundation.org. An email to info.drcfoundation@gmail.com is a good way to get your questions answered.

As with all plans, things don't always go as you would like them to. The re-building of 'YOUR Community Clinic' has been a long time coming. Five or six years ago, the dream became a vision. Four years ago, the vision became a true goal as the financial foundation was set. In between then and now, a lot can and did happen.

Staffing changes, board changes, provider resignations, departures and deaths, a pandemic panic, illness, fiscal slippage, opposition, overworked staff and board, and lengthy stalls created stumbling blocks, pot holes and rough patches along the way. Today we are on the cusp of constructing an expanded, state-of-the-art medical clinic for YOU, the people of South Wasco County and beyond, to better meet your health care needs now and long into the future.

Our architect and contractor, hired in 2018, stayed with us and did the clinic redesign to reduce the footprint and cost. Our capital campaign consultants became like family, providing support, strategic guidance, and writing grants. Our long-time supporters came through with their pledges and donations. Key members of the Board of Directors and clinic staff persevered through all the challenges. And, additional key staff were put into place.

Our fellow health care provider to the north, Mid-Columbia Medical Center, provided telehealth health care through the COVID crisis. Our other health care partner, Mid-Columbia Center for Living, was the source of our once-a-week provider during a critical period in 2020. Deschutes Rim Health Clinic and MCMC continue to explore additional ways to support, strengthen, and synergize each other's health care services for Wasco County. A school-based-health clinic will become a reality this fall as providers are being arranged and the school begins its remodel. Behavioral health services will be a key component to the school clinic. One Community Health will assist with meeting that great health care need.

A new Board is in place with four strong members: Sue Knapp, Jim Holycross, Andrew Houck, and Laura Taylor. Laura joined us to fill the vacancy of one of two vacant positions. The new chair is Sue Knapp; Jim Holycross remains the vice-chair, and Laura Taylor is the new secretary. We are still recruiting for one more board member to join our team and be a part of our exciting future. We wish Dennis Beechler, our past chair and long-time board member, best of health and happiness as he pursues other adventures. And we thank him profusely for all that he has done for the White River Health District and Deschutes Rim Health Clinic.

Sue brings strong leadership and technical skills to the chair position and has been instrumentally involved in coordinating the various aspects to the start of construction, as well as tackling all the other

foundation-related tasks. Dr. Mike Pendleton is spearheading the school-based health clinic and taking the lead on cementing a partnership with MCMC. Patient numbers and satisfaction continue to rise with the quality and charismatic care of our FNP, Madeleine Lawrence. Our new Executive Administrative Assistant, Tiah Mayhew, will bring administrative support to a new level. And, all staff are working well together as an enthusiastic, cohesive, and caring health care team.

We remain positive and are positioned well to expand services, strengthen partnerships, and secure certification as a 'rural health clinic'. All of which will greatly benefit all of South Wasco County, and neighboring areas.