

Hospital remains on schedule for early 2010 opening

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Tucked behind a family of trees that lines the eastern part of FM 2499 is the gradual progression of one of Flower Mound's most anticipated developments.

Presbyterian Hospital of Flower Mound will be one of the centerpieces for the River Walk at Central Park.

Cindy Slaydon, senior vice president of clinical operations and development for Texas Health Partners, said construction of the hospital is on schedule to open at the end of the first quarter of 2010. Wendell Watson, director of public relations for Texas Health Resources, said the project is more than halfway complete.

Among the components that have been completed are the basic site work including paving and fire lanes, foundation, steel erection, floor decking and concrete.

Currently, the drywall is being installed, as well as the ductwork.

The hospital is on schedule to be climate controlled and air conditioned in October, which is also when permanent power is expected to be available. Once the building is air conditioned, the facility's interior work will begin.

Slaydon said frequent rain, especially in the early part of the summer, made construction tricky.

"We've had tornadic-type activity, we've had I don't know how many days of rain, but we're still on schedule for the first quarter of 2010," Slaydon said. "We've had some issues with the rain, so we've had to adjust our schedule. What was interesting was that it would rain for two days, then we'd get it dry, then it would rain again. So it was this intermittent stuff that kept our schedule fluctuating. Fortunately, we've been able to bring enough manpower on to continue with the schedule and continue working pretty aggressively."

While many projects in the country have been affected by the economy, Slaydon said the hospital hasn't been one of them.

"The economy has actually helped us some because of our scheduling issues with the

rain," Slaydon said. "We've been able to mobilize more subcontractors because the economy has shifted, and there aren't as many projects going on. Whereas in the past, we might have had trouble mobilizing the number of staff to make up for the number of days of rain."

Slaydon said the economy has also helped in terms of purchasing products at a lower price.

"It's all about timing, because if it had been early on in the project and we had not finalized the funding and everything that was necessary, we could have had some problems," Slaydon said.

The hospital will feature 103 patient rooms, though the building can increase to more than 200 rooms. It will also include an emergency department and a wide range of medical services, including services for women and children.

The hospital is expected to provide between 500 and 600 jobs by its third year of operation, and it is the first to be constructed of several components of the River Walk at Central Park, a 158-acre project that is expected to include a hospital, townhomes, a hotel, restaurants, retail and more.

The site plan for the River Walk was approved by the Flower Mound Town Council in August of 2008.

"The town has really exceeded our expectations as to how quickly they turned things around and how much manpower they have put on this to make sure we meet our timeline on this," Slaydon said. "They've been very open to working with us one-on-one and as a group. I can't say enough about the town and their support for getting this facility open. Especially considering this is the first one they've done."