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HEALTH

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Smooth sailing so far for new hospital

Scottsdale's third hospital opened Nov. 5 amid much hoopla.

Instantly, Scottsdale Healthcare Thompson Peak became the city's smallest hospital (room for 64 beds, compared to Scottsdale Healthcare Shea's 400), and the only one that has a former hotel executive in charge of its meals and hospitality.



KATE
NOLAN

Other than that, its resemblance to a boutique hotel is only incidental.

The executive who runs the new hospital, Jean Knoedler, reports things are going so well that she was able to take a brief vacation, during which she stayed home in Scottsdale with her feet up.

Now she's back and recently gave me a generally glowing update on the institution.

According to Knoedler, the community has been knocked out by the new imaging center, which features audio and visual entertainment while CT and MRI scans are done.

"One guy was at the hospital at 6:45 a.m. opening day to get an MRI," she said.

Patients keep staff busy

All areas have been busy, but the emergency room has exceeded staff expectations.

In November, 700 patients came in for emergency care.

"If things continue at the current rate, we will see more than 1,000 emergency patients in December," she said a few days before Christmas.

The helipad has been used only once — to ferry a seriously injured patient to the higher-level trauma unit at Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn.

"We also have an ambulance here at all times, in case we have to move a patient quickly to Shea or Osborn. Often, it's children who have to be ad-



DANA FELTHAUSER/THE REPUBLIC

Judy Corkett of Phoenix looks over the surgical equipment at an open house at Thompson Peak Hospital, which opened in November.

mitted at Shea," she said. (The new hospital doesn't have its own pediatric unit, but treats children in its emergency room.)

"Sometimes, it's just as quick to go by ambulance. It's better for our neighbors, too," she said, noting earlier noise concerns that community members expressed.

Being neighborly a goal

Most rough spots with the community were eliminated before the opening, but Knoedler said she still has promises to keep.

"The traffic light at Scottsdale Healthcare Drive and Thompson Peak Parkway — we're working with the city on it and hope to have it completed by the end of January. We're keeping our fingers crossed," she said. So far, there's no snag, just the normal process of getting easements and paperwork in order.

A road extension to create a hospi-

tal entrance from Scottsdale Road to 73rd Street is still in planning stages, but is expected to be completed by the end of February.

Right now, Knoedler is gearing up for the January opening of a joint replacement clinic.

Then there's that other matter.

Events dictate staffing

Her facility is a tee-shot from where the FBR Open will be played Jan. 28 through Feb. 3 at the TPC Scottsdale. The area also will be rocking from Scottsdale events surrounding the Feb. 3 Super Bowl in Glendale.

"There are certain times when we will put more staff on," she said. "This is one period we will be ready to see anybody who comes through the door. We're watching very closely to see what the needs will be."

So far, she has hired 320 employees and is increasing the roster every two weeks to be ready for area activities,

Scottsdale Healthcare Thompson Peak

Scottsdale's third hospital opened Nov. 5 for patient care. Planned since 1995, the \$98 million structure in the Grayhawk community expected to clock more than 1,000 emergency visits in December. Area road improvements are expected to be completed in February.

Find it: The hospital is north of Loop 101, east of Scottsdale Road, at 7400 E. Thompson Peak Parkway, Scottsdale, www.shc.org, 480-324-7000.

By the numbers

400: lab tests conducted per day.

200: surgeries since opening day, Nov. 5.

800: emergency patients in November.

1,000+: expected emergency patients in December.

320: fulltime employees now.

440: fulltime employees when hospital is ramped up and using all 64 beds.

32: inpatient beds now in use.

64: beds expected to be in use by April.

as well as the increased patient load the new joint center will bring.

"It's so rewarding to open a new hospital. You really make it your own," said Knoedler, who previously opened a new hospital in Indiana. "We have about 100 volunteers, and they feel the same way."

What's next for her?

"This is the second hospital I've opened. I've already told them I don't want to open another one," she said. "At least not this year."