

Governor: Hospital is 'great anchor' for community

By Robert Galbreath
rgalbreath@pinedaleroundup.com

PINEDALE – Gov. Mark Gordon expressed optimism for the Sublette County Hospital District's (SCHD) critical access hospital and long-term care facility during a visit to the Pinedale Clinic on Thursday, July 15.

The governor reviewed architectural renderings of the health-care campus slated for construction this September on top of the hill adjacent to the Pinedale Clinic.

The century-long journey to build a hospital in Sublette County became a reality when the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved the hospital district's \$32-million loan application on June 28.

"When I was (state) treasurer back in 2012, I had people visiting my office saying we need to get (the critical access hospital) done," Gordon told the Roundup. "It's taken awhile and here we are. This is great and exciting."

Gordon credited cooperation between the SCHD, local entities and the wider community for bringing the hospital project one step closer to fruition.

"I think a lot of people have put quite a bit of thought into this project," he said. "Whenever a community makes a decision like this, there is a lot of weighing back and forth and dialogue that happens. It makes the proposal better."

Months of work carried out by SCHD administration and staff to prepare the USDA loan application, along with the selection of Star Valley Health as the district's managing partner, boosted the governor's confidence in the project.

"Making sure the project is financially stable is not an easy task to do," Gordon said. "Affiliating with the Star Valley hospital system gives everybody a little more comfort that this is going to be a sustainable, viable



ROBERT GALBREATH PHOTOS

Gov. Mark Gordon, center, meets Mary Said, RN, during his June 28 visit to the Pinedale Clinic. Also pictured, from left, are Bill Kluck, EMS director, Dr. Buck Wallace, Kayla Bowers, director of radiology, and Vicky Marshall, director of nursing.

hospital in the future."

A new model for medicine

Gov. Gordon emphasized the hospital's potential for expanded health care services at the local level, calling the project a "new model for medicine."

"Wyoming is being nibbled away at from neighboring states," he told the Roundup. "We have clinics and hospitals being bought up and affiliated with (outside entities). For the people of Wyoming, that becomes a challenge for medical care because you have to travel somewhere else, put yourself up in a hotel. We know how much inflation is hurting everybody's pocket these days."

The ability for a patient to remain close to home, near family and friends, improves medical outcomes, Gordon added, particularly when Wyoming's harsh winters make the 100-mile trip to the nearest hospital a life or death journey.

"Putting somebody in a helicopter or fixed-wing to try to fly them somewhere in bad weather conditions puts everyone at risk," Gordon said. "Having a facility like this is going to be a great anchor for the community."

A hospital plays a key role in creating economic opportunities in the region, Gordon explained.

"If you're going to have economic development, if you're going to hold the core of a community together and make it attractive, you need medical care," he said. "As we see people wanting to relocate businesses to places like Wyoming, a hospital just makes Pinedale and Sublette County much, much more attractive."

During the governor's visit, Mike Hunsaker, chief operating officer for the SCHD and Star Valley Health, thanked the Sublette County Board of Commissioners for its support.

In February 2020, the commissioners pledged up to \$20 million to replace the aging Sublette Center with a new facility. The commissioners' motion encouraged movement toward an agreement between the SCHD and Sublette Center that will place care under one umbrella.

Commissioner Tom Noble credited a series of workshops in 2020 for "bringing the county together."

The county, Sublette County Rural Health Care District, Sublette Center and former Roundup editor Holly Dabb organized the meetings with Dr. Bernadine Craft serving as moderator.



Gov. Mark Gordon, third from left, examines architectural plans for the critical access hospital and long-term care facility during his visit to the Pinedale Clinic on June 28. Also pictured, from left, are county commissioner Tom Noble, Kari DeWitt, SCHD public relations director, Tonia Hoffman, chairwoman of the SCHD Board of Trustees and Dave Doorn, SCHD administrator.

 Sublette County Hospital District

Sublette County Health Critical Access Hospital and Long Term Care Facility – Pre-Bid Meeting

Monday July 25, 2022 at 2PM

Visit www.sublettehospitaldistrict.org for the three different ways to join the meeting!



Chris McNamara - Estimator
Layton Construction

cmcnamara@laytonconstruction.com
801-568-9090



RE-ELECT 

CARRIE LONG
Sublette County Clerk

- 9 Years experience in the Sublette County Clerk's office.
- 4 Years as Sublette County Clerk.
- Wyoming Licensed CPA
- Committed to public Service

Keep Stability and Continuity in the County Clerk's Office

307-231-0415 carrielong81@yahoo.com

Paid for by Carrie Long