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Platte Valley Medical Center expected to lift local economy

By John Rebchook, Rocky Mountain News
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The \$138 million Platte Valley Medical Center opening next month in Brighton is being viewed as an incubator for jobs and economic development.

"What is good for the health center is good for the local economy," said John Hicks, president and CEO of the hospital.

Jobs created in the industry pay an average of \$29 per hour, he said.

The work force at the existing hospital, which is slated for other uses, has been growing at about 15 percent a year.

The hospital, which opens July 10, already is sparking interest in bringing medical offices to Stan Kroenke's Prairie Center project near the new hospital at 1600 Prairie Center Parkway, said Manuel Esquibel, Brighton's assistant city manager.

The Prairie Center, owned by Kroenke's THF Realty, covers almost 2,000 acres. Kroenke also owns the Pepsi Center, the Colorado Avalanche and the Denver Nuggets.

"At first, they were going to do mostly retail around there, but now THF is talking with the hospital (about) what is best use for the land around it," Esquibel said.

The new center is being designed by Denver-based Fentress Bradburn Architects.

Although it will not be a LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, building, it will have some "green" elements, Hicks said.

"We decided not to seek LEED certification because that would have cost \$1.5 million to \$2 million, and we decided to use that money for health care investments instead," Hicks said.

One of the technological highlights will be the first MRI machine in North America by Toshiba. Toshiba will use it as a showcase.

Hicks said that the hospital wanted the latest in technology, and Toshiba liked Brighton because of its central location in the U.S. and its proximity to Denver International Airport.

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Platte Valley Medical Center ©

A rainbow arcs over the entrance to the \$138 million Platte Valley Medical Center slated to open July 10 in Brighton.

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