Construction underway of new cardiac and pulmonary rehab center at Bristol Hospital

By JUSTIN MUSZYNSKI

BRISTOL — Construction is underway at Bristol Hospital for a new cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation center that will honor the late Bernie Guida, most often recognized for his work with his family's business, Guida's Dairy based in New Britain.

The official name of the new unit will be The Bernie Guida Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehabilitation Center and is expected to be completed late this year or early 2014.

"It's a legacy left by the late Bernie Guida," said Eva Wickwire, assistant vice president and chief development officer at Bristol Hospital. "He was very passionate about the cardiac rehab program here at Bristol Hospital and he wanted to ensure that the patients that came after him to use the program had the very best."

The site of the center will be at the same spot as the former cardiac rehab center which has been demolished.

"Right now the framing is going up," said Wickwire.

Phyllis Guida, Bernie's surviving wife, recently visited the construction site to monitor the progress. Bernie passed away in 2009 at the age of 75 due to complications from diabetes.

"My husband had been a heart patient and was operated on and he needed the therapy that Bristol Hospital offered," said Guida, a Bristol resident. "He was operated on in St. Francis and chose to come to Bristol for rehab because this was his hospital. He really thought a lot

"He decided that he wanted the center to be bigger and nicer and after he died we donated \$100,000 to help," said Guida.

Wickwire said that the hospital is more than grateful for the Guida family providing the lead, naming gift and added that Justin Muszynski can be reached at (860) not been for its generosity.

"Phyllis Guida has been instrumental in ensuring that this project goes on and we're honored to have her family's involvement," said Wickwire.

The project, once completed, will cost approximately \$500,000, according to Wickwire. Other events that contributed to the center include the annual hospital ball, its golf tournament and wine tasting.

"It's so nice to see how the community can come together and create something that will help patients," Wickwire said.

The new cardiac center will be much more spacious than the old one totaling 3,000 square-feet and will feature brand-new exercise equipment including treadmills and stationary bikes. Wickwire stressed the importance of cardiac and pulmonary patients rebuilding their strength and how this center will only enhance their ability to do that.

"It will be more comfortable and much more conducive to exercise and do one's rehab in a more healing environment," said Wickwire

Patients will be monitored carefully by the staff during their rehab that will look at things closely such as their vitals to assure that they are exerting themselves in a manner that is appropriate given their individual condition.

The entrance from the rear-parking lot is also being redone as part of this project to make it more "user-friendly."

"I'm sure it's going to be beautiful," said Guida. "I saw the blueprints and it's really going to be great. They've got it laid out really nicely.'

"It means so much to me because the town and the hospital meant so much to him," said Guida. "He couldn't say enough good things about Bristol Hospital and they were always great to him."

the venture might not be possible had it 584-0501, ext. 7250, or jmuszynski@bristolpress.com.

Photo courtesy of Bristol Hospital

Phyllis Guida, accompanied by Paul Smith, director of facilities, and Jeanot Pelletier, senior project manager takes a tour of the construction site.



