Construction of the new West Feliciana Hospital is moving along well ahead of schedule and Superintendent Max McCray said with a little luck and some good weather, the construction phase of the project should be completed by late April or early May.

“ We’re running ahead of the contract schedule, but we’re running behind on my schedule which is a little more ambitious,” said McCray, who has been with the contractor, Stuart and Company, for 24 years and lives in Folsom. “Rain is killing me on the outside schedule, but the inside schedule is moving pretty good.”

The $27.7 million, 53,000-square-foot hospital building is nearly three times the size of the current hospital and takes advantage of West Feliciana’s natural beauty. Designed for 21st century healthcare, it will utilize state-of-the-art technology, with expanded emergency room capabilities, imaging, laboratory and specialty departments along with 12 comfortable in-patient rooms.

“This whole building is the best looking building Stuart and Company has ever built,” McCray said. It’s also the largest project his company has ever tackled.

Finishing touches are being made on the outside of the building and all of the glass is in place. This includes a window with a large hummingbird in the chapel and the signature glass tower in the atrium, which features a beautiful tree etching.

McCray said he’s waiting on final landscaping plans to be approved before his crews can lay asphalt for the parking lots and driveways surrounding the building.

Inside, McCray said nearly all of the building’s sheetrock has been hung and 95 percent of the electrical wiring and 80 percent of the plumbing are complete. The building has seven heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) units and they’re all operational. He said they’re currently being used to draw moisture out of the concrete base so crews can begin to install the final flooring in the next couple of weeks.

Most of the walls have received a coat of primer paint and a second coat will be applied. Crews are beginning to put in counters and gradually many of the final finishings will be added.

“This is one beautiful building,” McCray said. “If all goes well, we should be finished by the third or fourth week of April. We’re running a full crew of 85 to 100 men, working six days a week. And, it depends on the weather.”
Construction on your new hospital is making great progress. Every day more walls are being finished, more interior systems are being installed. I believe our new facility will have a huge “WOW!” response from the community when we open this summer.

What can you expect from your new hospital? A 53,000-square-foot facility built to deliver healthcare in the 21st century. You will receive extraordinary care because this facility is spacious with private patient areas for imaging, lab and emergency services and 12 private inpatient rooms. If you are transported by EMS, you will have a special express entrance that will get you to the ER efficiently.

The Emergency Department is an excellent example of the state-of-the-art technology that is designed in the entire hospital. A communication and monitoring panel is in each room so physicians can observe their patients’ progress ensure a quick diagnosis and effective treatment.

The new imaging equipment will offer a level of technology that gives our hospital the most current diagnostic tools. We will have one of only two 128-slice CT (CAT) scanners in the entire Greater Baton Rouge region. This scanner has the highest resolution available in the industry. CT scanners help to detect cancer and other life-threatening diseases. Accuracy and resolution are extremely important for making critical diagnoses.

In addition, we are the first hospital in Louisiana to join the growing National Heart Health Program, a network of facilities that use CT scanners to measure a patient’s calcium in their arteries. This important, low-cost procedure will allow us to measure coronary artery disease, a key early detection tool to help us prevent sudden heart attacks.

We have partnered with Women’s Hospital to offer 3D mammography in our new facility. This is a revolutionary new screening and diagnostic breast imaging tool that improves the early detection of breast cancer. During the 3D part of the exam, an x-ray takes multiple images of tissues in just seconds. We will also be offering endoscopy. A special suite for these procedures is designed for the latest equipment for accurate testing of the gastrointestinal tract as well as other procedures with an emphasis on comfort and privacy.

These are just two examples of our goal to expand the services we provide along with MRI, digital radiology, ultrasound and echocardiograms.

We are able to build this $27.7 million facility with 64 percent of the funding provided by a low-interest loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the additional funding from Investar Bank and our own reserve fund. These funds pay for construction, technology and furnishings.

This facility is designed with future expansion in mind, with the intention of adding more convenient services that will mean less travel time for our citizens. Once the new facility opens, our goal is to offer you the finest health care services we can using state-of-the-art technology in a comfortable, modern facility conveniently close to your home.
Early and accurate diagnosis of breast cancer is the key to a good outcome and when detected early, the five-year survival rate is 98 percent. Current 2D digital mammography is considered the standard of care for detecting breast cancer early, sometimes even before a physical change is noticed.

Thanks to a new partnership with Woman’s Hospital, West Feliciana Hospital’s new hospital will offer the technology that can potentially detect cancer even sooner with 3D mammography. 3D mammography is a new screening and diagnostic tool designed for early breast cancer detection. It is done in conjunction with a traditional 2D digital mammogram.

**What is a 3D mammogram?**

3D mammography is a blend of current and new mammogram technology. This new technology, called breast tomosynthesis, involves the acquisition of more than 120 one-millimeter thin 2D images of each breast. These images are then layered or “sliced” to create a three-dimensional view of the breast tissue.

Clear, precise images are produced with 3D mammography that allows doctors to pinpoint the location of abnormalities with greater accuracy. The 3D mammogram may also find cancers that hide in dense breast tissue, resulting in fewer false negative studies. The frequency of callbacks from routine screening mammograms is reduced when combined with 3D, thus decreasing patient anxiety. As with standard digital mammography, the radiation exposure remains low, and the increased time to perform a 3D mammogram is minimal.

Not only does it offer the most advanced technology, Woman’s also will offer a team of experienced medical professionals to review the results of each mammogram. Under the new agreement, all breast imaging studies are read by two board-certified radiologists and a computer-aided detection system to ensure the highest accuracy possible.

Although mammograms are an excellent way to find most breast cancers when they are small and most curable, they do not detect all breast cancers. As a result, Woman’s has adopted the latest technology to make mammograms as accurate as possible.

Computers can help doctors find abnormal areas on a mammogram by acting as a third set of eyes. With a digital mammogram, the computer displays the picture on a video screen, with markers pointing to areas the radiologist should check more closely. The radiologists use the Computer-Aided Detection (CAD) technique on every mammogram. This multiple mammogram review process provides the most thorough screening available for the highest accuracy possible.
Heart health was focus of annual WFH health fair

West Feliciana Hospital hosted its annual Health Fair on Oct. 29, with this year’s event focusing on heart health.

More than 300 visitors were treated to the Ameriheart heart exhibit, a full-sized walk-through interactive heart, was popular as visitors were able to see how blood flows through the heart chambers.

As usual, the fair featured free health information and demonstrations on heart health, stroke risks, diabetes and healthy nutrition.

A variety of health screenings were also available including vision, hearing, blood pressure, glucose testing, lipid panels, cholesterol, carotid artery and abdominal aorta ultrasounds and prostate-specific antigens.

The hospital partnered with Lifetouch to bring the SmileSafe Kids program to the fair. SmileSafe is a national initiative to keep kids safer as children had their pictures taken for free SmileSafe ID cards for parent to have in case of emergencies.

There was also plenty of food, fun and games and a clown kept the children entertained.
West Feliciana Parish residents are receiving the potentially life-saving benefit of access to helicopter ambulance transportation, thanks to a cooperative partnership between several of the parish’s governmental entities.

For the third year in a row, West Feliciana Hospital, the parish government, parish sheriff’s office and Fire District No.1 have teamed up to provide helicopter ambulance services by purchasing memberships for every family living in the parish. The effective date for the contract with Air Evac Lifeteam was Nov. 1 of last year.

“This is a great partnership for West Feliciana residents and illustrates the importance of cooperation among these different agencies,” said Hospital CEO Lee Chastant. “By pooling our resources to provide this important service, these agencies are being good stewards of the public’s money and at the same time, are able to offer a terrific value for this vital service if an emergency arises.”

Air Evac Lifeteam, headquartered in O’Fallon, Mo., is membership supported and is the largest independently-owned air ambulance service in the country. It’s fleet of helicopters serves as the critical link to improved response time and immediate access to medical care facilities. Air Evac Lifeteam has nearby bases in Rayville and Natchez, Miss., in addition to 132 air medical bases in more than a dozen other states.

“If residents are flown for a life-or-limb threatening emergency by Air Evac Lifeteam out of West Feliciana Parish, they are covered by the Air Evac Lifeteam membership,” said the Natchez Miss.-based company’s membership sales manager Patricia Lozon.

For a $35 upgrade fee, Lozon said West Feliciana residents, when outside the parish, can be covered no matter where their Air Evac Lifeteam flight originates.

Air Evac Lifeteam is part of the AirMedCare Network, America’s largest air medical transport membership network with 2.7 million subscribers, so residents can be covered by more than 260 bases in 32 states with the upgrade. AirMedCare provides emergency access to the highest levels of care. It combines the membership programs of four leading air ambulance operators: Air Evac Lifeteam, REACH, and Med-Trans Corporation.

For more information about upgrading a membership, contact Lozon at (318) 403-4058 or patricia.lozon@airmedcarenetwork.com by email. For more information about Air Evac Lifeteam, visit www.lifeteam.net, or like them on Facebook. For more information about AirMedCare, visit www.airmedcarenetwork.com.
West Feliciana Hospital is the first healthcare facility in Louisiana to join the National Heart Health Program to provide early diagnosis of potentially deadly Coronary Artery Disease.

Leading cardiologists from more than 60 hospitals across the country like UCLA and Cedars Sinai Medical Centers are members of the National Heart Health Program and have developed the world’s most widely implemented and successful early Coronary Artery Disease (CAD) detection program that is considered a medical “game-changer.” This program identifies CAD before the first symptoms, which for nearly 50 percent of people are heart attacks or death. CAD kills more than 450,000 people annually in the U.S., often with little warning.

Dr. Jeff Fine, MS, PhD, from Columbia, S.C. and the national director with the Society for Heart Attack Prevention and Eradication, recently spoke to the West Feliciana Rotary Club where he outlined the importance of early CAD detection using coronary artery calcium scoring. The non-invasive test, which costs about $100, determines “at-risk” patients using calcium scoring with CT scans.

The common CT scans check the arteries of the heart for calcium buildup. A score of 0 means patients are at low risk. A score of 1-99 is considered moderate risk while a score above 100 is considered high risk.

After measuring 82,214 patients over a two-year period, the National Heart Health Program identified 41 percent as “low risk” with a zero calcium score. Thirty-four percent were considered moderate (1-99 score) while 12 percent were considered high risk (100-399). Thirteen percent were at very high risk with scores over 400 and many of those patients went for surgical intervention due to imminent risk of major cardiac events.

“The test will show if you are likely to have a heart attack,” Fine said. “As the calcium score goes up, the chance of an event goes up. You can take a patient-friendly test that places three sucker cup electrodes on your chest. There’s no preparation necessary and no needles. You take one breath, hold it and 30 seconds later, you’re up off the table and we can look at your heart and measure your calcified plaque. It’s a more accurate test.”

West Feliciana Hospital has joined the NHHP network of hospitals and will have one of the region’s most advanced CT scan machines with 128-slice capability. This state-of-the-art diagnostic tool along with new software will allow WFH to offer the 10-minute calcium scoring tests for our patients. This test saves lives, costs around $100 and if blockages are found early, will allow many options for treatment and may prevent heart attacks from occurring.

Calcium scoring is for people without symptoms or known heart disease. Adults aged 45 to 80 that have 1-2 risk factors or more for heart disease such as high blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, family history of heart disease, obesity, tobacco use, etc. are suggest to have the test. Your doctor or the hospital will be able to schedule the test for you.

For more information, visit www.NationalHeartHealth.org.
Charisse Wakeland often finds herself explaining what exactly it is that she does as a licensed occupational therapist with St. Francis Rehabilitation Services, where she’s worked since April of 2016. “The professional name makes you think we help people find a job,” said Wakeland with a smile. “It’s about helping people do the day to day tasks that “occupy” their time.” Actually, occupational therapists (OT) treat people injured, ill or disabled through the therapeutic use of everyday activities. They help patients develop, recover and improve the skills they need for daily living and working. An occupational therapist works with clients to help them achieve their maximal functional potential and satisfy state in life through the use of “purposeful activity or interventions designed to achieve functional outcomes. This in turn promotes health, prevents injuries or disabilities and which develops, improves, sustains or restores the highest possible level of independence.”

Anyone at any stage of life could benefit from Occupational Therapy. For example, Wakeland said for newborns, OT treatment may include integration of developmental reflexes. For school age children, it may involve play, hand writing skills, social developmental, physical strengthening and coordination as well as sensory integration. OT also works with people who have physical disabilities from car injuries, spinal cord injuries, strokes, fractures, carpal tunnel symptoms and shoulder, elbow and hand injuries.

“The biggest question to ask is are you able to complete your activities of daily living, called ADLs?” Wakeland said. “An OT can instruct and teach adaptive techniques to people with disabilities such as one handed dressing techniques for people suffering from hemiplegia from stroke.

“If someone is having trouble with their self-care such as if it takes them longer than usual or they get fatigued or short of breath, I’ll do a physical assessment along with a review of the medical history and design a plan of care with treatment goals with the client input,” said Wakeland. “We’ll design and implement a program to include an overall conditioning and strengthening program. The client will learn energy conservation techniques and correct breathing techniques to utilize when performing self-care activities and homemaking/leisure activities.”

“It is physical rehabilitation as well as adapting activities performed every day, performing them within your limitations and learning to do them differently,” Wakeland said. “We want people to be independent and functional so they can take care of themselves. They gain the self-esteem and confidence that they can do every day activities.

About St. Francis Rehab Services

St. Francis Rehabilitation Services is fully equipped with the industry’s most advanced, state-of-the-art rehabilitation tools and staffed by a professional team of licensed therapists. We offer services to all ages and provide extended hours of operation for patient convenience. Our goal is to minimize patient downtime and return them to maximum functionality. We work closely with your physician to help to restore your functional activity and provide your doctor weekly progress reports to ensure that your customized care plan is progressing as planned.

When you come to St. Francis Rehabilitation Services, our staff is committed to providing you with one on one comprehensive care.
Nixon named to WFH board
Willard Nixon Sr. has been appointed to the WF Hospital Board of commissioners. Nixon, a lifelong resident of West Feliciana, is a graduate of St. Francisville High School and has been employed by Georgia Pacific for 39 years. He is pastor of The Way of Holiness Church in Jackson for 31 years. He and his wife, Shirley, have six children and seven grandchildren. The WF Hospital Service District No.1 is governed by a seven-member board that is appointed by the WF Parish Council.

WFH named a ‘Top Hospital’
For the third straight year, West Feliciana Hospital has been named one of Louisiana Life magazine’s Top Hospitals in Louisiana. The designation is based on queries of patients conducted by Medicare each year and published at medicare.gov. The information is compiled and evaluated by New Orleans-based Louisiana Life and the one-of-a-kind list shows the state’s hospitals according to locality. To qualify for the list, at least 60 percent of the patients queried had to give the hospital a top overall ranking of 9 or 10. These are the top general service hospitals as seen through the eyes of those who have experienced them firsthand – the patients.

Blunt Force Trauma meets Dodgeball
The Blunt Force Trauma team with competitors from West Feliciana Hospital competed in the second annual WF Education Foundation’s Dodgeball Challenge on Sept. 4 at the WF Sports Park. More than $30,000 was raised for the WFEF, to be used toward projects supporting West Feliciana schools. They didn’t win a golden hippo trophy this year, but they had a great time! Pictured (left to right) are: EJ Arceneaux, Cody Brumfield, Jenny Zeringue, Mitchell McGhee, Anita Hidalgo, & Ben Zeringue