Daily Journal • Daily Messenger

Saturday, May 9, 2009

Oconee Medical unveils new patient tower

Family-friendly festival, parade celebrates hospital's expansion



Brett McLaughlin/Staff

Major donors and state and local dignataries were on hand Friday evening for hors d'oeuvres and tours of the new patient tower at Oconee Medical Center.

By BRETT McLAUGHLIN
brett@dailyjm.com

SENECA — The party at Oconee Medical Center (OMC) began in earnest Friday evening as several hundred major donors and dignitaries enjoyed a reception and tours of the new 155-bed patient tower.

The final, and most public, of a three-day festival will take place today.

The Main Event, as today's activities are being billed, is a family festival, that will kick off with a 10 a.m. parade, including every school marching band in the area and then continue with rides, games and children's activities on the lawn in front of the new tower.

Tours will be offered throughout the day and, at 12:30 p.m., there will be a ceremony at which a new plaque will be erected in honor of the county's veterans. That event will take place near the original canopy entrance.

Stage music and concessions, provided by area civic groups, will be available throughout the day.

Friday night, federal, state and local dignitaries sang the praises of the facility, its staff and the thousands of local citizens who donated more than $8 million over the past five years. Of that, $3.75 million has gone toward equipping the new tower.

"I see love every time I walk into this building and see the men and women who treat me like family ... men and women who show God's grace every day of their lives," said U. S. Rep. Gresham Barrett of Westminster.

"Nothing we can do in Columbia can come close to what you have done in supporting this hospital," said State Sen. Thomas Alexander of Walhalla.

"This is an impressive building, but it is the people who work here who are truly impressive," said State Rep. Bill Whitmire.