

# Centegra's Huntley hospital on track for August opening

\$230 million facility is about 95 percent done, Centegra officials say

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Published: Tuesday, Feb. 16, 2016 11:48 p.m. CST

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[HUNTLEY](#) – Rooms originally mocked up with cardboard furnishings soon will be fully functioning medical facilities as Centegra Health System prepares to open the doors to its new hospital in Huntley.

Centegra Hospital – Huntley, the third hospital for McHenry County's largest health care provider, is about 95 percent completed and slated for an August opening, Centegra Chief Executive Officer Michael Eesley said.

The 128-bed facility near the intersection of Algonquin and Haligus roads still has construction workers scattered throughout the facility completing finishing touches, but the bulk of construction of the new facility is complete.

Sheila Senn, Centegra senior vice president and chief operating officer for the Huntley hospital, said furniture and artwork is set to be delivered next month.

Centegra officials say the extensive planning process, which started with cardboard mock-ups in a work room at Centegra Hospital – McHenry and continued [with feedback sessions in the early stages](#) of construction in Huntley, has helped the process move smoothly.

## [PHOTOS: Centegra's Huntley hospital progress at 95-percent mark](#)

Eesley said construction that was originally planned to take 28 months is now scheduled to take 24, and costs are projected to be more than \$3 million less than the \$233 million budget.

"That was very helpful because we got in here and there's not a lot of change orders, not a lot of things happening where we would have to redesign," Eesley said.

The hospital's first floor will be dedicated to emergency services and medical imaging; the second floor will have surgical operations and intensive care units.

The third floor will be dedicated to child labor and delivery, with the fourth and fifth floors providing inpatient care, including cardiac monitoring and a hip and knee replacement center.

Throughout all five floors, rooms will have an innovative design that came through staff input, such as operating rooms where devices hang from the ceiling or private nurseries where mothers can bond with their hospitalized infants.

“Being able to implement those new ideas and new technologies is a huge opportunity,” Senn said. “You don’t have those built-in parameters of the physical space.”

With the physical characteristics of the building mostly in place, officials are now focusing on building the hospital’s culture.

Centegra Senior Vice President of Human Resources Berni Szczepanski said the company is recruiting for about 500 new positions, about 50 percent to 60 percent of which will be filled by current Centegra employees.

Recruiters will have the luxury of being selective: A talent community set up before jobs were posted had more than 1,000 potential applicants in it, Szczepanski said.

The recruiting process began in the fall, and interviews are ongoing. The hiring team will first focus on positions that require more training or are harder to fill, and other positions may be filled closer to early summer.

Szczepanski said Centegra will continue to use the peer interviewing process it has maintained for more than a decade, in which an applicant has a dialogue with four or five potential co-workers before a decision about hiring is made. Eesley points to the process as a main cause of the system’s low turnover.

“That’s proven to be very successful for our retention,” Szczepanski said, adding that the system has about a 94 percent retention rate. “It’s really a combination of the leader plus their peers. The things they’re looking for are really values-driven, in addition to the skills.”

Once the hospital opens, current Centegra staff will simply have to integrate with new hires. Szczepanski said new employees will go through a general orientation as well as one specific to the Huntley hospital and one for their department.

Officials are hoping the upfront work will make for a smooth process once the hospital opens. While they’re hoping that Centegra’s culture will seep into the new hospital, they also want to bring any lessons from the new hospital to the older facilities.

“When we discover ways to be more efficient in the work flow, we’re definitely trying to bring that back to our existing facilities,” Senn said. “Obviously, we want that efficiency, but we’re going to have a lot of staff moving back and forth between the facilities, and we want their work flow to be seamless.”