

# The Healdsburg Tribune

## EDITORIAL

### The heart of our community

It has taken nearly a decade of community-wide determination, visionary leadership and millions in donations to preserve, enhance and expand our Healdsburg District Hospital.

Let us all share in a rousing standing ovation for this momentous accomplishment of community spirit. This includes the major donor families, the Healthcare Foundation leaders, the local physicians, all other care providers and hundreds of community volunteers.

We also include the large majority of voters who supported Measure G in 2004 and the property owners who pay more than \$3 million annually to sustain our hospital.

Again, another big cheer and thank you to one and all. Healdsburg, Windsor and all of northern Sonoma County has a lifesaving institution with a state-of-the-art Patricia and Raymond Chambers Intensive Care Unit, 4,700 square-foot Wetzel Family Emergency Department and a new Kozel Stroke Institute. We have 70 practicing physicians with the hope of attracting more caregivers to our 43-bed comprehensive medical facility.

And, we must add: now that we have built this great community-owned institution we must all continue to support it with our taxes and our generous donations in time and money. We all want our hospital to be there on the day each of us may need it to heal or save a loved one.

The funding and endowment efforts of the Healthcare Foundation of Northern Sonoma County are continuing toward a goal of \$14.5 million. Some 150 donors to date have contributed \$11.5 million to that goal, led by the philanthropy of Raymond and Patricia Chambers, Harry and Maggie Wetzel, Henry and Holly Wendt, Herb and Jane Dwight and Edward and Betty Kozel, Sr. These families have donated a total of \$6 million.

Now comes the continuing challenge for each of us to dig a little deeper, spread the word and nurture the hospital we dreamed of one day having.

Dr. Dave Anderson and Kay Reed continue to lead the Foundation's overall fund raising campaign, also led by new Foundation President Mary Ellen Smith and Executive Director Tobi Ferguson.

A Major Gifts Campaign has been launched under the leadership of John Lloyd, owner of Big John's Market, Mary Johnson, of the hospital staff and Dr. Richard Mucci to attract new individual and business donations in the \$5,000 to \$50,000 range, with no gift too big or too small.

A series of information and orientation meetings are being scheduled and interested persons should contact Ferguson at the Foundation to participate. The telephone number is 473-0583.

There were some very critical early contributions almost 10 years ago that launched the efforts to save the North County's hospital. Some came in seven figures and some were much smaller. To date, they have all been of invaluable importance and all necessary, with more still needed.

The current hospital facility was built in 1972. The building and equipment has suffered many years of delayed maintenance and unfunded modernization. The hospital directly and indirectly supports more than 600 jobs and accounts for a local healthcare economy of about \$100 million.

With continuing changes to Sonoma County's healthcare industry such as the pending closing of Sutter Medical's Santa Rosa hospital, our community's investment in Healdsburg District Hospital will look wiser and wiser as time moves on.

We would have no celebrations today without the incredible generosity of the Wetzels, Wendts, Dwights, Chambers and Kozels. But we can not expect more from them; we must all share whatever we can for the future of the hospital.

Just as it would be unimaginable to consider Healdsburg or Windsor without its high schools and other learning institutions, it should be considered equally unacceptable to not have our community-owned hospital.

Afterall, isn't it the true "heart" of our community?

— Rollie Atkinson