

The Healdsburg Tribune

Hospital breaks ground on ER, dedicates department to Wetzels

Hospital thanks family who gave \$2 million.

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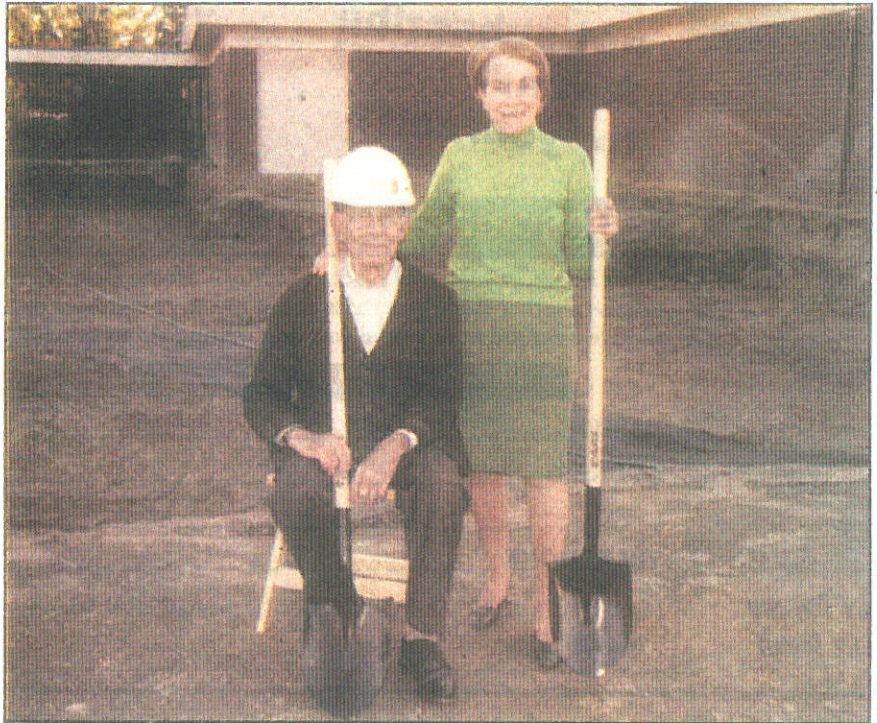
At the official groundbreaking ceremony for Healdsburg District Hospital's new emergency room, many thanks were given to Alexander Valley residents Harry and Maggie Wetzel and family, who recently donated \$2 million to the project.

Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey attended the reception.

"Healdsburg is doing the exact thing communities are going to have to do in the near future to make sure communities have hospitals. Healdsburg and Palm Drive Hospital in Sebastopol are setting the example that it can happen," she said.

Katie Wetzel-Murphy, the daughter of Harry and Maggie, said she was glad to see the hospital moving quickly with the money they received from the donation.

"I am glad to see they're jump-



PHILANTHROPISTS ♦ Harry and Maggie Wetzel recently donated \$2 million to the new Healdsburg District Hospital Emergency Department. They are pictured above at last week's groundbreaking and dedication ceremony on the grounds of the new ER.

PHOTO BY RICK TANG PHOTOGRAPHY

ing right in. We gave the gift in June and here we are at the groundbreaking today. They're very serious about the ER being done."

Wetzel-Murphy hopes the big donation will spark an interest in others to donate to the hospital.

"I hope this thing snowballs to get the whole thing funded," she said.

The new emergency room will cost approximately \$3 million and construction is expected to be completed in March of 2007.

It will be known as the Wetzel Family Emergency Department and improvements will include a centralized nurse's station and state-of-the-art monitoring equipment that can be accessed remotely for Web-based consultations with doctors at other hospitals.

The hospital's CEO Evan Rayner said the Wetzel's donation will be a new opportunity for the hospital.

"It's an opportunity for us to make a change, and a turnaround for the community," he said. "It's

an opportunity for us to go from defense to offense."

Rayner said in the last 10 years, 77 acute hospitals have closed, "yet this hospital will not only continue to survive, it will thrive."

Dr. Hallie Beacham, who recently retired from her Healdsburg medical practice, is now president of the Healthcare Foundation.

"Most people have seen this hospital through some difficult times," she said. "Now you are witnessing the revitalization of the hospital. This ER department has been a dream of so many of us for a long time."

After brief speeches from Rayner, Beacham, Wetzel-Murphy and Hospital District Board President E. J. Neil, the Wetzels were presented with commemorative hard hats and used special shovels to officially break ground on the project.

In an effort to save money on construction costs, the hospital is the first in the state to install a pre-built modular unit. It will be approximately 4,600 square feet.