

## SURVEY RESULTS FROM THE CEO

We didn't know what to expect when we included 5000 survey forms with the first Weems Hospital and Carrabelle Clinic Bulletin mailing in June. How many folks would take the time to complete them and let us know some of their concerns and needs for health care in Franklin County? It didn't take long to find out.

Within hours of the first newsletters hitting mailboxes in Franklin County, the first completed surveys came back. In the next few weeks, the returned questionnaires filled a basket in my office to overflowing. Since each of the nearly 300 replies probably represented a family of at least two persons, we believe we got an opinion sampling from at least 700 Franklin County residents. Here's some of what we learned from you for future planning:

- The most responses came equally from Carrabelle (36.7%) and from Eastpoint and St. George Island (36.7%)
- An overwhelming number of respondents lived in households of 1-2 persons (86.35%)
- Most had no children living with them (89.55%)
- 68.42% answering were ages 61-up
- Most said: for care unavailable in Franklin County, they travel to Tallahassee (61.9%)
- 84.8% are currently seeing, or have seen, a specialist physician
- 87.55% said their specialist was not located in Franklin County
- Most said they visit their specialist quarterly (55.83%)
- The six most listed specialists (visited by this group of respon-

dents) in order of the number of listings are:

Dermatology  
Cardiology  
OB/GYN  
Ophthalmology  
Orthopedic  
Gastroenterology

All narrative comments made on the survey forms have been noted and circulated to medical staff, department heads, and hospital board members for attention and future planning. The survey revealed many "opportunities" for growth and improvement. As CEO, I invite you to phone me anytime to make further suggestions at 653-8853.

We appreciate very much those citizens who took the time and effort to respond to our questions!

**Chuck Colvert, CEO  
George E. Weems Memorial  
Hospital**

## "WHAT'S ALL THE 'BUZZ' ABOUT?" SEE FOR YOURSELF AT NOVEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup> OPEN HOUSE

Weems board member Margie Solomon has been in and around the present Weems hospital for all of its nearly 50-year history. She has witnessed its ups and downs, stalls and starts, and even its move to private management, a name change and back again to county control.

Along with other hospital board members, Solomon believes Weems is entering a very positive period guided by CEO Chuck Colvert and a local governing body under the direction of the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners. "We want everyone to see the many good things that are going on, so we are going to open our doors to all," she said.

The board will unveil some additions and improvements to the hospital at an Open House from 3:00-5:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 16th. Solomon said a number of community people have volunteered to help with the food and "man" information booths at the Open House.

### **A Generous Donor Delivers New Hospital Decor**

Just as most people sweep the floor before company comes, Weems has polished its floors, painted walls, and added new equipment. As part of its makeover, new furniture has been added to the Dallas Shiver Chapel, the Emergency Department Waiting Room and the hospital's front lobby, courtesy of a very generous local resident.

When employees moved the Chapel to a room nearer the Emergency Department, the New Beginnings support group and hospital staff were not satisfied to use the same worn furniture. They set about to see if someone would be willing to donate new furniture for the chapel. Someone was.

Apalachicola resident Harry Arnold came to the hospital to take a look at what was needed. After he had agreed



to supply the furniture for the chapel, he also noted the frayed condition of seating in the Emergency Department Waiting Room and outdated look in the hospital's front lobby. Arnold said he would see that replacement furniture graced these areas, as well.

Visitors to the Open House will see a plaque honoring Arnold, a generous supporter of countless community projects in Franklin County. If you, too, would like to make a contribution to Weems or its soon-to-be Carrabelle Clinic, please contact Ginny Griner, director of human resources. ///

### **FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMISSION**

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Joseph Parrish, Vice Chair  
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Margie Solomon  
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### **CONTACT US**

Phone Number: 653-8853

### **VISIT OUR WEBSITE:**

[www.WeemsMemorial.com](http://www.WeemsMemorial.com)

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& Carrabelle Clinic  
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## **YOU ARE INVITED!**

### **Weems Memorial Hospital's Open House**

*Sponsored by Weems Memorial Hospital's Board*

**Sunday, November 16, 2008**

**3:00-5:00 p.m.**

#### **•Refreshments & Tours**

•Meet Hospital Board Members, Physicians and Staff

•Purchase Franklin Needs, Inc. 2009 Calendars

*to benefit breast cancer awareness*

•Sign up to Volunteer in the Weems Memorial Hospital Auxiliary

## PROGRESS ON WEEMS MEDICAL CENTER EAST

An important project being worked on by the Weems board over the last several months has been getting the wheels in motion to construct an urgent care clinic in Carrabelle. In a special meeting on August 19, the board decided to recommend to the county commission that the firm of Clemons Rutherford & Associates in Tallahassee be engaged to provide architectural services for the project. Clemons Rutherford was one of five firms with a background in hospital construction to apply for the job.

Hospital board member Paul Marxsen from Carrabelle told the governing body at its August 28th meeting that

he had been approached by Carrabelle City Manager John McInnis regarding an interim space to use for the hospital's urgent care clinic until the new clinic is completed.

McInnis has offered the old nursing station in the former Carrabelle School as a temporary location for Weems. McInnis told Marxsen the Franklin County School Board has given the city of Carrabelle use of the facility, which Carrabelle's city government now is using as its home. He said the only rental cost to the hospital for the clinic space would be its prorate share of the utilities. CEO Chuck Colvert visited the space and found

that it could easily encompass two exam rooms and a physician's office as well as a reception room and waiting area. Colvert said he and Dr. Nancy Chorba, an area family physician, have discussed her staffing the clinic at least part of the time.

Having gained county approval, hospital staff plan to open this temporary urgent care clinic in Carrabelle as soon as possible. They also are acquiring medical equipment which can be transferred to the new permanent clinic when it is completed. The clinic will be named the Weems Medical Center East. ///

## WEEMS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL AUXILIARY WANTS VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers! a new service organization is forming in Franklin County, the Weems Memorial Hospital Auxiliary. New life has been breathed into the idea of an auxiliary by the Weems' volunteer support group, New Beginnings.

A few years ago, an indomitable Franklin County woman, Hazel Robinson, with assistance from the Philaco Women's Club, enlisted area women to serve as "pink ladies" in the hospital. Local resident June Dosik remembers donning a "salmon"

colored, short-sleeved jacket each time she signed in for her two-hour stint pushing a magazine and juice cart to patients' rooms. Her tenure was from 2002 to sometime in 2004-2005, when the program ended, largely because Ms. Robinson moved away.

Hospital staff welcomed the ladies, saying it made a difference to patients and their families. In a move to revive this kind of volunteer help, New Beginnings recently invited Amy McDaniel, director

of volunteer services at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital (TMH), to explain how volunteers operated there.

McDaniel talked about a variety of tasks volunteers perform at TMH. She noted those volunteers fill out an application and are interviewed by the director. Volunteers also attend a hospital orientation.

Similarly, the new Weems Memorial Hospital Auxiliary will have a definite structure with officers, a handbook and volunteer job descriptions. Men will be encouraged to join as well as women. Areas of potential service include: patient visitor, admitting, emergency department waiting area, information desk, and book cart.

If you are interested in joining the new auxiliary, please call Ginny Griner, director of human resources at Weems, at 653-8853. A representative from New Beginnings also will be on hand at the hospital's Open House on Nov. 16 to answer questions and give you an application. ///



Margie Solomon, hospital board member, center, talks with volunteers and staff planning Weems Hospital's November 16 Open House.

## IMPROVED RADIOLOGY EQUIPMENT AT WEEMS

Some common themes emerged in the responses to the recent 2008 Weems survey. One comment (or some variation) that popped up over and over again was: "I would like to see up-to-date medical equipment for the hospital." The folks at Weems have been listening. The hospital will show-off some new diagnostic and upgraded equipment at the hospital's Open House on November 16.

Remember the days when your X-ray images were developed on film and you hand carried the film to a radiologist to read? Weems now has new equipment to take an X-ray picture and computerized radiography (CR) to display it. That means your X-ray image is automatically carried to the computer screen on a physician's desk at Weems. It then can be sent to a radiologist's computer screen in another city "in real time." The technology produces a very sharp image, which can be stored on a computer disc.

Another dramatic transformation in radiology at Weems is taking place in the mammography suite which used to be an administrative area. "Out" are all the metal filing cabinets and desk items of an office. "In" are pink walls (surprise!), a plaster ceiling, a creamy new porcelain sink, partition and bench for the dressing area, and feminine touches all around. Of course, the centerpiece in the suite will be a mammogram machine, expected in the next few weeks.

Franklin County Needs, Inc. and Elaine Kozlowsky & Co. have helped realize this dream of having mammogram equipment available to women

in Franklin County. Continued sales of the 2009 calendars they have produced will provide education and transportation for some women who could not otherwise get to a mammogram examination. ///

*The X-ray picture has changed at Weems. The Radiology Department now includes computerized radiography, which lets the physician see your X-ray image on his or her computer screen.*



### Did You Know?

- ◆ Candi Fox, Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) at Weems, recently told the hospital board the average amount of time it takes a Weems patient to go from "ER door to disposition" was just under two hours. Board member Margie Solomon said she knew of people who were traveling to Weems from Gulf County because they said they could "get in and get out" faster than it would take them to drive to Panama City and wait for emergency room care there. Board members expressed a desire for this good news to reach the Franklin County public. ///

- ◆ The industry standard is 75% as it relates to the percentage of patients who come with chest pains to an ER and reach an EKG within 10 minutes of their arrival. Weems has a better-than-industry-standard rate of 86% of patients who reach an EKG within 10 minutes of arrival, she said. ///

- ◆ Weems Hospital will be one of nine rural hospitals in the Florida Panhandle to be connected by an optical fiber network through the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration and the Big Bend Regional Healthcare Information Organization. Once the ten gigabit per second fiber network is built (probably sometime in 2009), the nine hospitals will be connected to health information exchanges in Tallahassee and Pensacola. This will allow large imaging files like MRIs, CT scans, and other digital files to be transmitted securely between the rural hospitals and urban specialty providers in their network. The technology is exciting for rural hospitals like Weems because they will be able to provide better quality of care to their patients through telehealth services and the latest continuing education opportunities. ///

- ◆ Sales tax collections tagged for health care in Franklin County through July 2008 total \$945,767.67. This total puts Weems on track to post 1.5 million dollars in revenue from the tax by the end of 2008. Half of the tax revenue is held by the county for capital improvements like the Carrabelle Urgent Care Clinic and half is used by the hospital for operations. ///