

Hospital frame finished

Watsonville event

marks last girder

Hospitals
Watsonville - Hospital
5-14-96

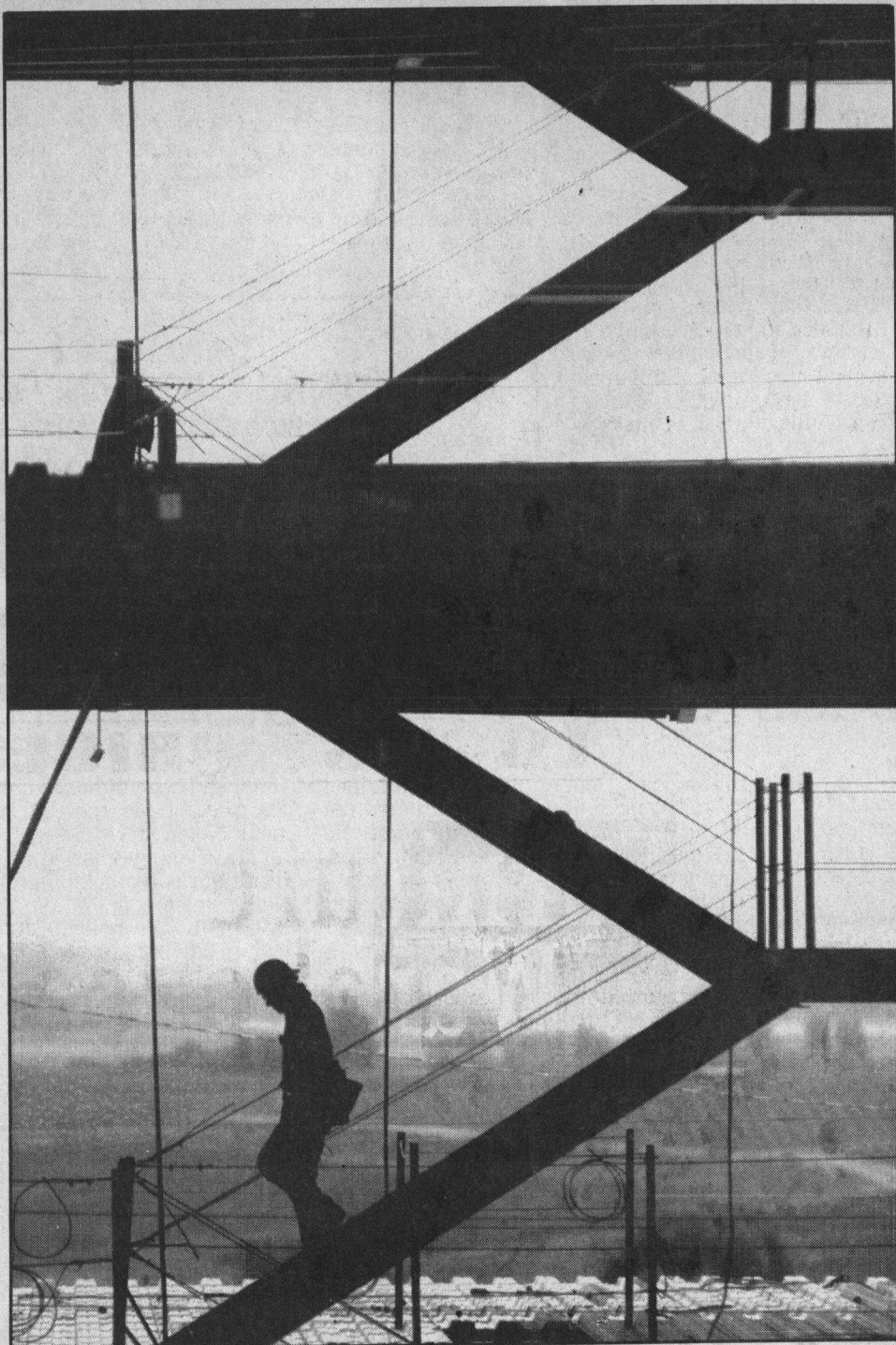
Sentinel staff report

WATSONVILLE — After seven years of planning, the new \$67.7 million expansion of Watsonville Community Hospital took another step toward completion Monday with a "topping out" ceremony at the corner of Airport Boulevard and Nielsen Street.

Over the past five weeks, 95 ironworkers used 120 tons of steel to erect the three-story structure that will house the emergency room, critical care unit, birthing rooms and 100 patient beds. Monday, after administrators, employees, medical staff, community members and volunteers had signed a white-painted steel beam, a crane hoisted the ceremonial beam to the third story where it was bolted in place, completing the \$3.5 million steel portion of the project.

"This is a great moment in our Watsonville Community Hospital history," said John Friel, president and chief operating officer. "Hundreds of people signed the beam, and they'll be part of history."

Friel said construction is on schedule and the hospital will begin readying the new center for patient services at the end of 1997.



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

A construction worker on the steel skeleton of Watsonville Community Hospital is silhouetted against a backdrop of farmland Monday.