

BUSINESS REPORT

Dominican on the move

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THE LARGEST construction project in Santa Cruz County these days is at Dominican Hospital where a multi-million dollar expansion project is well under way.

Currently work is progressing on three specific projects while a fourth bid (for remodeling of sections of the existing hospital) will be held soon.

Largest of the projects is the main hospital expansion which will provide for patient beds, skilled nursing units, surgery facilities, intensive and cardiac care facilities.

It is an \$8.4 million project by the Carl N. Swenson Company as general contractor.

The second project is the 28-bed psychiatric care facility, located across Dominican Way from the main hospital expansion. It will cost about \$2 million and is being built by Bogard Construction.

The third project, adjacent to the psychiatric care building, is a \$700,000 electrical control plant being built by Collins Electric.

The fourth project in the expansion program will be the remodeling of facilities, including the kitchen, in the existing hospital.

Dominican has been a success story every since the Dominican Sisters decided Santa Cruz needed better health care facilities.

It has received extraordinary community support with a fund drive providing more than \$2 million from the people to aid in the expansion program.

Now, like almost all hospitals in California, it faces a tremendous challenge with the changing pace of health care support across the nation.

Not only are major changes forthcoming in the Medicare program for the elderly, but drastic changes have been made in California's Medi-Cal program by the Legislature.

Present indications are that the new changes are going to put additional pressure on the health care providers, principally the hospitals although final details have yet to be announced.

Nevertheless, Dominican is committed to the future with its expensive expansion program which will not only provide more beds for its patients, but also expand the scope of its health care facilities.

A major addition will be the development of the psychiatric ward which will be operated by Dominican in conjunction with the County Mental Health department.

Surgical and testing facilities will be expanded as well as additions to the special care rooms, both cardiac and intensive care.

Dominican is already big business. It employs 819 persons, many of them part-time workers (by choice) or the equivalent of about 550 full-time employees.

The payroll is in excess of \$14 million annually while the hospital's total budget is approaching the \$30 million level.

The importance of the change in the Medicare and Medi-cal programs is emphasized by the fact they now account for about \$14 million in hospital billings.

Because it operates 24 hours every day, Dominican is becoming almost a community within a city. It is developing a sizeable self-support system which will be even more capable when the current construction program is completed sometime in 1984.

The psychiatric facility is scheduled to open in July, 1983.

And like all construction projects, the job at Dominican has some fascinating features.

Besides the exceptional support designed to handle a Richter scale "9" for earthquakes, the pre-pouring of the 17,000 pound exterior wall units is a delight for building fans.

Each pour of cement is designed to cope with an exact schedule controlled by Construction Superintendent Otis Evans to meet infinite curing and handling regulations.

And perhaps the most demanding tests of all is great cooperation from the weatherman.