

The Healdsburg Tribune

Residents get first look at hospital upgrades

New emergency dept. to take patients in weeks

By **KERRIE RUSSELL**
Tribune Editor

Hundreds of north county residents captured a glimpse of the newest addition to Healdsburg District Hospital this Friday and Saturday at events held to showcase the \$4 million Wetzel Family Emergency Department, set to open this month.

Hospital employees, city officials and financial contributors toured the new department at a reception Friday evening when excitement filled the air as the guests looked at the shiny new floors, state-of-the-art technology and private exam rooms.

"It's very exciting. You give this

money and they tell you there's going to be an emergency room, but you don't have a say over what it looks like," said Katie Wetzel Murphy, the daughter of Harry and Maggie Wetzel whose \$2 million donation made the emergency room project a reality.

"But they took the money and truly made this both a very useful and a very attractive place. It makes it even more of an asset to the community. We're thrilled," she said.

The evening was a positive one for Healdsburg District Hospital, which spent years struggling financially before a turnaround and revitalization plan spurred a capital campaign headed by Healthcare Foundation of Northern Sonoma County with a goal of raising \$14.5 million.

Kay Reed was the co-chair of the

campaign, along with longtime Healdsburg physician Dr. David Anderson

"This is really exciting," Reed said. "A couple of years ago we held an open house at the hospital for the public and nobody came. Now, look at this," she said, pointing to the jam-packed halls of the new emergency department.

The foundation has raised \$11.6 of the \$14.5 million goal and Reed said while the progress has been amazing, there are still many projects at the hospital that the foundation needs to raise money for.

"To stay up to date with the other hospitals we need to upgrade our record-keeping and we need new computers to do that. This is one of our special goals, but the money first had to go to pay for the

See HOSPITAL page 7



BRAND NEW ♦ Chief of Nursing Operations Jan Kiely gives Maggie Wetzel a tour through one of the exam rooms at the new Wetzel Family Emergency Department.

PHOTO BY RICK TANG PHOTOGRAPHY'

HOSPITAL ...

Continued from Page 1

emergency department and re-opening the ICU," Reed said.

Reed said she has been a patient in the emergency department twice and her husband had been once, so she knew how big a job it would be to raise money for a new one.

"I was scared half to death to take this job — that's a lot of money to raise," she said. "But we have such good volunteers, it's not one person, it's a great big team."

The new emergency department is a 6,500 square foot building on the east end of the hospital, just off of University Street.

Dr. Bruce Deas, who has taken over as the Emergency Department medical director said the new building is "pretty cool."

"It's incredible," he said. "It's going to be an amazing difference from the old ER. I am awful lucky to be here."

Following speeches from hospital doctors, administrators and elected officials, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held at the new nurse's station.

"It's an interesting circle we're in," said Murphy, who was holding the giant scissors that cut the official ribbon. "Dr. Marguglio was my father's doctor when he had a heart attack and his wonderful treatment kept him alive so he could give this gift," she said.