



## GOING GREEN

### RMH, County Sign Methane Agreement

The Rockingham County Board of Supervisors recently approved a 10-year contract with Rockingham Memorial Hospital to supply landfill-produced methane gas to the new RMH complex. Supervisors voted unanimously to sell the gas at a reduced market rate to the hospital.

It will cost about \$2 million to build the 10-inch-wide pipe and necessary equipment to clean up, dry out and compress the gas, said Warren Heidt, public works director for the county. According to the contract, the county will recover the cost by the end of the decade-long contract.

Construction of the pipe is expected to begin this fall and will take about eight months to complete, Heidt said.

The gas will help power the new hospital's boilers, which are used to sterilize surgical equipment, cook food and heat water, said Dennis Coffman, director, RMH Facilities Planning and Development.



Photo courtesy of Merv Webb

"We expect as much as half of our heating resources in the course of a year to come from this natural gas substitute," Coffman said. "It's one of those rare cases where everybody wins. It's good for the county, it's cheaper for us and it's good for the environment."

Methane gas is being produced by the landfill whether or not RMH or any other business uses it for energy. If it does not go to a business for commercial use, the county must burn it off rather than just let it escape to the atmosphere. The methane will be captured and processed under

strict guidelines and supervision.

The technology used for transporting and using natural gas is very mature and safe. In fact, the equipment on RMH boilers requires only a slight modification to burn methane rather than the standard fuel (natural gas). This modification is due to a lower heat content in methane, not because it is more dangerous.

The county has issued an RFQ (request for qualifications) for work on development of the methane collection and delivery system.

## RMH, Bovis Lend Lease Celebrate 500,000 Safe Construction Hours

RMH and Bovis Lend Lease recently celebrated 500,000 work hours without any lost-time injuries on construction of the new RMH facility.

This achievement means that no employees have missed work time due to injuries suffered on the job.

"This is a big accomplishment," said Gordon "Boney" Jones, general superintendent, Bovis Lend Lease. "Most jobs don't last as long as this one, so we don't ever reach this number of hours without incident. For our crew to work so hard over such a long period of time, without lost-time injuries, is significant."

Bovis Lend Lease, construction manager for the project, has a strong commitment to ensuring workplace safety and requires all workers on the job site to undergo a rigorous safety training program, according to Ray Montaigne, safety manager for the company.

"We strive very hard to have a safe workplace," Montaigne said. "Our motto is, 'Everyone goes home.' At the end of the day, we want every worker to be able to return to his or her family. We tell everyone who comes to work on this site that together we can do it—and we have. Our success to date is the success of everyone here."

Currently there are more than 500 workers on the construction site every day. That number will increase to more than 700 at the height of the project.

Work on the new facility is on schedule for a targeted opening date of mid-2010.



Gordon "Boney" Jones, general superintendent, Bovis Lend Lease, left; Dennis Coffman, director, RMH Facilities Planning and Development, center; and Ray Montaigne, safety manager, Bovis Lend Lease hold a banner proclaiming a Bovis Lend Lease safety motto. To date, more than 520 site workers and nearly 40 RMH employees have completed the rigorous Bovis safety training program.

# Q&A

**Q:** Will RMH have new phone numbers at its new hospital and health campus?

**A:** Yes! In fact, we will have a new, reserved three-digit prefix. We are formulating a plan for the transition process to the new numbering system. We will have a grace period for the rollover of the phone numbers and more information about this will be communicated at a later date.

RMH is working with McKinley Consulting Group Inc. of Fredericksburg, Va., to map out the current and future telecommunications and technology needs of each department in the hospital.

In addition to having new telephone numbers, we are switching telephone system manufacturers and adding an additional vendor. Our new manufacturer will be Cisco Systems Inc. Our current system, NEC Digital PBX, will still be in place to support most offsite locations.

Cisco integrates computers and telephone systems. That means that employees' computers and phones will plug into the same wall jack, explains Roger Dickson, IT integration director, Facilities Planning and Development. The new phone system lays the foundation for employees to have the following capabilities:

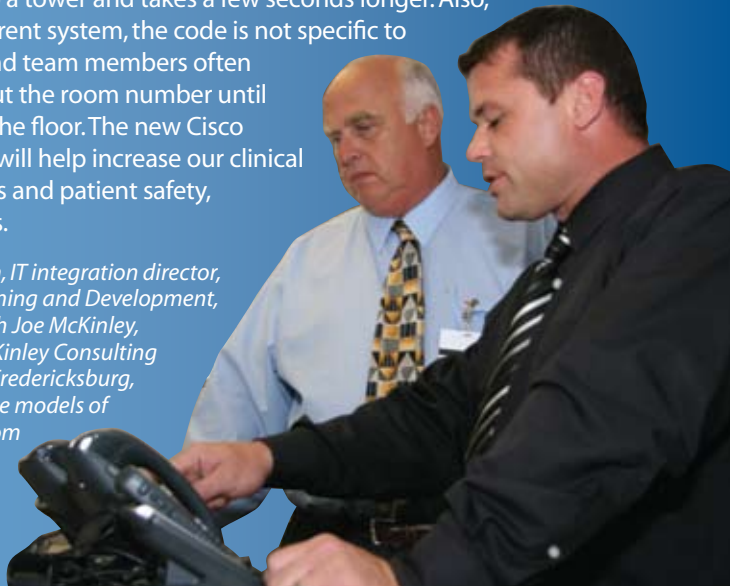
- Check voicemail on computers
- Click on a contact and have computers place the call
- Check e-mail through phones

Because telephones will be uniquely programmed to the user, employees can unplug the phone or computer and re-connect it anywhere in the hospital and the system will still recognize the user's phone number.

Cisco also offers wireless phone capabilities that are strategically planned for use by specific staff in most in-house areas. The wireless phones will allow nurses to see instantly when a patient has pushed the nurse call button and show the room number where the call originated. Clinical staff will also be able to replace in-house pagers with wireless phones, which will show the room number where a code has occurred.

This technology is faster than our current pager system, which sends a signal out to a tower and takes a few seconds longer. Also, with our current system, the code is not specific to the room, and team members often don't find out the room number until they get to the floor. The new Cisco technology will help increase our clinical effectiveness and patient safety, Dickson says.

*Roger Dickson, IT integration director, Facilities Planning and Development, left, works with Joe McKinley, president, McKinley Consulting Group Inc. of Fredericksburg, Va., to evaluate models of telephones from Cisco Systems Inc. to be used in the new hospital.*



## Going UP!



- **Number of elevators at our current facility—17**
- **Number of elevators at our new facility—19 planned (14 to be in use when we open in 2010)**

So wait a minute! Why are there fewer elevators in use when the new building opens?

In our current facility, we have multiple buildings connected by corridors and walkways. Each building requires an elevator, so we need more elevators. Since we have a clean drawing board at our new facility, we are able to control the design and make it more efficient. We can decide exactly where an elevator should go and what its use should be. That way, we realistically need fewer elevators to accomplish the same tasks—and in fact, we're planning for higher efficiency, so there will be less wait times for visitors.

Elevators at our current facility are designated for visitors and service (employee only), but elevators are accessible to everyone. Visitors, staff, patients and supplies often share the same elevators, despite signs designating an elevator's use.

"The plan in the new facility is to have service elevators behind closed doors," said Steve Nelson, operations planning director for the new hospital. "Patient transport elevators will be designated separately from visitor and supply elevators. This is a best practice for infection control. In addition, our mission is patient-centered care, so we want to make sure patient elevators are available when needed."

There also will be two dedicated elevators set aside specifically for central sterile case carts—one for clean sterile supplies and one for used tools from surgeries and other medical procedures.

RMH has space set aside for five additional elevators to accommodate future growth and expansion. Our building has the capacity to grow two more floors if demand arises, so these five could be added to service additional floors, said Nelson. In summary, patients, visitors and staff will experience less wait times and have improved elevator access in the new facility, Nelson said.