

■ **MARKDALE:** Construction still some time away

# GBHS, ministry trying for consensus about hospital

**TRACEY RICHARDSON**  
For The Sun Times

A new hospital for Markdale is still on target for construction to begin within two years, although the project has not yet proceeded to the detailed drawings stage.

Lance Thurston, the Grey Bruce Health Services president and CEO, said he hopes in the next month or two the project will be given provincial permission to advance to Stage 3, which is the detailed engineering and drawings stage.

From there, requests for proposals are gathered from prospective developers, while in the fifth stage, a developer is selected and construction begins.

Since January there has been a lot of back-and-forth with ministry on the concepts for the new hospital, which will replace the decades-old Centre Grey Hospital.

"You get into some challenges on projections, projected volumes of patients, so the ministry will be working with certain assumptions and projections, we have our projections based on the reality of our situation and we'll probably have to end up having to negotiate some of that before we move to Stage 3," Thurston said.

Some of the ministry's questions have had to do with the need for as much ER space as the plans call for, how patient flow will work and whether a basement is needed.

The project the ministry has approved will be 40,000 square feet, at least 4,000 sq. ft. larger than the current facility. It is expected to include a 24/7 emergency department, four patient beds, a procedures room, laboratory, diagnostic imaging, outpatient rehabilitation and ambulatory care service. The cost is

expected to be between \$50 and \$60 million and it will be built on property adjacent to Grey Gables.

Knowing a new hospital is in the works is vital for future development and planning in Markdale, said Thurston, who was previously Grey County's CAO.

"It has a huge impact from a community perspective... having a hospital and good health care is one of the prerequisites for any kind of future development. So that's a major item they can use for promoting new development and going out and trying to attract developers and investment."

The hospital secures Markdale on the health care map "for the next several decades, whereas without this approval, who knows what may have happened with the changes going on in rural health care?"

"We know it's approved, it's just a matter of the timing and the details, but that really helps the local community plan for investment and attracting new folks to the area. Health care is probably the number one consideration for people wanting to invest or move into an area," said Thurston.

The Owen Sound  
Sun Times

Thurs 7/9/15

"Markdale Hospital  
Update"

Thanks

PeoJ