

The Good Shepherd Expansion

Community health clinic adding old house for new space

By Daniel Silliman
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While doctors and staff members scurried around inside the **Good Shepherd Clinic** providing health care, house movers and board members worked outside to set a 1,200-square-foot house down behind the building.

The yellow house was hauled to Morrow on Wednesday, and put on a concrete pad next to the community clinic on Murphy Drive, where it will be remodeled into doctors' offices, and allow the clinic to expand.

"We're pushing out the walls here," said L.C. Thomas, a board member. "We were looking for a way to expand."

Open since 2000, the clinic provides health care to those who can't afford it. The volunteering doctors and staff have been working out of a remodeled, 800-square-foot house behind the First Baptist Church of Morrow. The clinic provided medical care for 1,810 people last year, according to board member, Jim Phillips, and things have been pretty cramped recently.

"That's people who either would have gone without health care or would have gone to the emergency room," Phillips said.

In March, Thomas said, the Good Shepherd Clinic's board of directors began looking at ways to expand.

Phillips said board members looked at relocating, perhaps leasing a location from the county or the city, and also looked at adding a modular unit. But then Morrow City Manager John Lampl had a solution. Lampl arranged to have an old house from Stockbridge donated to the clinic and moved over for free.

The city has purchased and moved more than a half dozen houses from around the state to a lot behind Southlake Mall, which is being redeveloped into a shopping district called "Olde Morrow."

Lampl knew about the Stockbridge house and has worked extensively with the moving company, Roy Bishop Housemovers, and Lampl reached out on behalf of the clinic. The 1,200-square-foot house had been moved out of Stockbridge to make room for the city's new city hall, park and green space, and was sitting in a lot for a number of months, waiting for a home.

Phillips said the house looked like it had been built in the 1950s, judging by its lack of insulation, its oil heating system and its high quality, hard wood floors.

Morrow City Councilman Bob Huie was on hand as the house arrived in Morrow. He said the city wanted to see the clinic stay where it was, and the council was glad to see arrangements could be made for the clinic.

"We think it's good for the county and good for the City of Morrow, to have the Good Shepherd Clinic here," Huie said. "We think it's a good location, and we want to support it."

Watching the house, a square house with "Dutch Lap" siding, as a truck hauled it around Murphy Drive into the back of the Baptist church parking lot, Huie joked, "We're getting pretty good at this."

The seven-man moving crew, following the directions of owner John Kinard, directed the truck around a curve, turned it around, and directed it onto the concrete slab. When the house came to rest, it was only a few feet from the existing building.

Once the remodeling job is completed, the clinic will have more than doubled its current space, with a total of 2,000 square feet.

Phillips said the two houses will be connected, in construction, and the clinic will have space for five more doctors' offices.

"It will look like it's always been one building," Phillips said. "We'll paint the whole thing white."

Construction is due to be completed on Aug. 2, and the ribbon will be cut at the clinic's annual fund