

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**Hospital Gets Some Good News from State Officials**

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POMEROY, WA – Armed with flashlights, clipboards and cameras representatives from two state agencies, architects, engineers and electrical contractors converged on Garfield County Hospital Tuesday in an attempt to determine its future. At the request of the hospital leadership; the Department of Health, hospital staff, and contractors spent the entire day at Garfield County Hospital engaged in a thorough review of the hospital physical plant. At the end of the day it seems the consensus among all those who participated in the process was rather optimistic. Although the final report has yet to be submitted; the general impression was that the building is safe and in relatively good repair for a facility of its age.

Triggering the review was citations from the Department of Labor and Industries involving two small electrical projects performed years ago. L&I is requiring plan review of these two electrical projects and is also asking for a detailed diagram of the hospital's 60+ year old electrical system. DOH agrees that it is necessary to resolve these two outstanding electrical citations and that the existing electrical system diagram is a necessary element for electrical plan review. While these citations have yet to be completely resolved, the door is now open for further discussion with the agency to see if a reasonable solution can be forged with the hospital. "The technical assistance visit from the Department of Health was requested by us so we could have a clear assessment by the agency that grants licensure to hospitals in Washington State" said hospital CEO

Andrew Craigie. “It was a real bonus to see L&I join us for a portion of the day so we could have all the players at the table at one time.”

DOH officials commented that the hospital, although somewhat antiquated, is safe and in relatively good repair. In nearly the same breath officials with the state emphasized the critical importance of planning for the future. Recognizing that the facility is old, some building finishes and mechanical systems will need to be repaired and replaced as they reach the end of their useful life. The electrical systems, the agency says, appear to be safe and provide sufficient capacity to meet the demand placed on it by the facility. As part of the review process the officials also conducted a general assessment of fire and life safety systems and produced a short list of recommended corrections, yet, clearly indicated no immediate life safety or health concerns.

Kevin Scarlett with DOH Construction Review Services indicated that the building systems seemed appropriate for the scope of service provided by the hospital. He suggested that because the hospital is small and provides mostly basic diagnostic, emergency, minor acute and outpatient services, there does not appear to be a need for the facility to have the more complex electrical systems found in larger medical centers providing more advanced services such as surgical treatment and intensive care. The hospital has not significantly changed its use of the facility in a number of years and district officials believe it is unlikely there will be a major change in the future. These realities suggest it may be unlikely that a change to the electrical system would be necessary in the eyes of the regulators.

The DOH representatives made it clear they understand the importance of maintaining hospital services to the community. Noting the importance of planning for repair and

replacement of aged mechanical systems, Scarlett made special emphasis on the need for the facility to plan for the replacement of mechanical systems such as the heating ventilation and air conditioning project currently underway in the long term care wing of the building. In their final report the agency will also provide the District with recommendations for secondary system improvements.

District officials will now be preparing an electrical plan review submittal for the Department of Labor & Industries. The hospital also hopes to demonstrate that the facility is safe and the capacity of the existing electrical system is sufficient to meet the demands of the facility. “We are not out of the weeds yet” added Craigie. “But we certainly feel more optimistic about resolving this issue now that we have completed this assessment.” The electrical plan review submittal is anticipated around the first week of June with L&I response being the end of June. The final report from the Department of Health will be shared with the Commissioners of the district at their next regular meeting the first week of June.

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