

Community Health to create 1,600 jobs in Antioch

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(Photo: Gresham Smith & Partners)

Community Health Systems Inc.'s planned shared services center in Antioch could eventually employ 2,000 people, providing a stronger employment base to support local businesses and fuel more growth in that once-struggling area.

The Franklin-based hospital chain will invest \$66 million and create nearly 1,600 jobs over the next five years at the center, where it will consolidate back-office functions such as information technology and accounting now spread across 29 states.

"Not only will it be cost productive, but it will be a great opportunity for us to expand in Davidson County,"

Wayne Smith, CEO of Community Health, said during Thursday's announcement at the state Capitol.

Under the plan, Community Health's six-story, 240,000-square-foot shared services center would be built on 35 acres the chain plans to buy from developer Oldacre McDonald LLC. The center is expected to open in early 2017 near Cane Ridge Road around Interstate 24 and Bell Road.

"It's the spark that's going to really light the fuse that I think will lead to many, many more announcements over the next few years," Mark McDonald, a partner in Nashville-based Oldacre McDonald, said about landing Community Health. "It's kind of a good housekeeping seal of approval when you have such a respected company choose to locate in this location and bring this many jobs. I think it just accelerates all of our plans."

Community Health's center is part of Oldacre McDonald's 300-acre mixed-use project that is expected to include residential, retail, office and hotel uses, along with community and green spaces and pedestrian walkways. Smith cited land cost and an opportunity to meet the company's long-term needs among factors in its choice of the Antioch location.

"We make our decisions based on business, not on politics," Smith said in a reference to reports that Community Health sought support from state lawmakers from Williamson County for the failed Insure Tennessee program while considering locations.

Community Health could receive incentives estimated at \$8 million from Metro, including property tax abatements of 100 percent in year one and two, 60 percent in years two through 10 and 25 percent in years 11 and 12. The company also is eligible for state job training and infrastructure grants.

Hospital chain CHS' office campus should boost Antioch

(<http://www.tennessean.com/story/money/2015/05/12/hospital-chain-chs-picks-antioch-office-project/27213867/>)

With Community Health part of the larger mixed-use project, McDonald is optimistic about getting approval for a sought-after expansion of Exit 60 (Hickory Hollow Parkway) off I-24 and other roadways to improve access to his company's planned development.

If the interchange is approved by the U.S. Federal Highway Administration and designated a high priority project, next year would be the earliest that engineering and design can begin, said Michael Skipper, executive director of the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, a seven-county regional transportation planning body.

Ben Freeland, an Antioch-area car dealer and board member of community organization Crossings Nashville Action Partnership, attended Community Health's announcement. "It's excellent for the community," Freeland said, citing other recent expansions planned by companies including Mac Papers.

Nashville Mayor Karl Dean called growth in Antioch an example of a strong public-private partnership.

"When a city shows that it has the confidence to invest in itself, people take notice and private investment follows," he said, citing public investments in that area including a satellite campus for Nashville State Community College, a community center, library and park, as well as the Ford Ice Center partnership with the Nashville Predators. "Antioch is back big time."

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