

# New baby kicks off opening day at Centegra Hospital-Huntley



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**A** steady stream of ambulance calls and the hospital's first birth filled the morning's activities on Tuesday, opening day at Centegra Hospital-Huntley.

Staff members had been outside on the grounds snapping a photos when a pair of expectant parents pulled into the lot for the delivery of their baby girl. The couple was on route to [McHenry Hospital](#) when the urgency of the situation led them to the facility that had just officially opened its doors minutes before.

Michelle Green, Senior Public Relations Coordinator for Centegra, said it wasn't long after their arrival that they had heard that the first baby girl had been born.

"We were walking down the hall when we heard Brahms' Lullaby playing in the corridor and we all said, 'Wow, it's real now,'" Green said.

The 360,000 square foot facility offers 128 beds, private patient rooms, an emergency department with helipad and private treatment and waiting areas, a state-of-the-art intensive care unit and over 450 staff members providing all areas of service.

Chief Executive Officer Michael Eesley said the hospital staff is comprised of about fifty percent new staff and fifty percent new hires to the Centegra family.

The decision to employ current staff in the new facility was to help maintain the culture and cohesiveness of the Centegra family of hospitals which includes McHenry Hospital, Woodstock Hospital and Northern Illinois Medical Center in McHenry, said Chief Operations Officer Sheila Senn.

"We felt it was important to start with a good blend of current and new staff. We wanted this hospital to feel like the other Centegra hospitals," she said.

The new hospital is part of the Centegra campus located at Haligus and Algonquin Roads which also includes the ambulatory care facility that was completed in 2008 and the Health Bridge fitness center that was completed in 2006.

Eesley said it was an exciting day for him after having worked on the hospital project since 2010.

"I think that judging by the excitement of the events leading up to today we have seen so much passion from the community about having a hospital here. We received over 16,000 letters of support from the community in favor of the hospital," Eesley said.

Eesley said all areas of the hospital are up and running with a number of scheduled surgeries planned for day one. He said the first ambulance rolled into the bays of the emergency room at around 7 a.m.

"It is once-in-a-lifetime to be involved in an opportunity like this, to build something and have a full-fledged campus," Eesley said.

Director of Emergency Services Catie Schmit said the building of this hospital has "been a journey" for her as the final design of the various departments was influenced by the experiences and recommendations of the clinicians who work in the field at Centegra.

"Many of the innovative new concepts you see here came from the staff. We're ready to serve the community," Schmit said.

*Jeanie Mayer is a freelance reporter for The Courier-News.*

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