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Columbia Construction completes 90,000 s/f Martha's Vineyard Hospital

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Columbia Construction Company is near completion of a new 90,000 s/f, 24-bed replacement hospital on Martha's Vineyard. The hospital, the community, donors and the entire design and construction team celebrated this milestone with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on April 11.

The two-story brick structure was designed by architects Thomas, Miller & Partners, PLLC of Tennessee.

Columbia Const. was hired to provide preconstruction services to the hospital in 2004. As an integral part of the team, Columbia is the LEED captain for this project. The project is expected to achieve a LEED Silver rating, through the U.S. Green Building Council. However, the team is working to surpass that and hopes to achieve LEED Gold. Only one Mass. hospital, Brigham and Women's in Boston, has received the LEED Silver designation before; none has attained LEED Gold.

One of the challenges faced by Martha's Vineyard Hospital was to build a new facility on a tightly bounded campus without unduly disrupting the lives of staff or affecting the quality of care. Paul Murphy, project superintendent with Columbia Const., worked closely with the hospital's project manager, Connie Bulman, to ensure construction proceeded with a minimum of hardship for patients.

Site work began 30 feet below the new building's ground level in the fall of 2007, with a process called vibro-compaction, to densify the ground material and create a solid base beneath the hospital. As a result of this process, 11,000 tons of material was trucked to the site to build the grade back up to the original elevation.

The placing of concrete for the new hospital foundation, in the spring of 2008, was the largest single project ever undertaken by Goodale Construction Co. More than 1,600 cubic yards of concrete was trucked from their plant to the hospital site for the building foundation alone. The basement mat slab, which was 20" thick, required over 600 cubic yards of concrete alone. When finished, it weighed 2.5 million pounds.

Erection of the structural steel began, in August 2008, upon completion of the foundation work. The steel was fabricated in New Hampshire and delivered to Martha's Vineyard on Cape Cod Express trucks and the Steamship Authority ferries. By late November, the structural steel frame was completely erected, and the building was wrapped. This construction sequence made it possible to work on the interior through the cold season.

"Columbia Construction has been a valuable partner and a tremendous asset to me and to the hospital throughout our project," stated Timothy Walsh, president and CEO of Martha's Vineyard Hospital. "They had the essential staff and expertise to help us navigate the logistical, community, environmental and technical challenges inherent in building a replacement hospital on an island. Columbia has done a fantastic job."

The celebration was the culmination of a two-and-a-half-year construction project that capped a successful capital campaign. The campaign, "A New Beginning: Building for the Next Generation" was launched in 2004 after the Hospital board agreed that the present building had reached the end of its useful life and that renovation was not an option.

Drawing on 85 years of experience, Columbia Construction Co. provides construction management services throughout New England. Its primary goal is to serve as a construction partner to clients and to provide them with innovative solutions. Columbia's work is focused within the healthcare, corporate, commercial, life sciences, academic, housing/hospitality, and senior living market sectors.

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