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Sept. 26, 2002

**GROUNDBREAKING SLATED FOR STATE-OF-THE-ART
SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT FACILITY IN VINITA**

In an effort to provide better access to residential substance abuse treatment, a groundbreaking ceremony for the new site of Vinita Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center will be held Tuesday, Oct. 1, beginning with refreshments and entertainment at noon, followed by the groundbreaking at 1 p.m.

The ceremony marks start of construction of a 52-bed residential substance abuse treatment facility for adult men and women, an increase of 20 beds over the current VADTC program. The state-of-the-art facility, operated by the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, also will provide day treatment and outpatient treatment with a focus on the family.

Funding for the new site was made possible with a \$2.5 million lease-purchase agreement with the Oklahoma Capital Improvement Authority, said Ben Brown, ODMHSAS deputy commissioner for substance abuse services.

“The construction of this new facility is another important step in increasing both quality and quantity of substance abuse treatment in Oklahoma,” he said. “We are

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especially grateful to our legislators – Sen. Rick Littlefield, Rep. Joe Eddins and Sen. James Dunlap, in particular – and Gov. Frank Keating for making this possible.”

All were instrumental in the passage of Senate Bill 326 authorizing the facility.

Littlefield, a Democrat, is from Grove, while Eddins, also a Democrat, is from Vinita. Dunlap, a Republican, lives in Bartlesville.

Substance abuse costs Oklahoma nearly \$7 billion annually in cash and lost productivity, Brown said. Drug and alcohol addiction contribute to “virtually every social problem we have in Oklahoma,” including divorce, domestic violence, child abuse, suicide, crime, traffic fatalities and deaths due to injuries.

“Substance abuse is Oklahoma’s number one public health problem,” he added. “The statistics are frightening. Drug and alcohol addiction is a factor in 75 percent of divorces, 85 percent of homicides and 80 percent of prison incarcerations—the list goes on.”

Studies also have shown that treatment works, saving lives, families and taxpayer money, he said. “For every \$1 we invest in treatment, we save up to \$7 in crime-related costs. That ratio rises to 12:1 when health-care costs are included.”

The new VADTC will add “vitaly needed beds to our system, reducing time spent on waiting lists,” which sometimes can be up to six weeks, he said.

“It’s important that people receive treatment when they are ready for treatment,” Brown said. “If a person has to wait six weeks for treatment, there is no guarantee that person will even be alive by then.”

Brown said the Vinita facility, with its focus on the family, will build on a

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movement that involves recognizing addiction as a “family disease,” one that affects every member of the household, whether they are using or not.

“Substance abuse is a disease—a treatable disease,” he said. “We want people to know that there is hope.”

The ceremony will begin with refreshments and entertainment at noon in VADTC Building 10, followed by a short walk to the construction site, located just west of the grounds of Eastern State Hospital on approximately 40 acres of land donated to ODMHSAS by the Vinita Industrial Development Authority.

For more information, call Phillip Cummings, VADTC director, at 918-256-7841, ext. 604.

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