

MANITOBA GOVERNMENT

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NEWS SERVICE

ASSINIBOINE CENTRE OPENS IN BRANDON

Assiniboine Centre, a 200-bed extended care and rehabilitation facility adjacent to Brandon General Hospital, was officially opened February 19 in Brandon.

Built at a cost of \$5.25 million, the centre will be operated as a part of the Brandon General Hospital complex. It will offer extended care and rehabilitative services to residents of southwestern Manitoba formerly provided by Assiniboine Hospital which will be phased out of service with the transfer of 160 patients to the new facility on Sunday, February 24.

The ribbon-cutting was performed by Miss M.C. Jackson, nursing consultant, who was director of nursing at Brandon General Hospital for 24 years and who retires next month.

Dignitaries participating in the opening ceremony included Alderman Emily Lyons of Brandon, Reeve T.W. Pentland of R.M. of Elton on behalf of participating municipalities and Douglas Crofford of Manitoba Health Services Commission.

Industry and Commerce Minister Len Evans, representing the Manitoba government said the Assiniboine Centre is regarded as one of the finest facilities of its kind in Canada.

"It is expected that the new centre will be able to carry out most of the programs which the Winnipeg Rehab Hospital can do," the minister said. "It is an important extension to the total health care delivery system for the province, and particularly for the Brandon area."

G.W. Manson, president of the board of Brandon General Hospital, outlined the phases of planning and development of the centre.

He said the old Assiniboine Hospital on Richmond avenue, built by the Department of National Defence in 1942, was operated by the Sanitorium Board of Manitoba until it was converted to an extended care facility in 1961. The need for a better facility in close proximity to Brandon General Hospital was recognized and in October, 1971 authorization for the Assiniboine Centre proposal was given by Manitoba Health Services Commission. Construction commenced in May, 1972, and has been completed in 20 months by Poole Construction of Winnipeg.

Included in the total cost are the necessary renovations to the hospital to provide food services, laundry, central supply stores, pharmacy, X-ray and laboratory services.

More than \$1 million was contributed on the basis of equalized assessment by the city of Brandon and the Rural Municipalities of Cornwallis, Elton and Whitehead. The remaining 80 per cent will be financed by a provincial government debenture issue.

Features incorporated into the design of the building include:

- . A window for every patient.
- . Room dividers permitting one to four bed arrangements in most rooms.
- . Special facilities and programs for the care and treatment of handicapped children.
- . Out-patient and day-care programs, and facilities for a full scale of rehabilitative treatment programs.
- . Two enclosed, treed and planted courtyards with balconies.
- . A large hydrotherapy pool with hydraulic patient handling equipment.

On Sunday, February 24, the 160 patients from Assiniboine Hospital were scheduled to be transferred to the new centre with assistance from the Emergency Health Services Division of Manitoba Health Services Commission, Brandon Transit, Brandon Fire Department, Brandon City Police, St. John Ambulance Association and many other volunteers.