

Central State Hospital Local Redevelopment Authority

Tasked with repurposing the grounds of Central State Hospital (CSH) to spur economic growth, the CSH Local Redevelopment Authority (CSHLRA) is achieving many of its set goals this year by privatizing state owned property and bringing jobs to the community.

Nearly complete, the newly built 19-million dollar Bostick Nursing Center (BNC) is owned and operated by CorrectHealth LLP., and will be a 280-bed skilled nursing and intermediate care services facility. BNC will be home to medically fragile parolees that currently have limited access to residential nursing care outside the prison system.

“Bostick Nursing Center will bring 330 much needed jobs to Milledgeville,” said Mike Couch, CSHLRA executive director. “They plan to begin hiring in the next two months.” The center is scheduled to open by mid-June.

The need for such a facility is evident by the astonishing high number of inmates in state custody aged 50 or over—an increase by 590.8% in the last twenty years. “Those that have no place to go once paroled and who are in need of skilled care, will find a home in our community at Bostick,” said Couch.

As the largest private provider of correctional healthcare in Georgia, CorrectHealth oversees the health needs of almost 15,000 inmates across the Southeast.

The BNC has the unique advantage of finding an established pool of highly qualified individuals in the Milledgeville area. With the CSH campus being home to many prisons, as well as the residential mental health facility for several decades, a trained workforce with years of experience already exists for employment.

One of the best assets on the CSH grounds is Parham Kitchen (PK)-named after state Representative Bobby Eugene Parham. The modern-era food preparation center once served 20,000 meals a day to residents, staff, and community members.

The 100,000 square foot facility is operational, with an additional 40,000 square feet of dry storage, cooler, and freezer space. Through a partnership with the Georgia Department of Agriculture, University of Georgia’s Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development, and Georgia College, the concept for Georgia’s Agribusiness Development Center (GADC) was created to repurpose the site.

The GADC will host space for a private food service entity to operate, an agribusiness incubator, and a distribution and warehousing co-operative. “We have already forged a relationship with a private food service company-Food Service Partners,” said Couch. “The company is aiming at providing 80 local jobs by the end of 2016.”

The National Guard Youth Challenge Academy (NGYCA) is yet another new program coming this year to CSH-bringing with it jobs that will lift the local economy. A six million-dollar renovation of the Boland Building is scheduled to be complete by late June and will be the designated location for the residential students.

The CSH site will join two other current YCA programs in the state-one at Fort Stewart and another at Fort Gordon. “We are extremely proud that Governor Deal announced the Central State Hospital campus for the location of the third academy,” added Couch.

The NGYCA is an evidence-based program to provide opportunities to adolescents who have dropped out of school but have a desire and potential to improve their lives through an alternative path. Participants, 16-to18-year old male and female high school dropouts are eligible to apply to the 17-month program.

Due to the close proximity to Georgia Military College (GMC), participants of the Milledgeville Youth Challenge Academy (MYCA) will have an exclusive opportunity to further their education. “For those in the program who finish their high school diploma before the end of the residential term, they will have the option to begin classes at GMC,” said Couch.

This prospect was made possible through a partnership between the Georgia Department of Defense, the CSHLRA, and GMC. Couch added, “The goal of this partnership is for students to come out of the YCA program with one semester of their college education completed.”

According to Couch, the MYCA will begin the hiring process for 120 to 150 positions by late summer. The jobs will include teachers, retired military instructors, and administration.