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Ground breaks for new hospital in Shindand

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – A ground breaking ceremony marked the start of construction on a new 28-bed hospital in Shindand, Herat province Jan. 28. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineer District-South designed the \$4.8 million hospital and is overseeing construction.

Representatives from the U.S. Agency for International Development, the International Security Assistance Force Regional Command-West, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, USACE, Herat province and Shindand district attended the event, along with more than 400 local citizens.

“This is a really important project for the people of Shindand and one that the U.S. government is committed to building,” said Lt. Col. Gordon “Mark” Bartley, the officer in charge of the Herat Area Office. “We anticipate the hospital will be complete in October. The construction contractor, Helal Khosti Construction Company, expects to hire 120 local citizens to work on the project, so at this point, we feel good that the project will proceed at the scheduled pace.”

In addition to the main hospital, the South District will build two additional clinic facilities; one for males and one for females.

“Design of the hospital was a challenge because there are limited construction funds,” said John Secleter, the South District architect who modified an existing hospital design.

“The original plan was to modify the design of a hospital addition we used on Camp Zafar,” said Secleter. “There, we connected new hospital construction to an existing Afghan National Army hospital that expanded the ANA’s ability to care for troops. That design was the starting point for this hospital in Shindand.”

Secleter said that the modifications to the existing hospital design were extensive because the Shindand hospital was a stand-alone building as opposed to an extension and the people it was going to serve are not soldiers. “We needed to make room for an OB-GYN suite and have clinic facilities that were gender specific,” said Secleter.

Robert Greco, the project manager, deployed from USACE’s New York District, said the hospital will consist of a full service medical clinic with emergency care facilities that improve access to medical services for the region.

“There are about 800,000 to one million people in the Shindand area,” said Greco. “Obviously this hospital will not be sufficient for all of them, but it is a step in the right direction. GIROA can take the hospital design and duplicate it throughout the country with minimal difficulty in the future.”



Dr. Suraya Dalil, the acting Afghan Minister of Public Health addresses the audience at the Shindand Hospital ground breaking ceremony Jan. 28. (USACE Photo/Karla Marshall)

In his remarks (speaking through an interpreter), Herat Provincial Governor Daud Shah Saba said that he welcomed the construction of the hospital and looked forward to the day it was complete so Shindand residents could have better access to health care.

Nabil Abouraily, the Herat Resident Office Engineer, said that the project was long awaited, adding that the district's Herat Resident Office had voluntarily stepped up to the planning role and worked very closely with USAID, RC-West, and the Ministry of Health since January 2011 to develop a scope of work, design, and requirements that were acceptable to the Afghan officials who will operate and maintain the hospital.

This was really a unique effort and experience that here in Herat we don't get to see much," said Abouraily. "By the end of construction, the Herat Area Office would have touched every piece of this project from planning and real estate procurement to design, award, and construction. I look forward to keeping the construction on schedule and delivering a quality product that the people of Afghanistan can use for years to come."

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