

# New health centre coming to John D'Or Prairie

BY DAVE BAXTER



An artist rendering shows what the new 12,200-square-foot John D'Or Prairie Health Centre could look like once completed. PHOTO COURTESY OF MARSHALL TITTEMORE ARCHITECTS.

A new healthcare centre will soon be up and running to serve the John D'Or Prairie community, and those responsible for bringing the project to life say the building's construction will make it an ideal facility for the community it will serve.

Construction began in September of 2016 on the new John D'Or Prairie Health Centre, which will serve the John D'Or Prairie First Nations settlement in Northern Alberta.

The project, with its approximately \$7.3 million construction budget, is expected to be completed sometime in September of 2017, according to project manager Bill Vance of Marshall Tittlemore Architects.

Vance said the single-storey, wood-frame building will be 12,200 square feet in size, with a metal roof and siding.

When completed, the John D'Or Prairie Health Centre, which will replace an existing facility in the community, will provide initial first-aid services and treatment, as well as dental and physician services.

The building will also feature a large community support service component that will include programs for community elders plus pre-natal, life skills and youth programming, and other community services.

Gordon Franklin of Marshall Tittlemore

Architects, the associate project manager for the project during the initial planning, design period, and construction document period, said the project is being built with the community members that will ultimately use it in mind.

"The building was designed to be welcoming, calming, open, and have lots of natural light," Franklin said. "Corridors are wide and open and there are numerous meeting rooms and spaces. The building features exposed heavy timber framing and warm colours to help alleviate the typical stress commonly associated with a visit to the facility."

Between six and 10 employees are expected to be working in the building at any given time, and Franklin said the building is being built in a functional way but "without having an institutional feel".

The John D'Or Prairie Health Centre is also being built with Northern Alberta's unpredictable and often extreme climate in mind.

"The building was designed considering the north's extreme and variable climactic conditions, and with long-term energy efficiency, and durability being a high priority," Franklin said.

The clinic will sit on a three-and-a-half-acre mostly open lot with some forested areas on both the east and west sides, and feature a

parking area for approximately 70 vehicles, and a paved vehicle drop off and pick up area.

Franklin added it was important for those designing the building to work closely with community members and stakeholders from the John D'Or Prairie community, and give them the building they were looking for.

"The community had a large say in what the building was to contain," Franklin said. "They wanted a facility that was welcoming, open to all, efficient and durable with low maintenance and operating costs."

Kor-Alta Construction Ltd. is the contractor currently building the John D'Or Prairie Health Centre, and Ralph Corbett of Kor-Alta Construction Ltd. said in March of 2017 that the foundations were completed, the building had been erected, and they were underway putting the exterior façade on.

Corbett added they were expecting to pour in floors in April of 2017.

Funding for the John D'Or Prairie Health Centre came from the federal government, as part of a \$17.3 million investment to upgrade health facilities in First Nations communities in Alberta, which was announced in July of 2016.