

**Entrant's Name and Organization**

Gay Watson, Ozarks Medical Center

Title of Project/Entry

Emergency Department Grand Opening

Brief Description of your community and your health care organization:

Ozarks Medical Center is a 114-bed, not-for-profit health care organization, which serves an 11-county area in south central Missouri and north central Arkansas. Its main facility is located in West Plains, a town of just under 12,000 people. OMC also operates 19 rural health and specialty clinics, serving a total population base of 160,000 people. OMC employs approximately 1,180 individuals.

Because OMC is the largest health care provider in a 90-mile area, it offers many services not typically found in small rural hospitals, such as 24/7 orthopaedic surgery coverage and 24/7 interventional cardiology coverage, a complete line of heart care services including open heart surgery and cardiac rehabilitation, nephrology, neurosurgery, neuroscience, complete cancer treatment, rehabilitation services, psychology and more.

OMC is located in an area of extreme poverty and the eighth poorest congressional district in the country.

About the Emergency Department

Originally designed to treat 4,000 patients per year, the former Emergency Department treated more than 20,000 in 2009. While patient volumes continued to climb, facility space remained unchanged, severely impacting patient privacy, comfort and treatment time.

Hospital administrators, board of directors and the community banded together to support the construction of a new \$6 million facility. This included a capital campaign to raise \$3 million to complete the infill portion of the project.

The state-of-the-art facility was completed and ready to open to patients on July 20, 2010.

Statement of problem/opportunity.

With 16 private patient rooms and the latest in technology and patient comfort, the new ED is one of the best facilities in the state. Promoting the facility was an opportunity to improve public perception of the hospital, gain loyalty and increase volumes. In order to maximize our goal, we needed people to see the Emergency Department first hand. We also wanted the community to take pride in the project that they supported through the capital campaign.

In addition, OMC is located in a small community of less than 12,000 people. Our media coverage consists of primarily a local daily newspaper and radio. The nearest regional television station is in Springfield, but since this is 90 miles away, our area in general, rarely receives television coverage. We saw this as an opportunity to increase awareness of our hospital and its wide range of services on a regional and state level.

Project goals & objectives:

1. Gain positive media coverage with on-site coverage by local newspaper and area radio stations
2. Obtain coverage of grand opening/new ED by at least one regional television station.
3. Tour at least 500 community leaders through the ED.
4. Have in attendance local community and business leaders as well as Congresswoman Jo Ann Emerson
4. A long-term goal of increasing ED volumes by 10 percent.

**Audience**

Audience – Southern Missouri and Northern Arkansas, including, but not limited to, our 11-county service area – physicians, employees, legislatures, media, residents, patients, donors and potential donors.

Reason for choosing this format

We wanted a large All-American, Grand Opening Celebration of the new ED. Due to patient privacy, this was a one-time opportunity to give the community an open look at this facility.

Frequency:

One time event

Cost Per Piece:

Photography: \$250

Pins: 2,000 at a total production cost of \$2,475. Design done in house.

Fans: 1,000 fans at a total cost of \$750. Design done in house

Posters: 100 at 20 cents each. Designed and printed in house

Invitation Cards: 1,000 at 5 cents each. Designed and printed in house.

Fliers: 500 at 8 cents each. Designed and printed in house.

Commemorative CD: 100 at \$2 each.

Implementation:

A committee with representatives from Public Relations, the Emergency Department and Administration was formed to plan and coordinate the event. The committee and OMC employees also designed and constructed a grand stand stage for the event. We targeted our audience in the following manor:

Community

- We worked with two area newspapers, which created special sections highlighting the new facility. The newspapers sold ads and our public relations staff provided content and photos.
- Ads promoting the grand opening were placed in 11 area newspapers.
- Fliers and Posters were displayed in the hospital and the community in local businesses.
- Cards were distributed at other OMC events, including at a health fair attended by more than 400 women.
- Multiple press releases were distributed to media, providing extensive coverage before and after the event.
- Schools and organizations were involved in the event. Boy Scout Troop 67 distributed fans, pins and waters and members of the West Plains High School Speech and Debate Teams assisted with parking and seating. In appreciation, the hospital made a \$200 donation to each organization.

Media

- Personal invitations were extended via e-mail, mail and phone to local and regional media.
- A staff acted as media coordinator the day of the event, providing media packets, interview coordination, special tours and reserved parking for radio vans.
- Each media representative at the event received a follow up call with a thank you and offer of further assistance and information.

Leaders

- Staff worked directly with Congresswoman Jo Ann Emerson's office to ensure her attendance at the event. She also accepted the invitation to speak at the event.
- The mayor was accepted the invitation to speak and be part of the grand opening.
- Personal invitations from OMC's President and CEO were sent to board members, contributors and community leaders and leaders in local and state government.



Event Implementation

The event included the construction of a grand stand, coordination of parking and transportation via golf cart, led tours, professional event photography. We also embraced the heat that comes with a July outdoor event by providing bottled water and specially designed fans.

What portions of the entry were created internally/externally?

Internally: ads, fliers, news releases, invitations, designs for pins and fans.

Externally: Photographs of event

Results and Evaluation

- Newspaper: The local daily newspaper and the county weekly newspaper were both in attendance. At least 7 newspapers ran coverage of the event
- Radio: Two radio companies were at the event providing live remotes and coverage on seven stations. There was also coverage on the regional KSMU station.
- Television: The event was covered on by the local CBS affiliate and KY3, the area's NBC affiliate was in attendance to cover the grand opening in depth. In addition, the local public access station was in attendance and covered the event.
- Tours: More than 500 community leaders attended, which is nearly 5 percent of the population of our immediate area. To compare, 5 percent of the population of the city of Springfield would equal more than 7,880 individuals.
- Leaders: Congresswoman Jo Ann Emerson and West Plains Mayor Joe Paul Evans were featured speakers. Also in attendance were city aldermen, the entire OMC Board of Directors, City Administrators from West Plains and Willow Springs, and OMC Capital Campaign Donors. Senator Roy Blunt was unavailable to attend the grand opening, but did tour the facility at a later date.
- Volumes: The ED treated 5,910 patients from Jan. 1 to March 31 compared to 5,083 during this same time period in 2010, before the new facility opened. This is an outstanding growth of 16.3 percent.

