

## Virtual tours of Cambridge Memorial's expansion part of fundraising for real building

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KITCHENER — Cambridge Memorial Hospital's future is on display in Kitchener's high-tech Tannery Hub.

Fundraisers for the \$200 million expansion and renovation — first suggested in 1999 — are counting on the 3D virtual video experience at RealityCave to convince cynical donors that the project will soon be reality.

"There are sometimes legacies here. I can't change that," said Ken Zelazny, chair of the hospital foundation. He's also incoming president of the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, with plans use the tours as he taps the city's business community for donations.

"It's a great tool. It not going to be a slam-dunk for me, but it's going to help."

The Star Trek fan lead a dozen people on the first tour through the virtual hospital Thursday, grinning behind big 3D glasses.

"It's truly like a holodeck experience," he said.

Hospital officials believe it's the first time a complete hospital has been rendered using the 3D technology developed in Waterloo Region.

Virtual tours are open to anyone who calls the hospital foundation office to arrange an appointment at 519-740-4966.

Queen's Park pays for 90 per cent of hospital construction costs. The remaining 10 per cent and all the cost of new equipment must be funded in the community.

The hospital foundation must contribute \$50 million in total, said Jennifer White, executive director of the hospital foundation.

There's \$17 million left to find after a decade of campaigns and donations from Cambridge and Waterloo Region councils, she said.

Every dollar collected in existing fundraising campaigns is now rolling into the expansion account, White said. For couple of years, she expects to quietly ask for "six- and seven-figure donations" from big companies, then launch a public community campaign.

Final construction plans were approved by the hospital board Sept. 25. They're now under review by the Ministry of Health.

Five companies have been shortlisted for the construction. They will be invited to offer bids after the province signs off on the plans in about four months, said Angelo Presta, director of hospital redevelopment.

Construction is expected to start in early summer and finish in 2018, he said.

Dr. Kunuk Rhee, the Cambridge hospital's new chief of staff, was eager to try on the glasses.

"It's going to make it so much easier to recruit physicians," he said of the virtual tours.

The walk through is also going to be used for staff training, getting workers used to a new building years before it's reality.

Thursday's tour started along the Grand River behind the hospital, facing the rear of the original building opened 60 years ago.

With everyone wearing 3D glasses, a dozen visitors flew up and over the dull, old building and looked left, where the sparkling addition beckoned. Across the roof of the new building and renovated B-wing, everyone landed in the parking lot, then entered the new main doors.

The tour went up and down stairs, in and out the glass-walled foyer next to a central outdoor courtyard with grass underfoot. The gift shop shelves were stocked with teddy bears and vases.

"Very surreal. This is freaky," Zelazny said as images moved across the floor, wall and ceiling around him.



Ken Zelazny, Cambridge Memorial Hospital Foundation chair, wears special glasses and "walks" in the 3D image of the new hospital addition projected in front and beside him on three walls.