

UAMS News Bureau

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UAMS Breaks Ground on a more than \$150 Million Energy Project at Main Campus

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) broke ground today in a ceremony marking the start of a more than \$150 million energy project, including a new \$49 million electrical power plant. The project is being paid for by a bond issue approved this year by the University of Arkansas Board of Trustees.

Shovels in hand, Board of Trustees members; local dignitaries; UAMS Chancellor Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA; and UAMS officials wearing hard hats officially turned dirt on the project that is estimated to result in \$4.8 million in savings annually.

“Moving forward with this work, we are seeing to the health of the university’s physical plant, so UAMS can continue to focus vigorously on the health of Arkansans, the education of its students and the innovation of its researchers,” Patterson said. “Part of our responsibility is being a good steward of the public’s dollars and of our finances in the most efficient way. This will help us do that.”

The energy project will enable UAMS to address \$101 million in maintenance needs, energy efficiency measures and rerouting Cedar Street onto a multilane expansion of Pine Street. Once completed UAMS’ energy efficiency ranking will be in the top 1% of all academic medical centers in the United States.

“For 140 years, UAMS and the city of Little Rock have worked together on a shared mission — the well-being of the people who live and work here,” said Little Rock Mayor Frank Scott Jr. “We’re glad today to join again with the university in a project that will help ensure that mission’s continued success for the city’s people and for all Arkansans.”

Over the three years of the project, the university will construct a new power plant on the east side of the campus, upgrade control systems, interior and exterior lighting, electrical systems, mechanical systems and building infrastructure. The new electrical generator plant will provide 100% back-up power for the UAMS campus, including the cooling system and research facilities. Currently, the UAMS West Central Energy Plant provides that backup power for UAMS inpatient facilities.

“Using guaranteed capital and savings in operating costs, UAMS is positioning itself to successfully weather the perfect storm of declining reimbursements and ever-increasing costs, challenges faced by many academic medical centers nationwide,” said Christina Clark, MBA, UAMS vice chancellor for institutional support services and chief operating officer.

To improve safety and create space for the project, the length of Cedar Street through the campus’ east side will be closed and traffic rerouted through the multilane expansion of Pine Street one block to the east. The city of Little Rock is contributing \$4.6 million to the projected \$12 million cost of relocation and other street improvements.

In addition to Patterson and Scott, other dignitaries at the groundbreaking included John Goodson, chair of the UA Board of Trustees; Kelly Eichler, assistant secretary of the UA Board of Trustees; University of Arkansas System President Donald R. Bobbitt; Beau Blair, chair of the UAMS Board of Advisors; State Rep. Andrew Collins of Little Rock; Becky Keogh, secretary of the Department of Energy and Environment; Randy Zook, president and CEO of the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce; Jay Chesshir, president and CEO of the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce; and representatives of CDI Contractors, Clark Contractors, Arkansas Energy Office and Bernhard Energy.

“At a time when universities must make critical decisions for the future, no one has avoided that responsibility,” Goodson said. “Teamwork and close partnership between the Board of Trustees and UAMS leadership have been central to the preparations that have gotten us to this point.”

The project team consists of all Arkansas companies including Bernhard Energy, Bernhard TME, CDI, Clark Contractors, Kirchner Architecture and Clear Energy.

UAMS is the state’s only health sciences university, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health; a graduate school; hospital; a main campus in Little Rock; a Northwest Arkansas regional campus in Fayetteville; a statewide network of regional campuses; and seven institutes: the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, Jackson T. Stephens Spine & Neurosciences Institute, Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute, Psychiatric Research Institute, Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, Translational Research Institute and Institute for Digital Health & Innovation. UAMS includes UAMS Health, a statewide health system that encompasses all of UAMS’ clinical enterprise including its hospital, regional clinics and clinics it operates or staffs in cooperation with other providers. UAMS is the only adult Level 1 trauma center in the state. *U.S. News & World Report* named UAMS Medical Center the state’s Best Hospital; ranked its ear, nose and throat program among the top 50 nationwide; and named six areas as high performing — cancer, colon cancer surgery, heart failure, hip replacement, knee replacement and lung cancer surgery. UAMS has 2,727 students, 870 medical residents and five dental residents. It is the state’s largest public employer with more than 10,000 employees, including 1,200 physicians who provide care to patients at UAMS, its regional campuses, Arkansas Children’s Hospital, the VA Medical Center and Baptist Health. Visit www.uams.edu or www.uamshealth.com. Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

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