

# Northeast Regional opens new heart lab

BY KELLY KIESEL  
Staff Reporter

Valentine's Day isn't the only day hearts get special treatment. Northeast Regional Medical Center has a new cardiac catheterization lab, which opened Feb. 12.

The lab allows physicians to detect heart diseases using specialized pictures. Scott Baker, team leader for the hospital's Cardiac Program, helped bring the service to Kirksville.

Baker said some of the conditions in which a catheterization lab would be used are when a patient has major heart and vessel blockages, heart valve disease or muscle dysfunction. During a heart catheterization procedure physicians insert a tube into the patient's coronary artery that leads to vessels of the heart, and then a dye is injected that outlines the arteries of the heart. This dye allows physicians to determine the severity of the disease by looking for a blockage. Before, patients either would go to the University of Missouri Hospital or Boone Hospital for this procedure.

"Until now, Kirksville residents, and really Northeast Missouri residents, have had to drive an hour or more to another town to have a heart cath done,"

Baker said. "This created more burden to patients and families who were forced to take time off of work, drive a considerable distance and assume the costs associated with that."

Because of these difficulties, the demand for the catheterization lab was high among Kirksville physicians.

"It has allowed us to be a more complete health care facility in Kirksville," Baker said. "We have spent lots of time and money in education, training and equipment to bring this service to Northeast [Missouri]."

Baker said that within the last three months, the hospital has purchased a state-of-the-art nuclear imaging camera dedicated to heart studies, opened the catheterization lab and signed new physicians to contracts. It also is in the process of purchasing new stress test equipment. Plans for the hospital in the future include adding four new ICU beds and renovations of the OB/Delivery area.

"This procedure has become very safe over the years with advancements in technology and techniques used," Baker said. "The same Mo. Heart Center doctors doing this procedure in a clinic in Columbia are now doing them right here in Kirksville."

Chief Nursing Officer Cin-



Krista Goodman/Index  
Lead CT Tech Nicole Cordray stands in the new CAT Lab and demonstrates the versatility of the new machine. The device is very flexible so that the doctors can examine every angle of the heart.

dy Carter sees many patients before and after their time in the catheterization lab.

"We took a look at how many patients were transferring out and how many referrals we were getting," Carter said. "We were losing our patients because we didn't have the service, and we want to keep them here."

Three physicians currently work in the

cardiac catheterization lab. The facility is used on Thursdays and housed its first patient Feb. 12. As the hospital builds volume and more patients are coming in, the lab will open Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Director of imaging Betty Barber supervises the cardiac catheterization lab. Barber said there will be more stress testing and other

procedures that will help the hospital's volume increase. She said she thinks the hospital will get patients from the surrounding communities and counties because the hospital has the only cardiac catheterization lab in the area. Barber said she has seen patients from Milan, Brookfield and Lancaster who currently use the hospital's facilities.

## Digital transition now delayed until the summer

Congress extends  
deadline, local stations  
continue to supply analog

BY COLETTE LINTON  
Staff Reporter

It's official. The digital transition has been postponed until June 12 according to the National Association of Broadcasters' Feb. 5 press release.

Ditching traditional analog broadcasting was expected to take effect Feb. 17, but President Obama and his transition team urged Congress to extend the mandated deadline to give unprepared households more time.

The NAB contacted 2,650 homes in a nationwide survey conducted Jan. 2. They found that 82 percent of over-the-air television households are prepared for the transition, according to the press release.



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index  
Sophomore Garrett McCormach watches cable in Missouri Hall. Students with cable do not need to worry about the DTV transition.

Individuals with subscriptions to cable, satellite or another pay service, who have a TV with a digital tuner or a converter box that will plug into

their current analog TV, are considered equipped for the deadline.

Digital broadcasting will offer a clearer picture and more program-

ming options for consumers. Some television channels will be used by police and fire departments for emergency communication and others will be auctioned to companies to provide new wireless services, according to the TV Converter Box Coupon Program.

"When a station goes digital, they can transmit more than one channel, sometimes as many as five or six channels, whereas you may have only gotten less than half of that with analog," said Chuck Updyke, owner of Cable Technologies. "The technology does allow for some enhancements, but Kirksville is at a little bit of a disadvantage at this point in time because we simply don't have as many stations."

Kirksville's geography might have an influence on the digital signals that can be received.

"Where [consumers] were once receiving an analog signal, they may not receive a digital signal,"

Updyke said. "Digital is less forgiving about trees and terrain."

John Wise, Chief Engineer at KTVO, said that although the DTV Delay Act brought more time for customers to become better prepared, it costs broadcast stations more money to continue supplying analog signals in addition to digital signals during the four month extension.

KTVO TV 3 station in Kirksville will continue to provide analog broadcasting but it costs additional money to keep both transmitters running, he said. The digital transition has cost KTVO \$2 million so far, and they expect to have spent \$3 million spent by the time the conversion is over.

Counteracting the cost of the transition relies partly on the economy in Kirksville, Wise said. As the economy struggles, businesses that leave the area will not be buying advertisements anymore.

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