

# Just what the doctor ordered

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Whether or not you have 20-20 vision, if you live in Las Cruces and are interested in this community's future, the year 2020 should be in your line of sight. That spring, we will have the first medical school graduates at the Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine walking down an aisle right here in Las Cruces.

Those first 150 or so students will represent a great deal for our community. They will represent promise. Young people in our region will see these medical students all over. That tangible evidence will show our local kids it's possible to study to be a doctor. They will represent a need fulfilled. New Mexico needs doctors and medical professionals. Particularly in the rural areas. According to Robert Juhasz, the president of the American Osteopathic Association, who was in Las Cruces Monday, April 27, for the school's foundation ceremonies, osteopathic doctors place importance on serving rural areas.

They will represent a coming together of our region. Those new doctors can fulfill needs not only in New Mexico, but in west Texas and northern Mexico as well. It is something we all can agree on. They will represent jobs. It takes quite a few people to operate a medical school. It is estimated when the college is up and running, it will support about 350 jobs. Right away, it will also support jobs, closer to 400 as construction ramps up. Mickey Clute of Gencon, who is working on the project, said he has been tasked with completing the 80,000 square foot building in just about a year. His company has done things similarly, and he thinks he can do this one as well.

They will represent a new chapter in the story of New Mexico State University. The public-private partnership between NMSU and Burrell College's investors is unique in the United States. There are 141 allopathic (M.D.) hospitals in the U.S., and Burrell makes the 31<sup>st</sup> osteopathic (D.O.) hospital in the U.S., but none previously have had this type of collaboration. Plus, the beautiful facility, in the shadow of "A" Mountain and Aggie Memorial Stadium, will make an indelibly positive impact on the landscape of the NMSU campus.

They will represent the value of collaboration, conversation and timing. Before the opening ceremonies, a dancer and a flautist from the Zuni Pueblo entertained the assembling crowd at the construction site. It was a little chilly but clouds were beautiful in a blue New Mexico sky above the Organ Mountains. A wonderful setting for a celebration.

None of that would have happened if several key people had not said, "What if?" and several other key people had not said, "Why not?" Several people said both. Those include George Mycahaskiw, a D.O. and anesthesiologist; John Hummer, local real estate broker and original CEO of MountainView Regional Medical Center; and Dan Burrell, a Santa Fe businessman. Their discussions went the right direction and found some other key people and those three now make up the key officers of Burrell College. Mycahaskiw is the Dean and Chief Academic Officer. Hummer is an executive board member and CEO.

Burrell is the Executive Chairman. Among the other key people they found were Garrey Carruthers, president of New Mexico State University, Gov. Susana Martinez and a host of others. If you think it takes a village to raise a child, it really takes a village to raise a medical school. Richard Coltharp is the publisher of the Las Cruces Bulletin. He can be reached at [richard@lascrucesbulletin.com](mailto:richard@lascrucesbulletin.com)