

# Confronting Cancer

A NEW LOUISIANA RESEARCH CENTER WILL BE DEVOTED TO FIGHTING CANCER. BY KELLY McCABE

The Louisiana Cancer Research Consortium's determination to bring a new cancer center to the state has never wavered. Hurricane Katrina and stalled financing have delayed the project, but the group still remains dedicated to fighting cancer in the state, which has the No. 1 cancer mortality rate in the United States. The new Louisiana Cancer Research Center (LCRC) will be the first of its kind in that it will be managed and operated by a consortium when it opens. "It is our mission to construct this facility and pursue and achieve National Cancer Institute (NCI) designation," LCRC Capital Project Manager Adrian Rodriguez says. The center will house the combined medical efforts of Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, Tulane University Health Sciences Center and Xavier University.

"There are just over 60 National Cancer Center-designated cancer centers throughout the United States, which is the prestigious gold standard," LCRC President and CEO Steve Moyer says. "There isn't an NCI-designated cancer center in Louisiana, Mississippi or Arkansas – the closest ones are more than 350 miles away. We are committed to trying to address the severity of cancer and keep the outflow of patients from leaving the state."

The consortium has been working with Brice Building Co. and the state since December 2004, but various hurdles and challenges delayed the project two to three years. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the LCRC found it difficult to secure funding, but Moyer says the state of Louisiana stepped up and contributed \$102 million, despite a \$2 billion budget shortfall it was facing at the time.

"The state has certainly seen the significance and the importance of why this needs to be done," he states. "What was really reassuring was the state's commitment to making sure the project came to fruition, even with the devastation of Katrina."

The financing delay followed by the nation's recession also challenged the general contractor to try to keep construction costs down. "Bringing it to construction was very difficult when you throw in Hurricane Katrina and the effects it had on the local economy and the



The Louisiana Cancer Research Center will offer advanced cancer care.

## Louisiana Cancer Research Center

[www.lcrc.info](http://www.lcrc.info)

- Location: New Orleans
- Cost: \$102 million
- Employees on-site: 150 at peak
- Scope: Cancer research facility

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*-Steve Moyer, president and CEO*

beginning of the recession last year," Brice President Ben Nevins explains. "From a contractor's standpoint, one of the biggest challenges we had was trying to balance the project budget and scope. The project grew in scope and complexity, and finally a line was drawn in the sand, and it was one that we were able to maintain. It was a very difficult balancing act while riding through a roller-coaster economy." Ground was broken in February 2009.

## Specialized Care

The 10-story LCRC will have 260,000 square feet of space, which includes a parking garage, common areas, a meeting facility, wet lab spaces and additional research space. The first five floors will be post-tensioned concrete, and floors six through 10 are structural steel, Brice Senior Project Manager Keith Clement explains.

The building's interior has "striking ceiling heights" where framed, hanging, ceiling-mounted and freestanding artwork can be displayed. Office space on levels seven, eight, nine and 10 have an innovative design that allows for collaborative research. For example, the floors are interconnected with their own dedicated monumental stairwells.

A modern aesthetic permeates the entire facility, and daylighting will be a big feature. The building will incorporate ample windows into the inner corridors, which allow sunlight to penetrate into the core of the building, and a skylight on the roof provides lighting for the

10th floor office space. To prevent the ample daylight from overheating the building, sunshades will be incorporated into the structure, and an aluminum composite panel system eyebrow, which will hang 7 to 8 feet over the top of the building to provide additional shade.

### Close Call

Because the LCRC will be home to very sensitive samples and experiments, the construction team is going to great lengths to make sure they will be secure. Therefore, Brice is constructing the facility's parking structure as its own building within the LCRC to cut down on vibrations that the vehicles may cause. Just two-and-a-half inches separate the garage and the research center, which is challenging for the general contractor.

"We did a thorough vibration analysis and redesigned the structure to separate them, so they wouldn't have any traffic-induced vibrations," Rodriguez explains. "They have a very, very small clearance."

Clement explains that to resolve the issue, the construction team is using plate steel to form two sets of cast-in-place concrete columns on each level. "The columns supporting the garage are approximately 24-by-48 inches, and the primary building columns are approximately 36-by-48 inches with two-and-a-half-inch separation," he says. "In addition, there are concrete post-tension transfer beams that are approximately 42-by-84 inches, which are designed to support the structural steel component of the building construction, which makes up levels six through 10."

### Community Support

Rodriguez says that the project is causing a great deal of activity and excitement in the city, which is still struggling from the effects of Hurricane









Katrina. "We are located in a downtown area of New Orleans that is redeveloping, so we have been strategically located to help bring on a new corridor," he explains. "It means a lot to a number of the other projects to see us succeed and pass the litmus test."

To generate even more economic activity in the area, Nevins says Brice is almost exclusively using local suppliers and subcontractors. He says the extra activity has been sorely needed.

"That's making a big impact right now because work is slow," he states. "This is really happening at a time when people need work."

The economic boost to the area is apparent, but Rodriguez says the LCRC also will boost the city's morale. "We're redeveloping an area of the city that, at one point, was really the gem of the city – and we're going to create that again," he states. ♦

**Louisiana Cancer Research Consortium** In order to achieve success, the Louisiana Cancer Research Consortium (LCRC) turned to the management expertise of the Adams Management Services Corporation to help interface with and guide a team of professionals consisting of RMJM – a global leader in architectural, planning and design services – and the renowned multidisciplinary engineering firm of Vanderweil Engineers. With this all-star team in place, the LCRC stands ready to realize its dream of opening a world-class cancer research facility. Thanks to the continued efforts of these great partners, the citizens of Louisiana will be one step closer to freedom from cancer.

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