



to 211 patients, from its current post-fire accommodation of 153 (see “Growth served,” Healthlines, March 7, 2019).

It was a “surreal” moment for Doug Teeter standing outside the entrance to Feather River’s emergency room last month. He was there with several other speakers—including Sen. Jim Nielsen and Assemblyman James Gallagher—to commemorate the passage of Senate Bill 156, which allows Adventist Health to operate the facility as a standalone emergency room through 2027.

The last time the county supervisor was on the hospital’s campus was Nov. 8, 2018. That day, survivors were stuck there for hours as the fire raged around them.

“I watched those [medical offices] burn down as we were here trying to make the elderly and infirm comfortable,” he told the CN&R.

Adventist Health CEO Rick Rawson couldn’t provide a timeline for the reopening, because the hospital has a lot figure out. The utility plant, which was damaged in the fire, has to be repaired, and the organization will need federal and state support to proceed, he said. It also has to draft a plan for staffing and transferring patients to other area hospitals should they need trauma care, for example.

But the hospital intends to run a 24/7 emergency room, which Rawson said will be critical not only for Paradise residents but also for those living in Magalia and outlying Ridge communities.

Michelle John, the superintendent

Supervisor Doug Teeter offers his support of Adventist Health and its pursuit of a standalone emergency room. On Nov. 8, 2018, Teeter sought refuge at the campus with other fire survivors.

of Paradise Unified School District, already knows the ER will make a difference for students: “We’ve actually had a couple of broken bones on the football field, and kids have had to be transported, in pain, off of the Ridge,” she told those at the hospital’s campus that day.

In Teeter’s view, the ER will help repopulate the Ridge, because of the economic, health and safety benefits it will offer. “To see Adventist Health willing to invest back into a community that has a lot of challenges,” he told the CN&R, “it’s going to make a huge difference for a lot of people.”

Over the past year, Adventist Health has been working to restore its services in the region. It reopened its Paradise clinic, offering primary and specialty services, and opened a walk-in clinic in Paradise. In Chico, it launched a Cancer Care Center and expanded primary and specialty services. In addition to the emergency room, Adventist Health also plans to help re-establish a Butte County EMS base station in Paradise utilizing a \$49,000 grant from the Butte Strong Fund.

“That’s not lost on us, that what we do and how we invest can influence [the regrowth of the Ridge],” Rawson said. “So instead of just reacting, what we want to do is be a partner and really help Paradise and the Ridge as it grows and redevelops, and really serve all of Butte County.”

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