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**Slidell Memorial Hospital names architect for new regional cancer center
*Test boring for state-of-the-art facility is underway***

Slidell, LA – July 16, 2008—After an extensive national search, Slidell Memorial Hospital’s leadership and Board of Commissioners recently selected AE Design as the architectural firm for design and construction of a new regional cancer center. Marietta, Ga.-based AE Design, which specializes in oncology and diagnostic imaging facilities, has established itself among the nation’s leading specialists in the field, completing more than 100 oncology facility projects in the world.

Engineers began drilling test bores this week to determine the necessary depth of the pilings required for the construction of the cancer center, which will offer East St. Tammany residents one-stop cancer care close to home. Groundbreaking is anticipated in December.

Daniel Chang, AE Design president, and Mike Palazzo, associate, is lead on the project. “We are honored and excited to be the selected architect for a comprehensive cancer center that will serve Slidell and surrounding areas,” said Palazzo.

The company has assembled an experienced team of engineers for the project including Duplantis Design Group of Thibodaux, La.; Wardlaw and Lasseigne, LLC, Baton Rouge; CRS Engineering & Design Consultants, Birmingham, Ala.; and Louisiana Landscape Specialty, Inc., Baton Rouge.

Developing a cancer center with the scope of care that will be available at SMH’s new cancer center requires the cooperation of many different groups who are working closely with AE Design during the design and construction of the center. The Cancer Program Working Group, an internal team including physicians, nursing staff, Commissioners and other hospital employees, helps ensure the facility incorporates the efficiencies and attributes that best serve the patients and medical specialists helping them fight their disease.

Bob Hawley, Chief Executive Officer of the hospital, and several members of the Cancer Program Working Group recently toured a number of cancer facilities in different locations. Hawley said the center will allow SMH to provide comprehensive cancer care in one central location. “Slidell Memorial Hospital has been a leader in cancer treatment technology for years. We’re excited to have the opportunity to be home to one of the most advanced Regional Cancer Centers in the south,” Hawley said.

The SMH regional cancer center will meet the growing demand for comprehensive cancer diagnosis and treatment close to home for families in the area. The center will host advanced technologies such as image guided radiation therapy, nanotechnology for drug delivery, specialized ultrasound, genetic testing and more.

Planners expect the center to attract patients from throughout the Gulf South region. It will be easier to get to, yet have the same level-or better-technology than larger facilities in other states or regions.

Funding for the center's creation will come from \$17.5 million in excess funds available from a 2003 tax millage that was re-dedicated with voter approval in late 2007. Once completed, patients will be able to have diagnostic work-up, outpatient treatment and support services all under one roof.

ABOUT SMH

Slidell Memorial Hospital is a full-service 182-bed acute care not-for-profit community hospital located at 1001 Gause Blvd., in the heart of Slidell. Founded in 1959, SMH is the third-largest employer in St. Tammany Parish, employing 1,300 full, part-time and pool clinical and administrative employees. SMH serves as a primary healthcare resource for families in St. Tammany Parish, LA; Pearl River County, MS; and the greater Mississippi Gulf Coast region. It is located online at <http://www.slidellmemorial.org>.

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