

| April 2009   | June 2009   | June 2009  | 2010   | March 2010   |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Family Health Clinic opened at the hospital</b> | <b>Hospital started its own rehabilitation services, no longer contracting outside agency for local physical therapy services</b> | <b>\$9.5 million renovation and construction project completed; over 500 citizens participated in re-dedication and 50th anniversary celebration with US Representative Jerry Moran as the keynote speaker</b> | <b>Rice County District Hospital received the Business Excellence Award from the Kansas Department of Commerce</b> | <b>US Congress passed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act</b> |

# A history of Lyons Medical Center

**By DEBBIE WIENS**  
When he made the decision to come to Lyons to practice medicine at age 31 in 1961, Dr. Richard Siemens found a family town where he could raise his children. The modern, up-to-date hospital had just been built, in 1960, and Dr. James Grimes had a new clinic on East Avenue South, just a year old. "There were 11 doctors in Rice County at the time," Dr. Siemens said. "Everyone practiced alone, and many of them were getting up in years, so it looked like there was room for more doctors." After Siemens graduated from KU Medical School, spent some time in public medicine and a residency in Ventura, Calif., he had numerous opportunities to set up his own practice, but chose Lyons for the schools and the new hospital.

Siemens joined Grimes as an associate for a year, then formed a partnership with him. Later they were joined by Dr. Curtis Wolf. They were known as general practitioners, covering everything from colds and flu to pregnancies and deliveries, pediatrics and geriatrics, even trauma. "For complete OB care, including prenatal, delivery, post-delivery, we charged \$100," Siemens said. Office visits were \$3, house calls, made every day, were \$5 and included trips to Chase and Little River and country homes. "We never turned anyone away," he said. They got unmarried OB patients who had been refused by Reno County doctors, and always accepted what they could pay as full payment.

Siemens said it was common practice for Kansas rural communities to pay doctors a big bonus if they'd stayed in practice there for a given length of time, enough to build a clinic and set it up. That didn't happen in Lyons, and the doctors never asked for it. In 1977, the three partners built the new clinic, The Lyons Medical Center, north of the hospital. "At one time, we had a total of 20 employees," Siemens said. There were nurses, lab and xray techs, office and house-keeping staff in addition to the doctors. Each doctor had a nurse who usually worked with them, but they kept it a family practice where nurses could switch if someone needed to take time off to attend a school function or care for a child.

Siemens said they scheduled appointments every 15 minutes, and usually had six hours of office time, in addition to hospital rounds morning and evening, walk-ins and other emergencies. "We rarely had a vacant time," Siemens said, "and if we did we were glad for the break, and that it shortened the waiting time for those still in line." He said it was important to take time to listen to patients, and often once the primary reason was covered, a "by the way" would come up, extending the time. "Overhead costs in 1994 were \$3 per minute," Siemens noted.

The doctors had privileges at Lyons Hospital, and most patients were admitted there if needed. Any needing specialty care were sent on to Hutchinson, Newton or Wichita. Various larger entities were soliciting contracts with smaller clinics at the time, and in 1986 Lyons Medical Center

entered into a management agreement with Hutchinson Clinic. This freed the family practitioners from the headaches and time spent dealing with payment issues, insurance and compliance.

Both the Siemens children, daughter Charlotte and son Doug, are Lyons High School graduates, and have gone on to have successful careers. Charlotte, also a KU Med school grad with residencies in pediatric and adult psychiatry, is a pediatric psychiatrist practicing in Fargo, N.D. and Doug is a professor of education at Bethel College with a Masters in Special Ed and a PhD in Administration. "The Lyons school system served our children well," Siemens said.

Dr. Wolf died in his 50s from pancreatic cancer. "It was quite a shock," Siemens said. Over the years after that, there were several doctors who came to practice in Lyons, usually to fulfill a loan forgiveness agreement, and were gone once the loan was paid.

Other physicians who came and stayed long enough to become a part of the community were Tim Talbert, Aug. 1, 1992 - June 30, 1998; Scott Stringfield, Sept. 1, 1987 - April 30, 1995; Mark Hilger, July 1, 1997 - May 31, 2001. Matt Schlotterback spent 10 years in Lyons before moving to the Hutchinson Clinic Sept. 1, 2011.

The most notable exception is Dr. Roger Tobias, a Lyons native who came back home to begin a practice at Lyons Medical Center in 1982,

and has been here ever since. Another long-time practitioner at LMC is Physician's Assistant Dale Diener, who has been here since Aug. 3, 1981.

Siemens continued to practice at the Lyons clinic until age 65, retiring Jan. 1, 1995. He then spent seven years in Indian community healthcare, totally retiring 10 years ago at age 72. He and his wife live in a townhome in Kidron Bethell Village in North Newton.

Siemens believes the Affordable Care Act includes many needed changes, and that everyone should be able to get the medical care they need, and that everyone should pay something for it. He said the hardest thing to sell to patients is preventive medicine, those things they can do themselves to reduce or prevent disease, but prevention education is the key to making healthcare affordable.

The biggest change in medicine Siemens has seen is the high-tech medicine that is now available that can save or extend lives immensely. But, he says, we can't afford it. Again, prevention would render some of those remedies unnecessary, he said.

In January, 2012, the Lyons Medical Center was acquired by Hospital District No. 1 of Rice County District Hospital as part of their consolidation plan, and the agreement with Hutchinson Clinic ended. The hospital assumed ownership of the practice of Dr. Roger Tobias, and in April, 2012 the LMC building was acquired by the hospital.



**RCH Dietary Department**  
Left to right: Linda Barker, Roberta Serbin, Caleb Dawson-Hogg, Elizabeth Coldwater, Tina Kelley; Not pictured: Bea Olson, Tiffany Thomas.

## Linda Barker, dietary manager, Rice County District Hospital

**By LOUANN COBB**  
Linda Barker, dietary manager Rice County District Hospital (pictured above), said she is proud that while working a full time job and her three children were in school she still did the mommy thing. She was an officer of Lyons Booster Club, a leader of Valley 4-H Club and a volunteer reader at school. Her first job as a dietary aide lasted one year. She left to pursue a degree in computer programming at Brown Mackie College in Salina, got married and started a family.

"When I finally made a decision to return to the workforce, I went back to hospital administrator John Mays, and he hired me back," Barker said.

She worked her way up the ladder from a cook aide, to a cook, full time cook and dietary manager. She is certified through North America University via correspondence, a drooling process that was worth it.

Barker said the best part of her day is working the 6 a.m. shift. On Wednesdays, she arrives at 5 a.m. to prepare for the Sunshine Café in the Bolton Activity Center, where swingbed patients and employees can order off a menu.

Several constructions ago, the dining room was the break room. Employees

were also allowed to eat free. Mays would watch them through the dining room window. If the nurses sat too long he would hand them a broom or a mop. He believed in working for your money.

"When she first started, the kitchen had a family-style freezer stocked with a whole beef and pork," Barker said. Kitchen cooks made up the menus and a registered dietitian checked off on them.

"We prepared a lot of special diets back then," Barker said. "Times have changed. Now we purchase our menus from Gerwick, a dietary association."

Barker visits with patients to get their likes and dislikes and works with a consulting dietitian.

Kitchen staff makes adjustments so the meals are more locally friendly. Hospital dietitian Ellen Garden goes over them to make sure they are correct.

"It's my job to make sure everyone in the

kitchen is following through with diets ordered by the doctors," she said. "If a patient isn't eating a menu entrée we find a way to make it work."

Ninety-five percent of the food is cooked by scratch, even the cream pies.

"People may not realize all the responsibilities that fall on the kitchen staff," Barker said. "We have regulations we have to follow."

To stay certified, she takes 45 hours of continuing education every three years.

The hospital food service also provides meals to Headstart, Meals on Wheels, Noble Place, hospital employees, and prepares the food for special occasions and the foundation golf tournament.

Barker said like any, her job could be frustrating.

"I wouldn't be here if I didn't like it," she said. "I enjoy my job because it's a family work environment." She recently celebrated her 37th year on Sept. 7.



**RCH Outpatient Clinic Department**  
Left to right: Carol Geier, Tara Link

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