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BOULDER CITY HOSPITAL CELEBRATES 55 YEARS

On April 15th Boulder City Hospital will celebrate 55 years of service to the community. Boulder City's first hospital was built by the Six Companies, the group responsible for building Hoover Dam. The U.S. Public Health Service, the government agency that would have been responsible for maintaining health in the town, couldn't afford to build a hospital. A second government agency, the Bureau of Reclamation, felt since the majority of workers on the project were employed by Six Companies, it was the companies' responsibility to build and maintain a hospital.

The original hospital site was the top of Block 8, a hill on the northeast side of town originally reserved for a resort hotel. The view from the hospital was magnificent: the Eldorado Valley and McCullough Mountains to the south and to the north the Colorado River wound lazily through its bed. Construction began in August 1931 and the hospital was opened November 15, 1931. The cost of the original Boulder City Hospital was \$20,000.

When the dam was finished in 1935 and the Six Companies left Boulder City, the hospital was closed. Those needing medical care went to Las Vegas. In some emergency cases, the time to travel into town proved fatal. In 1938 the National Park Service assumed responsibility for the hospital building and turned it into a museum and office but soon vacated it and the building was left empty for two years. In December 1943 the U.S. Public Health Service reopened the hospital to care for war wounded but it wouldn't be long before the Bureau of Reclamation took control of the hospital, which continuously lost money.

In 1954, with no forewarning, the Bureau again decided to close the hospital. If Boulder City wanted a hospital, it had to raise \$15,000 in two weeks to cover operating expenses and maintenance. The townspeople rallied and began a door-to-door fundraising campaign called 'Save the Hospital' on February 25, 1954. By March 18 the fund surpassed \$15,000 and the hospital was officially turned over to citizen control on April 15, 1954.

The public is invited to join us for a special reception on Wednesday, April 15th at 2:00 p.m. in the Hospital lobby in celebration of 55 years of caring. Light refreshments will be served.

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To learn more about Boulder City Hospital or the Boulder City Hospital Foundation, please contact Wendy Kyser at (702) 293-0214 or wkyser@bouldercityhospital.org.