

August 12, 2008 - Murtha compliments Frick renovations

The Daily Courier

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Murtha compliments Frick renovations By Mark Hofmann

Daily Courier

Tuesday, August 12, 2008

Paying a visit to Mt. Pleasant on Monday, U.S. Rep. John Murtha visited Excelsa Health Frick Hospital to see how an investment he aided is helping the community.

Since 2005, Murtha has secured nearly \$600,000 for the hospital through federal appropriations, \$250,000 of which served to kick-start fundraising efforts for emergency department renovations.

Most recently, Murtha brought \$341,000 to the hospital for enhancements to geriatric care. The earmark will assist in securing appropriate medical equipment to meet the needs of the aging population.

"The aging population and population with diabetes is big in Western Pennsylvania," Murtha said during a tour of the hospital's renovated emergency room and its Skilled Care Center.

"The emergency room continues to set the standard," hospital CEO Dave Gallatin said. The department has reached higher than the 90th percentile in patient satisfaction nationwide among hospitals of the same size, he added.

The emergency room renovations began in 2007 and were completed in May with a new, comforting look and atmosphere.

The emergency room has more space, an extra bed and more equipment, including a digital X-ray imaging suite where an X-ray image can be sent directly to a computer monitor within seconds after the picture is taken.

"I'm impressed with the changes to the emergency room," Murtha said.

Murtha said he tries to stress preventive care, staying on top of diabetes research.

"A diabetic patient takes more money to care for than someone without diabetes," Murtha said. "We got a long ways to go to get the preventive medicine we need."

Murtha took a moment to praise the 900 volunteers and 4,500 employees that comprise Excelsa Health, which ranks as the region's third-largest health care network.

"This is an amazing thing you got here," Murtha said. "Congratulations and compliments to you and what you did."