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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **MODERNIZED HOSPITAL TO BENEFIT EAST KOOTENAY PATIENTS**

CRANBROOK – Premier Gordon Campbell today officially opened the doors of a \$32-million renovation project at the East Kootenay Regional Hospital (EKRH), to provide patients with a new emergency department, ambulatory care centre and front entrance.

“Whether it’s a first-time mom giving birth or an injured patient rushed to emergency, our investment will provide East Kootenay patients with a regional hospital that will meet the needs of the population for decades to come,” said Campbell. “Across the province, new and expanded health facilities are being planned, undergoing construction and opening as part of a government commitment to modernize health facilities across British Columbia.”

The project includes a new emergency department and a state-of-the-art ambulatory care centre for patients who receive treatment on an outpatient basis. Renovations include a new main entrance and lobby, with a waiting room area that allows privacy for incoming patients, a new entrance for ambulances, and a more accessible entryway to the hospital.

“The development of a true referral centre for the 80,000 residents of the East Kootenay has been a dream for seniors, health-care professionals and families for decades,” said East Kootenay MLA Bill Bennett. “For the first time ever, patients, their families and their referring family physicians have a full complement of specialists to rely on at EKRH.”

The project is expected to be completed by mid-2007 and will include reinstallation of equipment and minor upgrades to existing infrastructure.

“The renovations and additions were on time and on budget. Hospital staff as well as patients will benefit,” said Interior Health Board chair Alan Dolman. “Updating the hospital means it is more attractive for specialists, with more than 16 new specialist physicians coming to practice at East Kootenay Regional Hospital since 2002.”

The Province of British Columbia, through the Interior Health Authority, funded 60 per cent of the costs, with the remaining 40 per cent provided by the Kootenay East Regional Hospital District (KERHD).

“These improvements are vital to maintaining effective care delivery for East Kootenay residents,” said KERHD chair Scott Manjak. “The extensive renovations and expansion makes East Kootenay Regional Hospital a truly regional centre.”

Including diagnostic equipment purchases, minor capital, and the major capital project underway today, over \$46 million has been invested in East Kootenay Regional Hospital since 2001. New equipment includes a multi-slice CT scanner, a gamma-scanner, two C-arms and a mobile MRI.

British Columbia's health system will benefit from more investments like this over the next three years as part of government's \$2.3-billion health sector capital plan.

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