

Groundbreaking for Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences: *New Medical University Moves Region in Exciting New Direction*

The shovels of dirt turned recently in Terrace Heights signaled a brand new day for the Yakima Valley. The [Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences \(PNWU\)](#) broke ground on the first of many planned buildings at their new campus. The 48,000 square foot facility will be ready by the fall of 2008 when the University opens its doors. The school will serve 80 medical students to start and eventually have over 400 students when the institution is fully operational.

PNWU is the first new school of its type in over 60 years. It fills a critical need within the region and we should all feel very fortunate to have this new institution in Yakima. An economic impact study recently completed by the university confirms big benefits:

- The medical school currently has seven employees and five consultants. When the school opens another 25 staff and faculty are expected to be hired. At full enrollment (estimated at 2011), the college will employ 44 staff and faculty. These workers will ultimately generate a payroll of \$5.8 million.
- When the medical school opens, students and staff are estimated to make \$1,401,000 in taxable purchases on household items; increasing to \$3.7 million once the university reaches full enrollment.
- At full enrollment, local jurisdictions will receive \$2.1 million in annual property and retail sales taxes as a result of the University's ongoing operations.

These are impacts that will ripple throughout the Yakima Valley. More importantly though PNWU signals a new day for our region. This new institution will put the region on the map for Higher Education and move our community in exciting new directions. Our Valley's reputation will definitely get a boost as PNWU grows to complement Heritage University, Perry Technical Institute, and the Yakima Valley Community College.

The medical university will also bring lots of fresh talent, in the form of students and faculty, to our Valley. In this vein new doors of opportunity may open for us as these medical professionals spur research, innovation and entrepreneurship within our community. At a minimum the Yakima region will certainly benefit from its deepening reputation as a college town.

University leaders suggest that Yakima is the home to the new institution because it is central to the five-state region. They also tout that Yakima is familiar with the health care access challenges that rural areas face. This sounds good, but leadership is the most fundamental reason that PNWU is in Yakima. People like Dr. Lloyd Butler, Dr. Sean Mullen, Dr. Greg Mick, Karen Hyatt, Jean Pryor, Bush Preacher and many others had the imagination and persistence to bring the medical school to fruition. We are so fortunate that these great people live in our community.

New Vision is thrilled that the new university is taking off - we applaud the local vision and talent that turned this dream into reality. PNWU is an enormous gift that will drive positive changes in our Valley and we are grateful to Dr. Butler and his team for moving this new institution forward.