

Posted: April 1, 2009

Updated: Today at 3:00 AM

## [A new Valley Crest 'ahead of schedule'](#)

**New nursing home could open by Dec. Then county could sell current site, land for revenue.**

By [Jennifer Learn-Andes jandes@timesleader.com](#)

Luzerne County Reporter

Walls are about to be constructed at the new Valley Crest Nursing Home in Plains Township, and the owners marked the occasion Tuesday by signing a beam.



[click image to enlarge](#)

Residents of Valley Crest Nursing Home watch Tuesday as representatives of Complete HealthCare Resources commemorate construction of the new Plains Township home by signing a beam.

Complete HealthCare Resources, of Dresher, Pa., assumed ownership of the financially troubled county nursing home in January 2006.

Luzerne County officials are eager for construction of a new home because they want to sell the existing structure and surrounding land to generate revenue.

In the best-case scenario, the new home will be completed in December 2009, said Pete Licari, President and Chief Executive Officer at Complete HealthCare.

“We’re ahead of schedule. We were thinking construction might go into early next year, but if the weather holds up, we should be done this year,” Licari said.

The new three-story, \$12-million, state-of-the-art home will hold 180 residents. Valley Crest’s occupancy has been around 170 residents and was up to 174 on Tuesday, Licari said.

“Now that residents see the building, they’re starting to get excited,” he said.

County Engineer Joe Gibbons said a steering committee of county managers have been working on a plan to sell the property, though they are limited from marketing until they receive a firm date on when Complete Healthcare will vacate the old home.

The county owns about 58 acres and the old home, which was built in 1958, Gibbons said.

The steering committee is trying to come up with a package that would generate the most revenue for the county, Gibbons said. Options include: selling the entire parcel as is; leasing out the old building and selling the remaining land; or selling the building and land separately, he said.

Gibbons said the county will act swiftly on future plans so taxpayers aren't stuck heating and repairing the old home.

"It's a big building and would be hard to maintain if it was vacant," Gibbons said.

It's unclear how much the county should expect to make from a sale, though millions of dollars have been projected in the past.

Commissioners did not budget revenue from the sale of Valley Crest land this year because it wasn't realistic to expect the money until 2010, county officials said.