

BlueCross campus takes shape



MOVE-IN DATES

Scheduled completion and move-in dates of buildings at new corporate headquarters:

■ **Parking deck**
Dec. 29, 2008

■ **Building 5**
Feb. 6, 2009

■ **Building 4**
Feb. 9, 2009

■ **Building 3**
April 3, 2009

■ **Building 2**
May 15, 2009

■ **Building 1**
June 12, 2009

Source: BlueCross
BlueShield of Tennessee

STAFF PHOTOS BY D. PATRICK HARDING

Cement trucks move through the construction site of the new BlueCross BlueShield campus on Cameron Hill.

\$299 million home office on time and budget, officials say

BY MIKE PARE
DEPUTY BUSINESS EDITOR

Downtown Chattanooga's skyline is starting to take another shape as BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee's new corporate headquarters arises from Cameron Hill.

A year after construction started on the city's largest-ever office investment, the \$299 million project is on time and budget, said Dan Jacobson, vice president of properties for the Chattanooga-based health insurer.

He said the garage is the first structure to go up as construction crews work from south to north on the site that overlooks the central city and Tennessee River.

"Three thousand pieces comprise this garage," Mr. Jacobson said about the eight-level, 3,000-space parking deck.

The site will have two ways for workers to enter the new campus, and BlueCross' flexible scheduling will help ease the traffic to the entrances and exits, he said.

In addition, there are discussions of putting a traffic signal or roundabout at M.L. King Boulevard.

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Audio is at www.timesfreepress.com.

The 950,000-square-foot home office will have five buildings to house about 4,000 employees who will be consolidated from a number of locations throughout the city.

Mr. Jacobson said the two buildings on which floors already are up are those that will be occupied first. One will hold the insurer's data center, he said.

"Before we move the first employee, we'll have to have working computers and telecommunications," Mr. Jacobson said.

In addition, in the lowest level of a second building on which major progress has been made will be the cooling and heating facilities for the site, he said.

Move-in at those two buildings is to be complete in February 2009, according to the schedule.

Gary Hamilton, general superintendent for builder Skanska EMJ Russell, said 1,200 yards of concrete are

poured per floor.

"On a real good week, we pour 2,000 yards," he said.

Mr. Hamilton said the project has about 300 employees on site currently and likely will have a high of 500 to 600 workers at one time.

J.Ed. Marston, the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce's vice president of marketing, said construction projects such as the massive BlueCross campus pump dollars into the city.

"Once it's complete and BlueCross has made the transition, it will continue to be a big economic boom," he said.

Mr. Marston said having BlueCross build its new headquarters in Chattanooga rather than leaving the city is "a tremendous economic coup for the city."

Mr. Jacobson said that while shifting operations to Cameron Hill will take place in stages, the final move-in is slated for June 2009. He said what BlueCross is building is adaptable and flexible.

"This uniquely positions us" for



Francisco Duran uses a torch to cut through a metal beam on the top floor of Building 4 at the BlueCross BlueShield construction site on Cameron Hill.

the future no matter how the business evolves, he said. "One constant is change. It's a changing industry."

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