

Klamath County Health Department Transfers To Newly Built Quarters On Vandenberg Road

By DICK BRIGGS

The Klamath County Department of Public Health has moved into spacious new quarters on Vandenberg Road, near Alameda Avenue, ending some 20 years' occupancy in quarters at 1919 Main Street, which had been constructed in 1932 for use as a sanatorium.

Dr. Andy Soule, operator of the sanatorium, had the old building constructed at a cost of some \$50,000 and utilized hot springs on the premises for the treatment of his patients. The two-story brick constructed institution is located next door to the doctor's two-floor frame dwelling, that at one time was linked to the sanatorium by an underground tunnel, which has since been sealed off. The title to the institution passed to other owners in 1938 and six years later it was sold to the county by J. S. Wilson and Kathryn Wilson for a sum close to \$25,000.

The building was not used exclusively by the Public Health Department. It was shared by the County Juvenile Department, which retained its charges in custody on the second floor of the building while operating its main offices in the Veterans Memorial Building. In 1962 both activities of the juvenile department were consolidated in the new County Juvenile Home, located adjacent to new \$123,000 structure now occupied by the county health department.

The raising of the health department structure marks an end to building construction on the former state highway department property that was sold

to the county in 1960 as a site for the new juvenile home. Plans for raising the new public health department on the same property were later advanced and that project commenced three years later.

The new building provides a special entrance to the department's mental health section, whose work has increased in recent years as the result of a more liberal policy adopted at the state hospital relating to the discharge of mental patients.

Public Health Officer Dr. Seth Kerron remarked that the average stay of patients at the state hospital has been reduced considerably. It is the view of authorities that in many cases the interests of mental patients are better served in their home environment rather than at the state institution. Consequently, more patients are now being returned to their homes. Records of those being released to their families in Klamath County are dispatched to the County Health Department, whose staff works closely with the patient's family to hasten his recovery.

Dr. Kerron's record of 31 years as a health officer exceeds that of any other similar official in this state. Born in Portland, he graduated from the University of Oregon Medical School before serving 14 years as Public Health Officer for Lane County. In 1932 he left that post and served in the U.S. Army Medical Corps until 1946, when he was released to inactive duty as a full colonel. In that year he was named Klamath County public health

officer, a post he has held since that time.

Dr. Kerron noted that modern drugs and antibiotics have, in certain cases, made dramatic inroads in the perennial fight to eradicate disease in the county. In recent years, immunizations have made diphtheria a disease of the past and we no longer have the high incidence of polio that was reported in the past, the health officer said.

He added that some other diseases are not so easily conquered and cited that the presence of the wonder drugs had evoked a dangerous complacency in the public regarding them.

One such disease is tuberculosis, which is arrested more quickly through the administration of modern drugs, but the number of cases reported here annually remains about equal to those of past years.

The effects of antibiotics against TB have been truly remarkable in that fewer deaths are caused by the disease and, further, that the hospital stay per patient has been reduced from three years for more serious cases to about three or four months, Dr. Kerron explained.

Much of the work in the public health department entails the immunization of students in the county school system, as it did when Dr. Kerron became county health officer 17 years ago. The department offers immunizations to every student, every year, with the cycle being completed every third year.

The Klamath County Health Department was established in 1921 by Dr. George Merryman, who served four years as coun-

ty health officer on a part-time basis. Meanwhile, other counties throughout the state were setting up similar departments.

The original quarters of the local public health service were at Eighth and Pine streets but when the facilities became inadequate the department was relocated at the one-time Dr. Soule Sanatorium, then defunct. Later an addition was constructed at the rear of the building

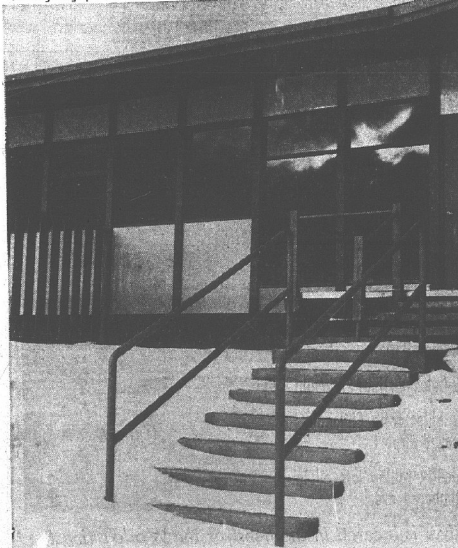
and the structure remains generally as it appeared at that time.

The new home of the department comprises 5,664 square feet in area and includes facilities for the county health officer, nurses, clerical workers, psychiatrists and sanitariums. Additional space is provided for an X-ray room and other facilities.

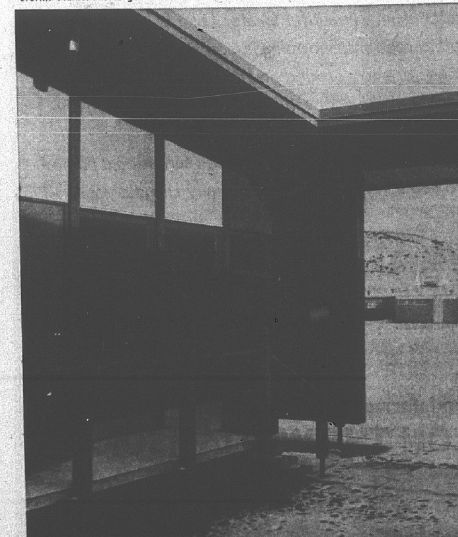
Comprising the staff of the

County Public Health Department are Dr. Seth Kerron, public health officer; Marian Ackerman, Marjorie Corner and Agnes Bush, secretaries; Dr. J. Martin Adams, deputy medical examiner; W. K. Ostlund, sanitarium; Ellen Bruestlein, Myrtle Caldwell, Pearl Juris, Marian Skinner, Rita Snyder, Mae Speitz and Margaret Williams, nurses; and Mildred Lowden, psychiatric social worker.

SNOW VIEWS TO EAST — A panoramic view of snow-covered mountains to the east spreads from under the roof of the main quarters of the newly completed County Department of Health Building, located on Vandenberg Road adjacent to the Klamath County Juvenile Home. Other striking vistas of the county can be viewed from the building's high point on a hill.



PANES REFLECT STORMY SKIES — Highly polished windows near the main office of the health building form a mural effect reflecting the dark clouds of an approaching storm. Numerous large windows are characteristic throughout the structure.



INSIDE COURTYARD — A patio on the east side of the building forms an auxiliary entrance to a number of offices for personnel of the county health department. In the background is a portion of the County Juvenile Home.

Bids On Old Structure Rejected

The city council has advised the county board of commissioners that the old public health building at 1919 Main Street may be utilized as a medical building or be converted into an apartment house.

The request for the ruling had been made of the council by the commissioners in line with its efforts to dispose of the property. "The council decision may result in potential business people becoming interested in purchasing the old health building," said Commissioner Don Kenyon.

Prior to the issuance of the statement from the council there was some question as to whether the property could be used for purposes other than a family dwelling.

Earlier this month the commissioners rejected as "too low" a number of bids submitted for the purchase of the property. The former board of commissioners had appraised that the building would bring at least \$25,000 on the market; the present board will seek to obtain an amount close to that figure, Kenyon said.

Revenues obtained from the sale of the structure will be applied against the costs of construction of the new county health building on Vandenberg.

Way, raised at an expense of some \$123,000. Three of the five bids were for more than \$12,000.

Birth Figures Evenly Split

LAKEVIEW — In a recap of vital statistics for Lake County for 1964 it was found that in the 120 births for the year there was an equal number of boys and girls.

Deaths for the year totaled 82 with 15 female and 37 male, plus one male fetal death. Causes were as follows: Heart, 24; stroke, five; pneumonia, four; carcinoma, three; accident, nine; gastric hemorrhage, one; hepatic coma, one; edema, two; uremia, one; suicide, one; hyaline membrane disease, one.

In summary of communicable diseases during the year there were seven cases of chickenpox; six gonorrhea; 445 influenza; 51 measles; 20 German measles; four pneumonia; two rubella; three scarletina.

There were 25 marriages performed and 31 divorces granted.

Official bid opening ranged from \$1,801 to \$12,860. Three of the five bids were for more than \$12,000.

Birth Figures Evenly Split

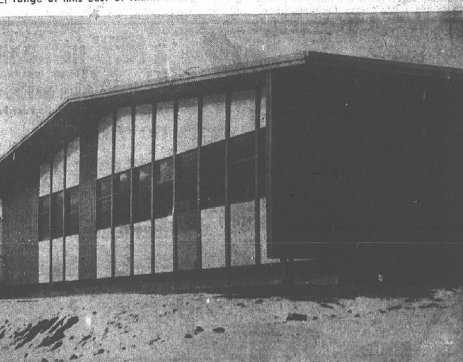
LAKEVIEW — In a recap of vital statistics for Lake County for 1964 it was found that in the 120 births for the year there was an equal number of boys and girls.

Deaths for the year totaled 82 with 15 female and 37 male, plus one male fetal death. Causes were as follows: Heart, 24; stroke, five; pneumonia, four; carcinoma, three; accident, nine; gastric hemorrhage, one; hepatic coma, one; edema, two; uremia, one; suicide, one; hyaline membrane disease, one.

In summary of communicable diseases during the year there were seven cases of chickenpox; six gonorrhea; 445 influenza; 51 measles; 20 German measles; four pneumonia; two rubella; three scarletina.

There were 25 marriages performed and 31 divorces granted.

ERIE SENTINEL — Appearing like some technical device out of the space age, an outdoor lighting fixture stands on the edge of a runway leading outside from an anterior patio of the building. In the background is the County Juvenile Home and a low range of hills east of Klamath Falls.



FRONT ENTRANCE — Multicolored panels decorate long row of windows designed to utilize a maximum amount of natural lighting.



MODERN LOW DESIGN — The long, low lines characteristic of the structure raised by the Brostherous Construction Company at a cost of some \$123,763 is exemplified by this view of length of the main entrance. A slightly tapering roof adds depth to this view of the south portion of the building.

OFFICES LINE INNER COURT — Four offices for county health department staff workers line one portion of an inner court on the east central portion of the building. A runway for wheel chair patients is situated adjacent to the row of offices.