

WILLIAMSON COUNTY

From health to hockey, county's future takes shape

Cedar Park Event Center, first part of Texas A&M Health Science Center medical school campus to be completed by next fall.

By [David C. Doolittle](#)

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

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Two major construction projects that are expected to help drive tourists and students to Williamson County are moving ahead on time and on budget, officials say.

Construction on the Cedar Park Event Center and Texas A&M Health Science Center's Round Rock campus has begun, and both are expected to open next fall.

Texas A&M Health Science Center

The health science center broke ground on the 134,000-square-foot first building of a 50-acre campus in August, and it is expected to be completed by next November.

The campus, which will be on A.W. Grimes Boulevard near University Boulevard, will be completed in phases that could take up to 15 years, said Gary Newman, president of land development and operations for Waterstone Development Group, the developer.

The first building will be used for clinical teaching, laboratories, student life and administration for third- and fourth-year medical students, according to the health science center.

The health science center hopes to also have nursing, pharmacy and public health students at the campus in the future, said Alicia Dorsey, vice president for communications and program development for the health science center.

Currently, 44 students are doing rotations in Round Rock, Dorsey said.

Work on the first building is about seven days ahead of schedule, Newman said. Most of the foundation has been poured, and steel for the first three floors of the north wing has gone up, he said. The building will have four stories.

The project is expected to be topped out in April, and a pond in the center of the campus will be completed by summer, Waterstone said.

The center will be the third medical-related learning facility planned in the area. Texas State University-San Marcos plans to begin construction this fall on a nursing school at the Round Rock Higher Education Center, and Austin Community College has purchased 60 acres next to the Texas State site where it will offer nursing and other training. Seton Medical Center Williamson is also near the intersection, and Waterstone is planning a mixed-use development on nearly 1,000 acres near the health science center.

Cedar Park Event Center

The \$55 million event center will be the home of the **Dallas Stars' American Hockey League** affiliate and will seat 6,800 people for hockey games and 8,000 for concerts and other events.

The 181,640-square-foot facility will sit on 31 acres at New Hope Road and the 183-A tollway and is expected to be completed by Sept. 30.

The city will own the center, and Hicks Sports Marketing Group, which owns the Dallas Stars and Texas Rangers, will operate it. The developer is Hunt Construction. The Hicks group is also planning to develop a retail area on 17 acres along the 183-A toll.

The city held a groundbreaking on the event center in June. Since then, most of the foundation has been poured, and water and wastewater lines have been completed, said Emily Truman, project manager for the city.

Last week, crews started putting up steel beams for the area that will include locker rooms and staging areas for concerts, Economic Development Director Phil Brewer said. The roof and walls are expected to be completed by February or March, he said. Once the project is topped out, crews will start working on the ice floor, seating and framing on the inside, he said.

The foundation for the ice floor will be installed in the spring, Truman said.

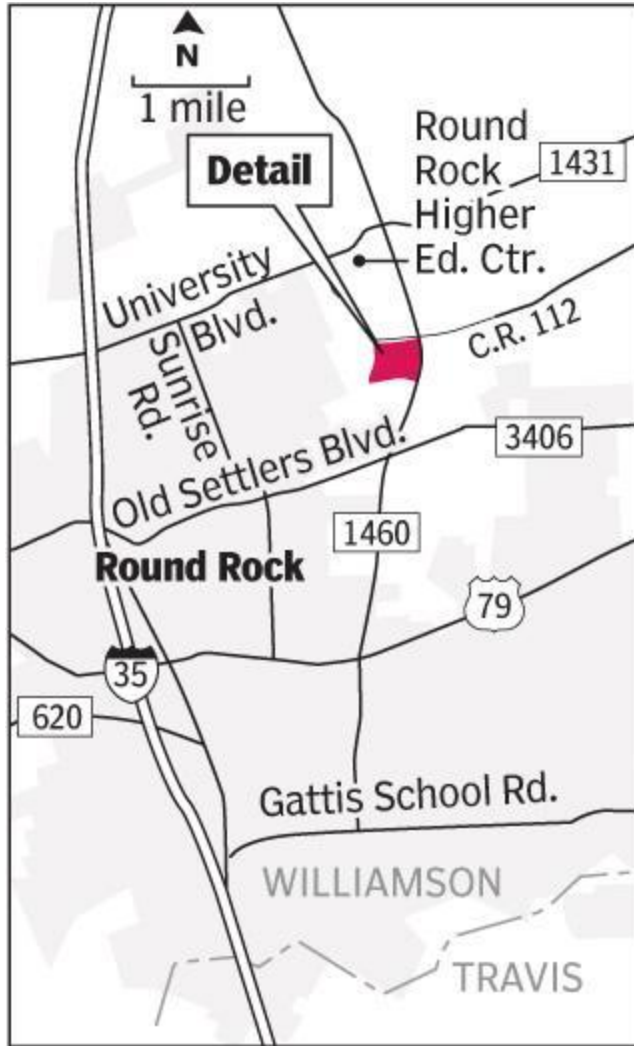
"You can't just have a regular concrete company pour that slab," she said. "It has to be dead level, it can't have any variation."

A 6-foot berm between the site and a nearby neighborhood has been built and will soon be landscaped. The parking lot has been graded and curbs have been poured, Brewer said, but the asphalt will not be poured until summer.

Courtesy of JB Goodwin



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