



## Staying power



Construction of the new Cameron Memorial Community Hospital is expected to start in April.

CONTRIBUTED ILLUSTRATION

New \$42-million Cameron Memorial Community Hospital is a major part of Angola's downtown revitalization efforts

BY RICK FARRANT  
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There was a time when Cameron Memorial Community Hospital board members considered locating a proposed new hospital closer to Interstate 69.

Angola Mayor Dick Hickman is thrilled the board elected to build the new hospital at its current location just east of the downtown, ensuring the Steuben County city maintained its two key anchors — Trine University to the west and the independent

community hospital to the east.

"Just having the hospital there means a great deal," Hickman said. "It's quite important to the community."

Jack Bercaw, executive director of the Angola Area Chamber of Commerce, added: "It will cause more people to stay in the community to take care of their health care needs. We're hoping it will attract more doctors who will spend money and buy homes. And, the more traffic you have

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### CAMERON HOSPITAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

**Payroll:** \$31,797,000

**Supply purchases:** \$31,037,000

**Capital spending:** \$4,126,000

**Total impact:** \$66,960,000

Source: *Indiana Hospital Association, 2009*



RICK FARRANT

Stacey Smith, president and CEO of Prairie Quest Consulting, said the BuyWithPQC program will start out with services including office supplies, landscaping, warehousing and fuel cards.

## Cost savings

Prairie Quest develops group purchasing service for small and midsized businesses

BY RICK FARRANT  
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Prairie Quest Consulting, a Fort Wayne-based professional consulting firm, will soon unveil a Web-based group purchasing organization for small and medium-sized business in northeast Indiana, President and CEO Stacey Smith announced.

Vendors contracted by Prairie Quest will be accessible to businesses that belong to

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### PERSONAL BUSINESS

#### Semper Fi

Former Marine commands Parkview department

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## SAVINGS: Sign-up is free

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nonprofit membership groups such as chambers of commerce, social service clubs and professional associations.

The first participating membership group: the Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce.

Prairie Quest's concept, Smith said, is a benefit to vendors, whose services will be marketed by her company, a boon to participating membership groups because they will be able to offer the option as a membership benefit and a cost-saving bonus to small and medium-size businesses that cannot alone vie for attractive purchasing choices.

"When you're a big company like GM, you have enough spending power that vendors are more than willing to offer big reductions because you're buying in bulk," Smith said. "Small and medium-sized companies never have that opportunity. They don't have enough money to go out and negotiate the better contract."

Smith said the group purchasing organization, called BuyWithPQC, will offer services and products in 22 categories. Among the categories: office supplies; landscaping; warehousing; fuel cards; certified public accounting; janitorial services; information technology; printing; records management; and temporary staffing.

Down the road, she said, Prairie Quest may consider group purchasing options for life, dental and vision insurance. The future of major medical insurance, she said, is still too uncertain to consider it for inclusion.

Smith declined to name any of the vendors because contracts are still being worked out in anticipation of a late January launch. But she said Prairie Quest has been careful to choose vendors with good track records and has, on occasion, rejected vendors interested in participating.

The vendors, she said, will pay a percentage of resulting sales, ranging from as a little as a quarter of a percent to 5 percent. Those fees will go to Prairie Quest to cover the expense of operating BuyWithPQC and marketing the vendors' services.

Businesses signed up to make group purchases through BuyWithPQC can use the service for free.

Prairie Quest, with more than 45 employees in five states, has as its main focus helping governments and military branches with acquisition strategies.

Smith, 51, started the company six years ago after working on space shuttle systems at Rockwell International as an engineering technician and senior project manager and at Lincoln National Corp. as a senior project manager.

She envisions BuyWithPQC eventually becoming a national enterprise, but always with an eye toward ensuring most of the vendors are local.

"When you're in Monrovia, Calif., you don't want to buy from a Fort Wayne vendor," Smith said. "You are looking for Monrovia vendors."

Smith said that, from her perspective, there's more to BuyWithPQC than simply seizing a business opportunity for Prairie Quest.

"(Small and medium-sized companies) are going to be the powerhouse of the economy going forward," she said. "That is where the true growth is going to come from."

"And yet, we continue to see some of these companies struggle," she said, "and it has bothered me for years that we do all of this money-saving for large entities, but we have not figured out how to help companies that are our peers."

"The day that somebody walks up and says (BuyWithPQC) made a difference in their business, that's the day this is going to pay off."

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