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Lori Manning, outpatient dietitian at Mercy Health Center in Oklahoma City, with healthy food choices in the hospital's cafeteria.
PHOTO BY MAIKE SABOLICH

OKC seeks quiet zone downtown

BY BRIANNA BAILEY
THE JOURNAL RECORD

OKLAHOMA CITY - Preliminary plans for a railroad quiet zone that would span 10 blocks downtown along the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railway include an estimated \$4 million in traffic improvements designed to make crossings safer or eliminate them altogether.

The BNSF line runs north-south between Oklahoma and Broadway avenues. The proposed quiet zone would stretch from Sixth Street to 16th Street.

"Right now, the trains just about blast constantly through downtown and this would greatly reduce that," said Jim Lewellyn, project manager for the Oklahoma City Public Works Department. "If we can create a quiet zone in that area, it will encourage development in the area north of downtown."

Trains that travel up and down the railway are now required to sound their horns at each intersection downtown for safety reasons. Preliminary plans for the quiet zone include traffic improvements like medians and double railroad crossing arms designed to make it safer for the trains to pass through the downtown area without blaring horns, said Steve Mason, chief executive officer and president of Cardinal Engineering.

Oklahoma City has commissioned Mason's engineering firm to study traffic improvements for the quiet zone and conduct public outreach on the project. Mason also owns property in the area around the train tracks. Over the past five years, Mason remodeled six historic buildings in the area around Ninth Street and Broadway Avenue, sparking new business activity in the area.

Cardinal Engineering has developed an idea to install 100-foot traffic medians along the railroad tracks at Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, 13th and 16th streets and install quadruple traffic gates at 10th Street to keep cars from driving around the traffic arms at the crossing. Railroad crossings at West Park Place, 11th, 14th and 15th streets would be closed off altogether.

"By making these changes, you eliminate the need for the train whistle and it See **QUIET, PAGE 17**

Helping the healers

Employers offer wellness programs for health care professionals

BY APRIL WILKERSON
THE JOURNAL RECORD

OKLAHOMA CITY - Physicians, nurses and other direct-care staff members are not immune from unhealthy factors like obesity and smoking.

But they see patients every day who are hospitalized for conditions that are exacerbated or brought on by poor lifestyle choices. Do health care workers bear an

additional responsibility to model the behavior they're asking of their patients? If a diabetic hears a directive of healthy living delivered by a physician who is obese, is that message diluted?

Health care professionals answer those questions in different ways, but increasingly, hospitals and other medical facilities are offering wellness programs aimed at their own employees.

"To me, we should set that bar a little higher for ourselves," said Pam Troup, executive director of HealthFirst Operations, which oversees wellness at St. Anthony Hospital and its facilities. "There are many people in health care who, unfortunately, smoke, are overweight and don't eat right or exercise -

just like everybody else. But we see what happens when people don't follow good health habits, and a lot of people in the hospital today are smokers and are overweight. We see the toll it takes on people."

Hospital wellness programs are similar to those offered at companies in other industries because the root issue is no different: finding out what it takes to change someone's behavior. But hospitals are often among the biggest employers in a city and stand to reach a lot of people with incentives to get healthier.

St. Anthony has long offered a cardiovascular evaluation for employees for a minimal co-pay, and in the last See **HELPING, PAGE 22**

GREEN

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who feel they are making a difference in the community."

The fact that the goal is within sight despite a difficult economy is amazing, America said.

"It has been a tough couple of years for nonprofits," America said. "The fact we've been able to raise \$1.5 million shows the commitment that this community has."

Donating money for a tree is a real act of faith, she said.

"People are doing something that they realize that somebody else will get the benefit from," America said. "They realize they may never sit under the shade of it. It is a real act of generosity to do that."

This month, Kathy Taylor and her husband, Bill Lobeck, pledged to match any donation. Furthermore, the Tulsa Community Foundation will match that amount, making it a 3-for-1 ratio, America said.

"So, \$1 turns into \$4," America said.

Taylor, who was mayor when the city suffered the damage, relates the story of a woman at a retirement home who won a lunch pot of \$8 and handed it over to the campaign.

"She said, 'Now I am planting \$32 of trees!'" Taylor said.

America is confident of making the goal of planting all the trees. The deadline is March 31, which is considered to be the end of the 2010 planting season.

However, Up With Trees will delay the planting of several hundred trees until the highway construction around downtown Tulsa and along Interstate 44 is complete, America said.

"We'll hold off planting 1,500 trees and plant them at the end of the construction to make it part of the beautification effort," she said.

Going forward, America expects to keep the current campaign, but on a smaller scale. Currently, Up With Trees plants trees once someone has paid to sponsor a specific site.

The result was that some areas have gone without any new trees.

"What that means is, if there was a part of town that no one wanted to sign up for, it was hard to find the money for that area," America said. "With the ReGreen campaign, we do not have to worry as we can plant trees where they are needed."

Tulsa loses trees every day, America said.

"We lose trees to development, disease or the next ice storm or tornado," America said. "We have to keep planting if we want to stay even. And we hope to gain trees."

states.

PARC then struck sale and lease-back agreements on the parks with CNL for \$290 million in cash and a \$22 million note receivable. PARC continued to operate the amusement parks under long-term, triple-net lease agreements, meaning PARC would pay rent, as well as all taxes, insurance and maintenance expenses, on the parks.

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PARKS

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November that PARC Management defaulted on its lease and loan obligations to CNL in October. CNL announced on Nov. 24 that it was in the process of finding a new management company to take over operations for eight parks PARC previously operated in seven states, including Frontier City and White Water Bay.

PARC Management acquired Frontier City and White Water Bay in 2007 as part of a \$312 million stock purchase agreement to buy seven former Six Flags Inc. amusement parks in six

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eight years, its employee wellness committee has created different competitions and incentives, such as a free pedometer for people who walk a certain number of steps or gift cards and iPods for those who get the requisite number of points for eating well and exercising, Troup said.

More recently, it has begun offering discounts in the cafeteria for employees who choose the wellness menu, and its meals are spotlighted in a weekly newsletter. But it's rare that a hospital will switch to a completely healthy menu in its cafeteria, she said.

"You have to serve what sells - it's a business like anything else," Troup said. "So you'll see unhealthy food in hospital cafeterias and you wonder why, but it's a business."

St. Anthony also began paying half the membership dues at the YMCA for employees and their families, a factor

that led to the opening of a YMCA in the Plaza Court in Midtown, Troup said.

Wellness also has received extra attention at OU Physicians, part of the College of Medicine at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center in Oklahoma City. The OU Fit program was begun three years ago and provides financial incentives and prizes such as iPads for employees who meet exercise, nutrition and community service goals. Fun team competitions also add to the program. About 220 people are participating in the program, said Brian Maddy, chief executive officer of OU Physicians.

Because OU is a teaching hospital training the next generation of medical doctors and other providers, offering such a program is important, Maddy said.

"I think part of our role here is that we owe it to the community to set a healthy lifestyle," Maddy said. "From my position, I believe we need to do it as the teachers. We're setting the example."

"I think most companies should do

GLOBALLY

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enough.

"With benchmarks you don't necessarily buy the best products, you buy the biggest companies," said Hensler. "In order to identify the best companies, you need to do active research and you need to have active management."

Hensler also recommended investors consider alternative alloca-

tions for better correlation balances. He noted that gold, tips and market-neutral allocations could better pair with the Standard & Poor 500 Index than the U.S. large- or small-cap indices.

That led him back to global opportunities.

"This gets my juices going," said Hensler, who playfully noted his Swiss heritage throughout his presentation. "I think this is one of the biggest opportunities we see today."

GOOGLE

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September, the most recent head count available.

Managing a company with the population of a small city will pose another challenge for Google co-founder Larry Page as he prepares to take over as the company's CEO April 4 in a shake-up that will reassign Schmidt to executive chairman. In that role, Schmidt will focus on meeting with government officials, business partners and potential takeover targets while Page runs the company.

Page, 37, served as CEO in Google's early days when the company was far smaller. Google had fewer than 300 employees when Schmidt replaced Page as CEO a decade ago.

Google has become a coveted place to work, largely because Page and fellow co-founder Sergey Brin have always insisted on making the company's offices seem like a home away from home in an effort to make people more productive. All meals, snacks and drinks are free at Google, and employees can commute on free shuttles equipped with Internet access to San Francisco and other cities located within a 50-mile (80-kilometer) radius of the company's Mountain View, California, headquarters.

The sprawling headquarters, dubbed the "Googleplex," is a testament to the company's explosive growth and its ambitions to become far larger.

Google owns or leases about 4.2

million square feet (about 0.4 million square meters) scattered across more than 60 buildings in Mountain View and hopes to build another corporate campus on a nearby NASA complex in Silicon Valley. It also signaled plans to expand in New York last year when it paid about \$2 billion to buy a 15-story office spanning about 2.9 million square feet (0.27 million square meters) - more space than the Empire State building. About 2,000 Google employees currently work in that New York office.

Trying to get a job at Google is akin to trying to get into Stanford University, where Page and Brin started working on their search engine as graduate students. The company receives more than 1 million applications a year and identifies the top candidates through a rigorous screening process that analyzes SAT scores, grade point averages and their performance on tests with mind-questions such as: "How many different ways can you color an icosahedron with one of three colors on each face?"

The people who make it through Google's intellectual gauntlet will likely be under intense pressure if they get hired. Management is pushing aggressively for more innovation so that the Internet giant can compete against emerging threats from smaller companies such as Facebook and Twitter.

"The opportunities are so big this year that for us to maximize them we are going to have to work quicker and we are going to have to make decisions faster," Eustace said.

things like this for their employees. We have a tremendous issue of poor health in our state, and it's important to find whatever ways we can to encourage people to have healthy lifestyles," he said.

The Sisters of Mercy Health System, including Mercy Health Center in Oklahoma City, recently launched its Healthification initiative. The first phase includes healthier cafeteria choices, the removal of doughnuts and other high-sugar food and the implementation of NuVal, a nutritional scoring system. Lori Manning, outpatient dietitian at Mercy, said NuVal is based on an algorithm that ranks 30 nutrients within a food and comes up with one score. That score, on a scale from 1 to 100, provides a quick way to assess a food's nutritional value and encourages people to "trade up" to better food with a higher score.

Manning said NuVal also is serving as an educational tool.

"For example, a lot of people choose vitamin D milk, or whole milk," Manning

said. "They don't realize that other milk products also contain vitamin D, but with the NuVal score, it helps them understand why the 1-percent fat-free has a better score than whole milk. It helps them know why they need to make a better choice in that area. It should catch people who don't always look at food labels in-depth."

Manning works one-on-one with both employees and patients to help them find ways become healthier. Their issues are like anyone else's: busy schedules, food preferences, being accustomed to certain portions and emotional eating, she said. But they can usually figure out a way to make healthier choices by sitting down and making a plan, she said.

Mercy's new health program is a part of that, and its components will grow, she said. Upcoming programs will focus on exercise, smoking cessation and stress management.

"It's a small thing that over time will have a big impact on the health of our co-workers," Manning said.