

# Gulf Bend opens new facility

*State Sen. Hegar relieved center bought before economy tanked*

## **Related Assets:**

- State Senator Glenn Hegar talks about the new MHMR facility

**BY MADELINE LEWIS - MLEWIS@VICAD.COM**

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Don Polzin felt proud and knew he wasn't alone.

"I can tell you there's a great deal of pride in our staff," he said. "Our staff has a great deal of pip in our step."

The executive director of Gulf Bend Mental Health Mental Retardation Center in Victoria was proud of the center's new facility at Nursery Drive in Victoria. He celebrated the grand opening of the building Tuesday afternoon at a ceremony and reception in its conference room.



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The ceremony included an address from state Sen. Glenn Hegar and a dedication of the conference room to the M.G. & Lillie A. Johnson Foundation, which helped fund the renovation of Gulf Bend's new home.

The Center provides a variety of services, such as psychiatric and medical care, to mentally ill and intellectually challenged adults and children from the Crossroads region.

After being introduced by state Rep. Geanie Morrison, Hegar thanked her and praised Gulf Bend's work.

"I want to say thank you to everyone in this room for your appreciation of mental health and mental retardation," he said. "You appreciate something that a lot of people in Texas do not."

He then expressed relief that the Center purchased the new building before the economic downturn of recent months.

"If we would have delayed on this any longer, today may have not been a reality," he said.

Gulf Bend was located on East Airline Road for 14 years before moving to Nursery Drive in October. Purchasing and renovating the new building cost \$3.8 million - \$300,000 of which was offset by a grant from the Johnson Foundation.

"That foundation has been instrumental in the funding of our cause," said David Way, the Center's director of operations.

Gulf Bend paid for the remaining costs with \$500,000 of its own funds and the sale of bonds.

It decided to purchase its own building several months ago to be more cost-effective. In the past, it paid rent to occupy a building. Now, it has its own facility and plans to earn revenue from leasing space to other companies.

"It's more of a vision - a long-term plan that I think is going to pay off in the end," said Debra Baros, vice-chair of Gulf Bend's Board of Trustees.

During renovation, many interior walls were torn down and larger spaces were created, Way said. An example was the conference room, which previously consisted of a hallway surrounded by several small offices.

The new building, which consolidated patients services on one floor, business offices on another and administrative offices on a third, would also "better facilitate the work that we do," Way said.

**SPACE TO LEASE** Gulf Bend currently has about 10,000 square feet of space available to lease to other private or public health care or social service providers. If interested, you should contact Woolson Real Estate at 361-578-3623.