

**Clark County Child Care Center**



In top photo, county officials use gold-painted shovels to "break ground" for the new 24-hour daycare center at the Clark County Industrial Park Thursday. The center will be operated by a non-profit organization, Clark County Child Care, Inc. Each shift it will serve 100 children. The center will serve all of Clark County but is aimed primarily at serving employees of industries. In inset photo, John French, president of Southern Community Development Corp., speaks to the crowd of people attending the groundbreaking ceremony at the Clark County Industrial Park.

*Siftings Herald / Donna Hilton*

# Ground broken for center that will benefit workers

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Although construction work has already begun, Clark County officials attended a groundbreaking ceremony Thursday for the 24-hour daycare center at the Clark County Industrial Park.

The 7,500-square-foot facility was made possible through a \$690,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and local loans, said John French, president of Southern Community Development Corp.

When completed, the center will serve 100 children on each shift, 24-hours a day, seven days a week, French said. It will provide care for children of parents who work overnight, which is a "huge advantage for employers."

Some workers have been forced to choose between work and caring for their children because there was no overnight daycare available, French said. The new daycare center will eliminate that dilemma.

Southern CDC, the real estate development arm of Southern Bancorp, applied for and received a grant last year to fund the

construction. The Clark County Industrial Council leased the land where the facility is being built to Southern for \$1 per year.

A new non-profit corporation was formed to operate the center. Called Clark County Child Care Inc., the corporation will oversee all operations of the center, which is expected to employ about 40 workers.

Board members of Clark County Child Care Inc. are Karen Manning, representing Scroll Technologies; Lewis Diggs, superintendent of Centerpoint public schools; Dr. Stan Miller, superintendent of Arkadelphia schools; Bobby Smithson, superintendent of Gurdon public schools; Jim Rothwell, of Ouachita Baptist University; Pat Wright, School of the 21st Century; Pam Davis of Henderson State University; and Ronnie Farnam, manager of Petit Jean Poultry.

The facility will be open to all residents of Clark County, not just employees of the Industrial Park, French said.

He thanked those involved with the Clark County Strategic Planning Committee, including the education subcommittee, officials of all school districts in the county, city and county governments and all county residents. "This wouldn't have happened with-



out county support," he said.

Bill Wright, president of the CCIC, said he was happy that he and his organization could assist in the project. "I want to thank all those who really dreamed about this project," he said.

The establishment of the daycare center is

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exciting to the CCIC, Wright said. "Companies don't believe us when we tell them we're going to have a daycare center in the Industrial Park."

Dr. Wesley Kluck, chairman of the CCSP said he was thankful that the efforts of all county residents came together to result in such a wonder-

ful project. "We're here today on behalf of all of you and all residents of the county," he said.

The project is "a great example of how unity and energy makes tremendous progress," Kluck said. "Thanks to everyone who had any input in this." The project "is only one of

many that are yet to come." The addition of the daycare center in the industrial park will be of tremendous value to employees of the industries located there, Farnam said. "We are glad this is here. This will be really good for the community."