

Alamosa Community Hospital



Instrument case built into the original plan of the Alamosa Community Hospital, across from Operating Rooms, 1937. This case held doctor instruments (they owned their own and brought them to surgery) also where pharmacy was locked and stored. Pictured in 2017- now facilities and housekeeping

1963: Dr. Donald Lentz becomes Chief Laboratory Technologist

Dr. Donald Lentz became Chief Laboratory Technologist and had one employee. By 1981, with technological advances, he was up to six full-time technologists, one technician, and three laboratory aides.

1964: Dr. Robert Bradshaw is hospital's first anesthesiologist

Dr. Robert Bradshaw commenced his many years of service at Alamosa Community Hospital becoming the hospital's first anesthesiologist. "Anesthesiology became a recognized medical specialty in 1941 with the founding of the American Board of Anesthesiology. Additional sub-specialty certification was established for anesthesiologists with special interests in critical care medicine in 1986 and in pain management in 1993" (PSANES.org).



Sky view image of the Y-shaped Alamosa Community Hospital 1937-1987



Central nurses station under the sky light in the hospital, 1938-1968. Superintendent of Nurses Ann Edstrom seated



1966-68: The "Uptown Board" acquired property west of Blanca Avenue allowing for more expansion

The "Uptown Board" acquired property for the existing hospital westward to Blanca Avenue which allowed for the new hospital expansion, but not enough funding was secured to build it as originally desired. The headlines in the February 15, 1968 edition of the Valley Courier declared: "OPEN HOUSE SUNDAY FOR \$2 MILLION DOLLAR HOSPITAL." "The three-story structure would eliminate over-crowding immediately by adding 36 beds to bring the total number of available beds to more than 100." Reese said his greatest sense of accomplishment as administrator came through the completion of a three-story addition to the hospital making the facility "one of the finest in southern Colorado" and enhancing the "fine medical care given by some of the best staff members and employees in this part of the state."



Hospital Gray Ladies honored in special ceremony for their years of volunteer service, 1973

1968: Partnerships with ASU and TSJC

The hospital begins a long history of nurse education through partnerships with Trinidad State Junior College and Adams State College (now University).

1973: Hosptial Gray Ladies

1974: Addition of Medical Professional Clinic

Addition of the Medical Professional Clinic was built and leased to physicians. The Clinic was built directly south of the existing hospital and connected by a ramp. The building was later demolished for construction and expansion in 2008.

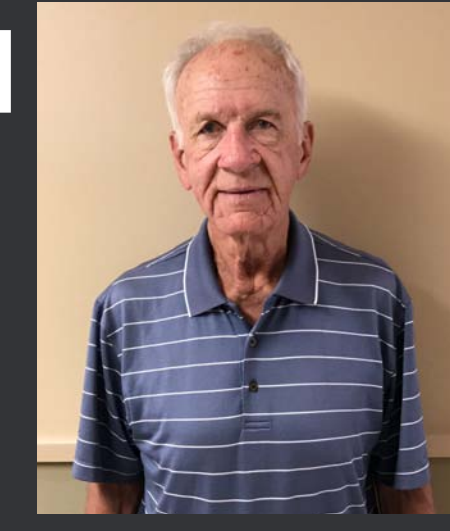


Loretta Gonzales shown on her first day of work at Conejos County Hospital as a LPN. She worked for 38 years in the SLV as a nurse, retiring from the OB dept. at SLV Health in 2015

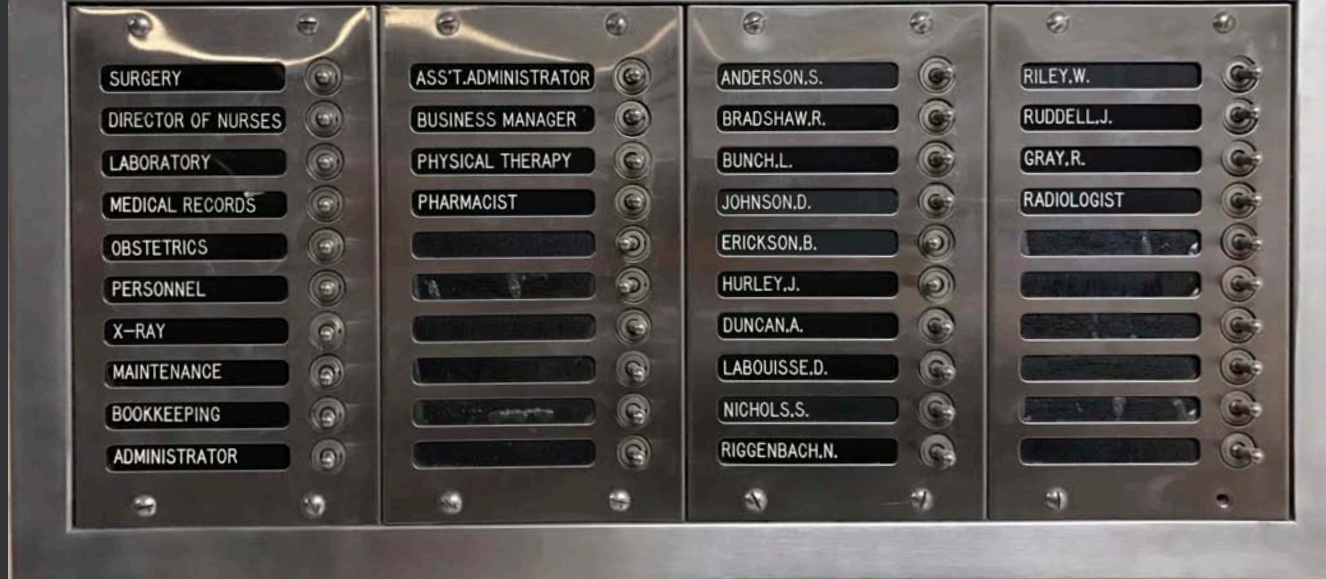
Trinidad State Junior College Nurses graduation ceremony, 1970. Loretta Gonzales pictured at the end of the front row

1975: First medical staff representative elected to the hospital board

Dr. R. Paul Wagner, MD, Ophthalmologist, was the first medical staff representative elected to the hospital board. Dr. Wagner recalled, "Everyone was expected to take call, even me, and sometimes I had to call an Internist if it wasn't something I could diagnose. I came here in 1972 and they changed that rule in 1975 when they started hiring ER Physicians. That really made a huge change and increased the quality of care. I was part of the physicians group that eventually vacated the Medical Office Building south of the hospital, as it always leaked and flooded, and joined the SLV Professional Corp. and moved into the Physicians Services at 2115 Stuart Avenue."



Dr. Wagner, pictured 2017



Pictured here is the Doctor Call Light. They would flip the switch when they were on site and available.

By ERIN SMITH
ALAMOSA (CSJ) — The four hospitals in the San Luis Valley expect to continue the excellent medical care offered in the past year.
Alamosa Community Hospital, which received a new administrator, Jerry Miller, the first of this year, achieved two major goals: obtaining an orthopedic surgeon on staff and upgrading pediatrics.
Miller took over as administrator from longtime administrator Elton Heide, who became the hospital's executive director.
Dr. Leo Stelzer, who already has a reputation for himself locally through his skill, has joined the ACH staff as an orthopedic surgeon.
Miller explained that by having an orthopedic surgeon on hand many accident victims and others who would have been taken out of the valley in years past, remain here.
Stelzer is looking for a partner in his practice and hopes to have one in July. He said the hospital can "pretty much start to handle most everything orthopedic."
The young surgeon, who was educated at University of Indiana, said that he is doing reconstructive surgery, and total joint and fracture work. Reimbursements such as restoring a severed hand to the wrist are highly specialized and need a team approach because of the hours involved to complete the surgery. Stelzer has worked on

reimbursements but said he will send such work out of the valley.
Stelzer said that the only limiting factor working in the valley is that many family physicians don't realize the quality care available here and continue to send many patients out of the valley. He pointed out that hospital care here is less expensive than in large cities and the patient remains close to his family and friends.
Miller would like to add a pathologist to the ACH staff but explained that it would be a bit cramped for a pathology lab. "In the relatively near future, we'll have a pathologist."
Pediatrics has been improved here with the addition of a neonatal monitoring unit in the nursery and infant transport equipment for carrying babies to an ambulance. Mrs. Mary Ann Lee, director of nursing stated, "The changes arose after Dr. W. C. Riley returned last spring following a residency in pediatrics elsewhere."
Another change in the pediatric unit came in staffing. Licensed practical nurses are now used instead of aides, amounting to a doubling in salaries. Mrs. Lee explained.
ACH gained another doctor on staff, Don Jacobs who is associated with Valley-wide Health Clinic. South of Alamosa in La Jara, Conejos County Hospital obtained a new director of nursing, Mrs. Paula Howard, and completed a new addition on the building.

1979: Betty Young is the first female trustee appointed to hospital board
Betty Young was the first female trustee appointed to the hospital board. She served on the board from 1979 to 1981.

1979: Orthopedic surgeon joins hospital staff

Dr. Leo Stelzer joins the ACH staff as an orthopedic surgeon. Dr. W. C. Riley completed a residency in pediatric training to enhance care for children.

1979: Jerome Miller, takes reigns as new CEO

Jerome Miller received a B.A. Degree in Business Administration from Moorhead State, Minnesota and was mentored by Mr. Reese during his first two years as the Hospital Administrator, and took the reigns for the next seven years as CEO.

1981: Hospital payroll was at 160 employees

The hospital payroll reached 160 employees in 1981, reflecting the growth and expansion of services.

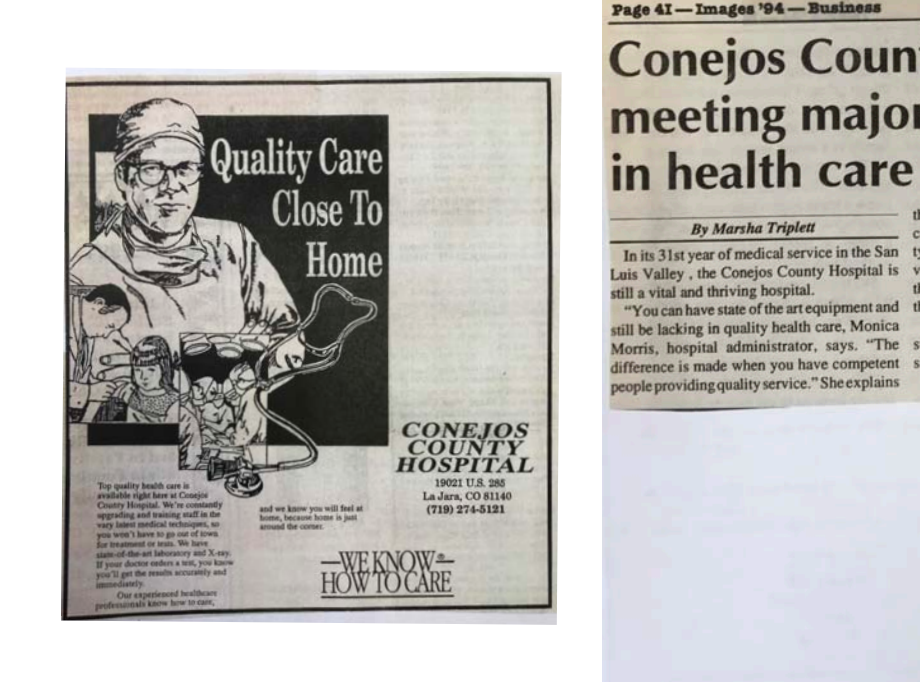
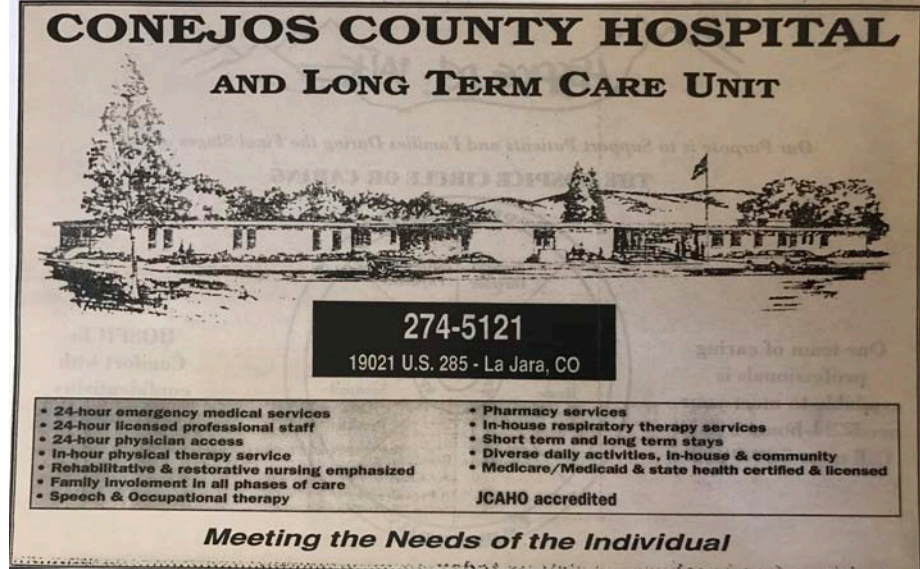
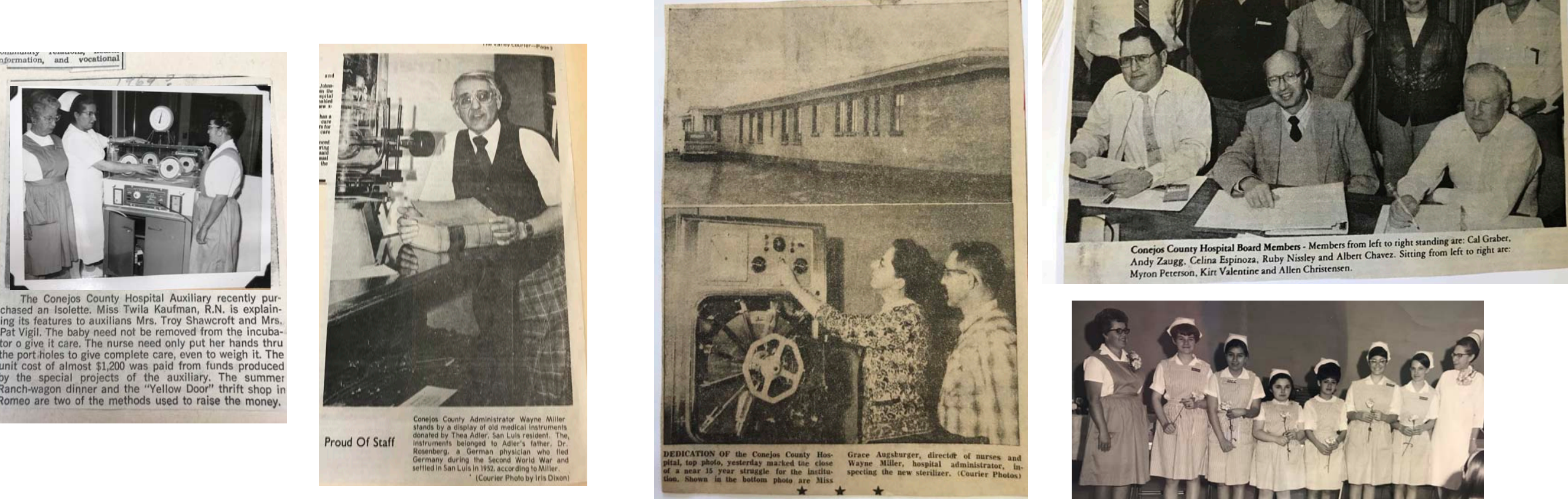
1985: Paul Herman becomes the Executive Director

Paul started his healthcare career in 1971 as a resident at Denver General Hospital. He was the Emergency Medical Services Administrator at the City and County Denver for four years and then in 1975 became the Assistant Administrator at Swedish Medical Center. Before becoming CEO in Alamosa in 1985, he served as CEO at Kremmling Memorial Hospital for eight years, bringing a wealth of experience to the position at SLVRMC.

1987: Hosptial Board of Trustees begins adoption of new name for the hospital

1969-1987: Conejos County Hospital continues to grow

The Conejos County Hospital continues to grow with the addition of a long term care unit along with expanded services such as lab, x-ray, pharmacy, and therapy. The growth relied on a community that was heavily involved with fundraising and donated services, such as church and civic organizations providing hours of landscaping, extensive upgrades and cleaning. The early years saw patient care enhanced by the presence of "candy strippers" who were trained in caring for patient's non-medical needs. Hospital AuxiliaryBQs are successful annually and grow in size and participation each year. The Conejos County Hospital receives support from local American Legion Posts and surrounding towns including Sanford, Antonito, Manassa, and Romeo. CCH equipment upgrades and advances in technology especially in the laboratory, along with continuous community support also lead to building expansions. CCH and the La Jara Clinic staff, grow as they welcome new doctors, offer special health screenings, participate in local and self-held health fairs.



The Alamosa Community Hospital, 1981

