

by Elizabeth Kumru

DOUBLE THE PROMISE

UNMC'S DURHAM RESEARCH CENTER II OPENS

For some Omahans, UNMC's new Durham Research Center II is a midtown landmark that they pass on their daily commute to work. Others see only the glistening wall of windows and the shadows cast onto Saddle Creek Road.

But, to UNMC researcher Steven Hinrichs, M.D., the glass and brick tower is a beacon – and a promise of a better tomorrow.

"This building allows us to meet the challenge of big science," Dr. Hinrichs said. "It's a place where multiple people with different expertise come together to work on complex problems. It's through that type of collaborative approach that science is best advanced and the quality of people's lives improved."

That collaboration, although not unusual at UNMC, only will increase as the first of 47 researchers begin to move into the 10-level building – almost a mirror image of the Durham Research Center I.

The scientists come from different disciplines, but have one thing in common – each has at least \$1 million in research funding. That minimum threshold helps determine who gets assigned space in the coveted tower.

Once inside, a myriad of research – ranging from regenerating organs and curing lung disease to developing vaccines for Alzheimer's and emerging diseases – and training will take place in the 98 laboratories.

Although each level has a primary research focus, scientists will collaborate on ideas with colleagues throughout the building and across campus. The following outlines the areas of research being done on each level:

- **FIRST FLOOR** – Pulmonology research with faculty from internal medicine and the College of Public Health. The first floor also will house four core laboratories – microarray, mouse genome and DNA sequencing (both moving from UNMC's Munroe-Meyer Institute) and tissue banking and histology. These core facilities – sometimes called shared resources – provide sophisticated, expensive technology and expertise that no single lab would have the financial resources to purchase and learn.

- **THIRD FLOOR** – Neurodevelopment

- **FOURTH & FIFTH FLOORS** – Cancer



- **SIXTH FLOOR** – Regenerative Medicine/Gastroenterology/Hepatology

- **SEVENTH FLOOR** – Infectious diseases

- **EIGHTH FLOOR** – Nebraska Public Health Laboratory and the Air Force Research Laboratory

The opening of UNMC's newest research tower is evidence of the vital role academic medical centers play in boosting today's economy and workforce. It demonstrates that UNMC is an active developer of new health care concepts and therapies.

The Durham Research Center II is named – as is the twin facility that opened in 2003 – for the late Chuck Durham, who died in April 2008 at age 90. Durham provided the lead gift to the University of Nebraska Foundation and was an ardent supporter of UNMC. Funding for the \$74 million facility came largely through private support.

Grand opening festivities for the second tower are set for May 5 and 6, during which a commemorative sculpture of Durham by Omaha artist John Labja will be unveiled.

Long after the festivities end, however, Dr. Hinrichs and his research colleagues will continue to ask, study and advance the health science questions that signify the promise of a better tomorrow for all. ∞