

State OKs funding for NL health center

Other regional projects funded

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Funding for several local projects — including the conversion of a Shaw's Cove office building into a community health care center in New London — was approved Thursday by the State Bond Commission.

The commission also authorized \$250,000 in bonding for improvements at the East Lyme High School athletic field and at Bride Brook Rehabilitation Center in East Lyme. \$650,000 for the expansion of a Colchester company and \$203,000 for the renovation of three elderly housing complexes in New London.

The \$314,000 health care grant will help Community Health Center move its New London facility from the Rich-

ard R. Martin Social Services Center on Broad Street to Shaw's Cove I at a total cost of \$860,000.

The relocation will triple the space at the health center and allow it to double the number of patients it serves, according to John Sayers, director of contracts administration for the Department of Public Health and Addiction Services.

His department is awarding the grant to the health center, which primarily serves lower-

income residents.

Community Health Center Inc., based in Middletown, purchased Shaw's Cove I in April for \$460,000 from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. The FDIC acquired the building from New England Savings Bank when the bank failed.

Community Health Center will finance the balance of the cost through a loan and with its own money, Sayers said.

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At its current location, the health center has 4,000 square feet of space. Shaw's Cove I will provide 12,000 square feet. Sayers said the clinic was originally operated by the city of New London. Community Health Center took it over in October 1992.

Sayers said the company said it needed to expand because demand for services in New London is great. There is a long waiting list at the facility, especially for dental care, he said. At present it serves about 6,000 patients annually, and clinic officials expect to be able to serve an additional 6,000 in the new building.

The clinic plans to hire an additional dentist, another family practice physician and two nurse practitioners to serve the increased patient load it is expecting, said Maria Montanaro, director of the

clinic. It also hopes to offer services to patients in surrounding communities. At present, services are available only to New London and Groton residents.

Montanaro said the building is being completely renovated into a state-of-the-art medical office and plans to open in the fall. It will be vastly improved from the Martin Center facility, which is cramped and has no waiting room other than the hallway.

"When we first came to take over the clinic we knew the facility was woefully inadequate," Montanaro said. "It's not in keeping with our sense of quality. This will allow us to speak the language of dignity to our patients that we are committed to."

Other projects of local interest approved Thursday by the Bond Commission would:

■ Let S&S Worldwide Inc. of Colchester buy machinery and equipment as part of a \$3.13 million expansion. The state is providing \$650,000 for the project. The grant will help retain 275 jobs and create an additional 65, according to the state Department of Economic Development.

The fourth-generation, family-owned business makes games and crafts that are sold internationally.

■ Allow for drainage and parking improvements, fencing, lighting, and other renovations at Bride Brook and East Lyme High School, for a total cost of \$250,000.

■ Let the city of New London install new roof shingles and convert a central electric heating system to a gas hot water system at Rizzo Court and Gordon Court, each of which has 40 units, and at George Washington Carver Apartments,

which has 130 units at 202 Colman St.

The Bond Commission also released \$3 million for the Connecticut Development Authority to establish the Connecticut Job Training Finance Program, which was created by the legislature in 1993.

The program — part of a state-wide defense diversification effort — will insure bank loans that companies take to pay for basic skills training, innovative production methods and computer proficiency.

The Bond Commission, chaired by Gov. Lowell P. Weicker Jr., authorizes the state to issue bonds that will be used to pay for various projects. It takes about three months for the state to complete legal work, sell the bonds, and draft contracts for transferring money to recipients.

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