

DEVELOPMENT

New hospital almost finished

By **ANDREW THEEN**
THE OREGONIAN

HILLSBORO — Tayna Wylder looked on Tuesday as her crew delicately molded concrete for the central plaza of the \$344 million Kaiser Permanente Westside Medical Center, the first new hospital in the metro area in nearly 40 years.

"It's the hardest job we've ever had," said Wylder, owner of Star Construction Services. "It's tested our company extensively."

Wylder's crew started work on the project in 2010,

among the nearly 2,000 workers chipping in on the new facility. Kaiser, the nation's largest nonprofit health management organization, hopes to open it to patients and 1,100 employees in August 2013.

Virtually all construction is complete on the Tanasbourne-area facility. The plaza is intended to be a central courtyard and hospital entryway, a warm and open place where patients or their friends and family can find refuge.

Woman-owned firms like

Wylder's took in \$33.7 million in contracts on the soon-to-be-finished 126-bed hospital, accounting for roughly 27 percent of construction costs, according to Kaiser. Minority firms took in \$7.5 million, or 6.5 percent.

With private companies like Kaiser and public entities creating minimum requirements for woman- and minority-owned contractor involvement, Wylder said companies such as hers are not as much of a rarity these days as they used to be. "It's

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Tayna Wylder (right) works alongside her crew as they wrap up work on the elaborate plaza entry to Kaiser Permanente's new hospital in Hillsboro.

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going to be the new norm," she said of the diversifying face of construction. "That's the way the industry is trending."

Star Construction is sched-

uled to work on the Sellwood Bridge replacement, but project delays put their duties a couple of years out. Work continues on the Willamette River bridge on Interstate 5 in Eugene, but that will end soon. So, despite the bright, sunny day Tuesday and the fact that her whole crew was working, Wylder

said she still feels the weight of a recession that has hammered construction firms everywhere in recent years. "I feel a big pressure to keep our employees employed," she said.

Ultimately, said Wylder, 43, it's a simple equation. Like everybody else, "we need more work."