



Times photos/MIKE SILVA

Dr. William Steen Jr.

Dr. Donald L. Hall

James K. Elrod

# Eye Institute to break ground

By LARRY BURTON  
The Times

A five-story eye center will soon begin taking shape on the Willis-Knighton Medical Center campus.

Ground will be broken this afternoon for the Steen-Hall Eye Institute, a joint development of the hospital and Steen-Hall and Associates.

It is named for Drs. William H. Steen Jr., 47, and Donald L. Hall, 46, who perform nearly all of the eye surgery at Willis-Knighton. It will house their 15-year-old private practice, five operating rooms for the hospital, an auditorium for public and professional seminars, Willis-Knighton administrative offices, the Shreveport Eye Research Foundation and the Eye Bank of North Louisiana.

"The facility will provide us the opportunity to group all our ophthalmology services together in one building," said James K. Elrod, president of Willis-Knighton.

"It will make things not only more convenient and accessible for patients but ultimately more cost effective."

Construction is expected to take a year and cost around \$5 million. Another \$3 million will be represented by surgical

and diagnostic eye equipment.

The 70,000-square-foot building will be at Greenwood Road and Virginia Avenue, across from Willis-Knighton's main building.

"It will be primarily a surgical facility. The institute will be equipped so we can handle any diseases of the eye," Steen said. "Any eye surgery scheduled at Willis-Knighton will be done here."

Among other things, its in- and outpatient services will address cataracts, glaucoma, retinal diseases, corneal transplants and laser surgery. Internationally known eye surgeons will also periodically perform surgery as guests of the institute, Steen said.

Steen credited the idea of the institute to Coni Sweeney, who manages Steen-Hall and Associates and is a board member of the Eye Research Foundation.

"She has gone all over the country visiting other practices and the large academic institutions. Many of the things she has observed are being incorporated in this building," Steen said.

Architectural work is being done by Florida-based Gordon & Associates, which specializes in designing eye facilities. Construction will be by McInnis Brothers Construction in Minden.