

Rockford Register Star

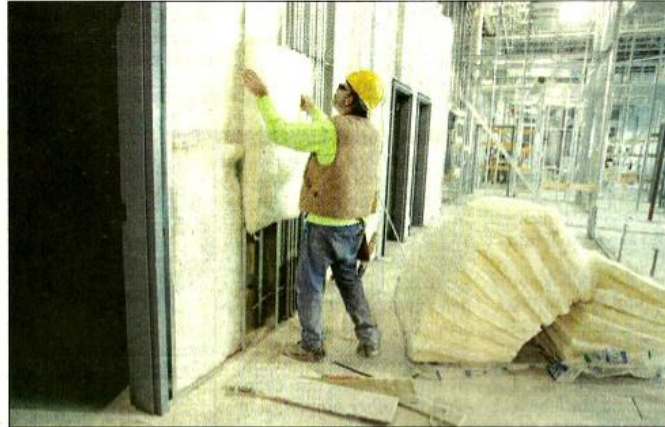
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BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY



Jimmy Marx with CityWide Installation installs insulation Friday at Rockford Orthopedic Associates' new location on East Riverside Boulevard in Rockford.

AMY J. CORRENTI/ROCKFORD REGISTER STAR

Orthopedic groups aim to grow together

Officials want to build patient volume, recruit more surgeons to the region

By Melissa Westphal
Rockford Register Star

ROCKFORD — Rockford Orthopedic Associates and Crystal Lake Orthopedics are considering joining forces this year.

Officials announced their plans this week and said they'll begin the due-diligence process of researching each others' financial information and daily operations with the goal of completing a deal by fall.

Crystal Lake Orthopedics would actually join Rockford Orthopedic but retain its name, staff and patient base. Officials say their goals are to build patient volume, improve technology and recruit more orthopedic surgeons to northern Illinois for specialty procedures, such as spine surgery, and pediatric and trauma orthopedic surgeries.

Leaders of both groups said they belonged to the same professional circles for many years but started seriously discussing



Rockford Orthopedic Associates' next clinic is under construction on East Riverside Boulevard in Rockford.

a potential deal last summer.

"We already know Rockford brings quality work to the table," said Ed Grogg, CEO of Crystal Lake Orthopedics. "We both had the same strategic plan, which was to find a partner to merge with to get bigger. Our goal is to get bigger and have more muscle to bring subspecialties that aren't here to the area."

Don Schreiner, CEO of Rockford Orthopedic, said the two have cultural similarities that would make for a natural partnership.

"To be the best, you want to continue to improve patient satisfaction and service," he said. "By being combined, we're going to be able to provide better patient services

and be able to offer more subspecialty services and better technology."

Crystal Lake Orthopedics has four orthopedic surgeons on staff, a podiatric surgeon and two physician assistants. It's based in Crystal Lake and has an office in Huntley.

Rockford Orthopedic has 25 physicians, 16 physician assistants and owns an ambulatory surgery center and four rehabilitation centers.

Rockford Orthopedic also is renovating a former retail storefront near East Riverside Boulevard and North Mulford Road for a new clinic site. Officials hope to move in by June.

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