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## Editorial

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# Hospital an amazing achievement

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The recession, end of the pineapple industry and Furlough Fridays were all major headlines here in 2009, but we think the approval of the West Maui Hospital & Medical Center is the year's biggest story.

The economy will bounce back, and educational days will eventually be restored. The hospital is a story that will impact generations on the West Side.

Culminating a grassroots effort by Joe Pluta and volunteers with the West Maui Improvement Foundation (WMIF), the State Health Planning and Development Agency (SHPDA) granted the proposed medical center a crucial Certificate of Need on March 13.

Working for years with no guarantee of success, Pluta and hospital supporters arranged a site through a key donation from Kaanapali Land Management Corp., secured government approvals and conducted research to show the glaring need for a community hospital and 24-hour

emergency room on the isolated West Side.

With this foundation in place, WMIF found a proven industry developer in Brian Hoyle of Newport Hospital Corp. to carry the project to the finish line and SHPDA approval.

Construction is slated to begin in June 2010, staff will be hired in March 2011 and the grand opening for the \$45.7 million West Maui Hospital is projected for March 2012.

"It is a triumph of hope over adversity, where the seemingly impossible has been made possible," said Pluta in March.

Plans call for a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital, 40-bed skilled nursing facility, 40-bed assisted living facility and 30,000-square-foot medical office clinic.

Pluta and WMIF supporters deserve great credit for constantly charging forward on this project.

Given the state bureaucracy and its stranglehold on health care, the cost of the project and many other obstacles, the citizens' effort was incredible. They truly achieved the impossible.

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