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Union workers will be used for Mon General expansion project

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Monongalia General Hospital announced Tuesday that it signed an agreement to use union workers for its \$82 million expansion project.

The project labor agreement with the North Central West Virginia Building and Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO, gives the hospital a guaranteed workforce for the project without the possibility of strikes in exchange for the hospital's committing to hire union workers.

"The agreement paves the way for a first class medical facility to be constructed to better serve our patients and the community," MGH CEO David Robertson said in a press release.

Mon General's agreement came after the Affiliated Construction Trades Foundation, an associate organization of the Trades Council, withdrew a challenge to the hospital's project. The ACT Foundation had requested a hearing to get more information about the hospital's certificate of need, which is required before the hospital could expand.

Robertson said last month the hearing could have delayed construction on the hospital by as much as two years. He said the hospital agreed to the contract to avoid delays in approval of the certificate of need.

North Central President Darwin Snyder said in a statement that he was pleased with the agreement negotiated with the hospital.

"This agreement will ensure good jobs for West Virginians -- jobs with good health benefits."

Now that the hearing request has been withdrawn, the West Virginia Health Care Authority is free to rule on the hospital's certificate of need, according to Steve Mariner, vice president of operations at Monongalia Health System. Mariner said the hospital hopes to see a decision by January, at which point the hospital could begin designing the expansion.