

Mt. Vernon Bracing for Searcy Hospital Closure



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(MT. VERNON, Ala.) - The small town of Mount Vernon is bracing for impact as Gov. Robert Bentley confirmed Friday that Searcy Hospital, a cornerstone of the community, is still set for closure.

"We're going to see what we can do," Mayor Jerry Lundy said.

With 350 jobs gone in a town of just 1,600 people, Lundy said he's actively looking for ways to soften the blow.

Lundy said he's working with the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce to bring in a large department or grocery store, possibly a Wal Mart. The town limits are also expanding and will include a new 24-hour McDonald's, which will bring dozens of jobs.

Lundy admitted that whatever the town does, Mt. Vernon will still feel an economic impact. Many small business rely on the hospital. A majority of the local pharmacy's customers are patients at Searcy, and the town's barbershop said at least half their clients are hospital employees.

On Friday, Governor Bentley announced two mental hospitals set for closure would stay open, but Searcy Hospital was not one of them.

Searcy Hospital has a tentative closure date in September of

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