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GRAND FORKS PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ANNOUNCE THEIR APPROVAL TO BEGIN CONSTRUCTION OF CHOICE WELLNESS CENTER

[Grand Forks, N.D.] During the October 12, 2010 special session, the Grand Forks Park Board of Commissioners voted to officially approve to begin construction of the new Choice Wellness Center. More than five years studying feasibility, conducting comprehensive research, partner building and fundraising has finally allowed the Board enough solid information and funding to officially give the “green light” to start construction.

Choice Wellness Center will be located on South Washington Street between 40th and 47th Avenues. The 42 acre plot of land was a generous donation to the Grand Forks Park District by the Crary and Sproule families.

“It has been a long and conscientious process by volunteers, staff and partners; however the time and effort was certainly worth our patience and diligence. Our primary goal is to be sure we are able to provide exceptional services, programs and facilities for the betterment of community and regional health and wellness. With that in mind, we needed to be absolutely certain our funding was in place to support the project before we moved forward with construction,” stated Grand Forks Park District Director, John Staley.

The IMAGINE Campaign began in 2007 with a grass-roots group of citizens who joined together to raise the funds needed to build a new health and wellness center in Grand Forks and renovate the existing YMCA Family Center. The first major contribution came from an organization who desired naming rights of the new facility. Choice Financial signed a \$2.75 million naming sponsor agreement, and it was followed by many private citizens and businesses coming forward to show support for the project through financial gifts and pledges. Most recently, Altru Health System invested \$6.5 million in the project with their goal to help create a healthy community. The gift gives naming rights for the park surrounding Choice Wellness Center (to be named Altru Wellness Village) and will also support the revitalization of the YMCA Family Center in downtown Grand Forks.

“It is through the great vision and generosity of donors and business sponsors that we are here today, approving the construction of the Choice Wellness Center. Although we are right where we need to be financially to begin construction, we will continue to fundraise throughout the construction phase of the project in order to meet the accumulative needs of the new facility and the YMCA renovation,” concluded Staley.

With cash donations, leasing partners, existing Park District capital and betterment allocation (1 mill), and several grants, (including those from Dakota Medical Foundation and Otto Bremer Foundation), the Campaign has secured all but approximately \$700,000 needed for the Choice Wellness Center. The overall project (including a 158,000 square feet Choice Wellness Center and a significant renovation to the Grand Forks YMCA Family Center) is projected to cost approximately \$27,000,000.

An official community groundbreaking event is scheduled to take place on the Choice Wellness Center site, **October 21, 2010 at 3:00 PM**. Everyone is welcome to join in this historic groundbreaking! The specific groundbreaking location is at the corner of 44th Avenue South and 11th Street South (just off S. Washington Street behind the Crary Prudential building).

A recent construction timeline indicates Choice Wellness Center could open for business as early as August 2012.
