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Baptist project

by ANTHONY WARREN Sun Staff Writer

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CONSTRUCTION is expected to begin this month on a project that will bring new economic development to the Belhaven community.

Baptist Health Systems is planning to get started on a \$45 million mixed-use development that will be bordered by North State Street and Poplar Boulevard.

Baptist's Director of Communications Robby Channell said a ribbon cutting will likely be held to mark the beginning of construction, but didn't say when exactly the event would take place.

The development will include a 180,000-square-foot medical office and retail complex and adjoining parking garage.

Baptist officials had hoped to get started on the project in September, but held off until businesses in the area could relocate. The property is located across from Baptist's main campus in downtown Jackson. It was home to the Pizza Shack, Keifer's and KFC. The Pizza Shack and Keifer's have relocated to make way for construction.

It was unclear if the KFC had moved or closed altogether.

Plans are for the first floor of the development to feature retail and restaurant space. Because of the grading of the property, there will also be a small "daylight basement" that will be set aside for restaurant space.

The remaining floors will be used for medical office tenants.

Additionally, a 700-car parking garage and apartment complex will be constructed behind the building on Manship Street. In a previous interview, Baptist's Vice President of Development Michael Stevens said the apartments would wrap around the parking structure to shield it from neighbors and passers-by.

Work will take 15 to 16 months to complete, weather pending.

Previously, four medical groups had signed letters of intent and were in lease negotiations to

locate in the facility. Baptist was also talking to a bistro-like restaurant that they hoped would locate on the first floor. More information on the development and its possible tenants was not available at press time.

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