

[The GRANT COUNTY BEAT](#), a blog published in Silver City, New Mexico, carried this story on Tuesday, 25 August, 2015:

## The GRANT COUNTY BEAT

**The old Fort Bayard Medical Center building will soon begin tumbling down**



The back and side of the old Fort Bayard Medical Center, which will soon be demolished.

By Mary Alice Murphy

At the 149th Birthday celebration of the founding of Fort Bayard in 1866, participants were treated to a short presentation by

Florence Bowers about her husband's great-grandfather, a Buffalo soldier who served at Fort Bayard, almost simultaneously with the founding; ragtime and fiddle music from the 1912 era; and a report on the demolition of the old Fort Bayard Medical Center facility. That Saturday evening, only posts stood where the chain link fence would be put in place on Sunday. By Monday, access to the area was limited.

Jeb Fowler, representing the demolition contractor, said he, too, is sad to see the hospital demolished. He has had family members in the Fort Bayard hospital over the years.

He reported the time allowed for completion of the demolition of the hospital is 500 days. He is making an effort to save whatever is possible within the old hospital. Cobre schools, Silver schools, Bayard Community Center, Girl Scouts, the High Desert Humane Society, Fort Bayard Historical Preservation Society, Santa Clara, and others are receiving items in the hospital that they have requested, he said.

Even much of the concrete in the building is to be reused. It will be taken to a grinder in Hurley to be used later in road projects. Unfortunately, the murals painted on the walls of the hospital will be demolished along with the building. However, he said he is doing his best to save the mural painting of the Last Supper located in the cafeteria.

Fowler emphasized that he will work with the Fort Bayard National Cemetery, so that noise will cease during funeral processions and services.

According to Dr. John Bell, response from the audience was varied. Some of the comments expressed disappointment and others were more optimistic.

Fowler again emphasized the decision to demolish the hospital was not his. He did address some of the reasons for the demolition. The building is 150,000 square feet, so it is too large

for most things that businesses are seeking in this area. The costs of remodeling the hospital to bring it up to code would be prohibitively expensive. He reported the building has been extensively vandalized, and he is now providing 24-hour security. Estevan Lújan, public information officer for the General Services Department, told the Beat the contract has been executed. Once the Historic Review Board documents what is in the building and completes its survey, which could take weeks or months, the demolition will begin.

Lujan said they expected completion of the demolition by about this time next year.

When asked about how the building will come down, he said it is less expensive to chip away at it with bulldozers and heavy equipment than to use explosives.

"We do the building and taking down of facilities," Lujan said. "The Department of Health, as the tenant, is responsible for what is inside the building. There are a lot of processes to make sure that everything is documented."

