

FIRST FREESTANDING SURGERY CENTER DEDICATED TO ORTHOPAEDIC CARE OPENS IN THE MIDLANDS

\$6 million surgery center is first in the country to feature technology; opens during Midlands Orthopaedics' 25th anniversary year

(Columbia, SC) – June 6, 2006 – Midlands Orthopaedics, P.A., a 165-employee practice with three locations, held a ribbon cutting ceremony today to celebrate the opening of its state-of-the-art, \$6 million Surgery Center on Blanding Street. The 13,000 sq. ft. Surgery Center, which is opening during the practice's twenty-fifth anniversary year, is the first freestanding Ambulatory Surgery Center in the Midlands dedicated to orthopaedic care.

In addition, the Surgery Center is the first in the country to utilize Digital Video Interface (DVI) as the main signal in its three fully digital operating rooms, or "virtual operating rooms." This upgraded technology will sharpen the image on the screen for surgeons and operating room staff. The Surgery Center also offers the most advanced equipment, lighting and technology in the field.

"We've combined the best of both worlds – the most advanced technology available with the care and skill of our surgeons – to create a world class Surgery Center," said Bill Frew, chief executive officer of Midlands Orthopaedics. "Our Surgery Center will ensure that South Carolinians continue to receive cutting-edge, cost effective, specialized orthopaedic care."

Today's ribbon cutting ceremony participants included: Mayor Bob Coble, City of Columbia; Ike McLeese, Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce; Senator Ronnie Cromer of Lexington County; Ross D. Lynch, M.D., Medical Director; Bill Frew, CEO; Keith Wilson, COO; Belinda Rutledge, Administrator/Clinical Director; Francine Moring, MD, Chief of Anesthesia; Ransey Bowers, CFO; Al Weidenmuller, The Hunter Group; Paul Mashburn, Mashburn Construction Company; Jim Brown, Vice President, Wachovia; and patient Claud Sapp

Sapp was treated by the practice in route to his honeymoon destination for a severe hand injury he endured just before his wedding. He shared his success story at today's ceremony.

Midlands Orthopaedics has offices in Downtown Columbia, West Columbia and Irmo. The practice employs approximately 165 at its three locations and the Surgery Center. The equivalent of 23 full-time employees will work at the Surgery Center, most of which were recently hired.

Midlands Orthopaedics anticipates a first-year projection of 2,200 outpatient surgeries and an annual projection of 3,600 at its new Surgery Center. Currently, the practice performs 1,200 surgeries and has a pain management caseload of 3,000.

Outpatient procedures that will be offered by the Surgery Center include the removal of bunions and ganglion cysts; the repair of fractured arms, fingers or wrists; and carpal tunnel relief. Arthroscopic procedures on the knee, shoulder, ankle, wrist, or elbow also will be offered.

The Surgery Center was designed by Al Weidenmuller of The Hunter Group in Atlanta. The interiors were created by Incore Planning Associates, LLC of Columbia. Mashburn Construction of Columbia was the general contractor.