

# SILICON VALLEY BUSINESS JOURNAL

## A major Bay Area burn center is undergoing a makeover. Here is what it will involve.



Michael Van Every is the President and Managing Partner of Republic Urban Properties.

TOMAS OVALLE/ SVBJ



By Clare A. Fonstein – Reporter, Silicon Valley Business Journal  
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A longtime Silicon Valley commercial real estate developer took on a local project with a purpose that hits close to home for him.

When he was two and a half years old, Republic Urban Properties' President Michael Van Every got in a severe accident, resulting in burns on about 60 percent of his body. Fifty-two years later, he is working with healthcare nonprofit Valley Health Foundation to raise private funds in support of an updated burn center in San Jose. Created in 1988, Valley Health Foundation helps to fund Santa Clara County's public health care system.

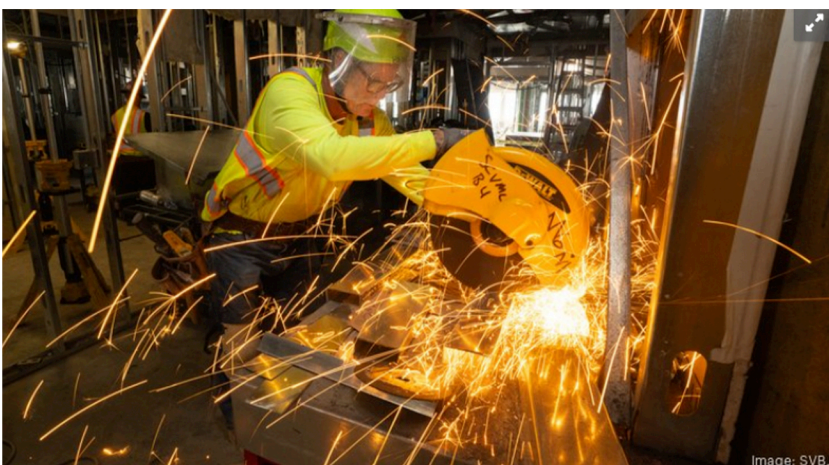
Construction of the new facility is underway and Valley Health Foundation president Michael Elliott is hopeful the new Burn Center at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center will open in 2026.

Van Every said the center is more than halfway complete as of October, after beginning construction in November of 2022.

"When I started (at Valley Health Foundation) the staff at the burn center were advocating for a new space, even back then," said Elliott, who has been with the nonprofit for 17 years.

The incoming 20,000 square foot facility will include a dedicated operating room, a greater number of patient beds, a physical therapy gym and a space specifically for pediatric patients.

The center will top the current largest burn center in northern California. UC Davis Health shared that it holds the title, with its 13,000 square foot facility.



"Burn injuries are really frequent but it can be really challenging for people to find the right level of care," Elliott said. "It's been a commitment by this hospital and this county to say this is a service the community needs. Yes, it's expensive to provide; yes, it's complicated to do, but it's the right thing to do."

Santa Clara County is the owner and operator of the Santa Clara Valley Medical Center, which will house the burn center. The new unit will be built onto the existing hospital at 751 S Bascom Ave., going up on the third floor of Building K, one floor below the hospital's current burn center.

Santa Clara Valley Medical Center is where Van Every was taken back in 1972, when he suffered his burn injury.

He had been at his grandmother's home in Willow Glen when the accident happened. Van Every got out of sight of the adults, and wound up in the garage, playing with a gasoline tank. The water heater ignited the gasoline that has been poured onto the floor, burning him.

Van Every was taken to Santa Clara Valley Medical Center -- its burn unit, new at that time.

"Long story short, it saved my life," Van Every said. "...The thing that I remember the most are the nurses and how kind and dedicated they are and were."

From the age of 2 to about 48, Van Every said he had to get surgeries related to the initial burn.

"What I find just sad and sometimes it makes me angry is that most of these injuries are preventable," Van Every said. "We have this incredible resource, but gosh I sure wish we didn't need it."

The current, 40-year-old burn center at the hospital is the only one of its kind in Northern California, according to Elliott. He said people from all over the western region come to the 4,500 square foot center for burn care.

"Most hospitals don't have burn centers because they're expensive to operate," Elliott said.

Van Every serves as the chief fundraiser for the incoming burn center, raising private dollars through the Michael Van Every Burn Fund to support the largely publicly-funded facility. Last year, he hosted an event accumulating more than \$175,000 to donate, Van Every said.

This year, he has another fundraiser planned, expecting to exceed last year's numbers. The Oct. 17 fundraiser will be a jeopardy-style trivia event, including former San Jose mayor Tom McEnery as a celebrity judge.

The monies raised last year are already at play, and he said future donations will go to the center and patient needs, including post-hospital expenses to support burn survivors.

"I hope it can, obviously save more lives," Van Every said of the incoming burn center.

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