



**Bigger, Better, Best:
Saint Francis Health System
retains partnership with LAVATEC
to retool new laundry facility**

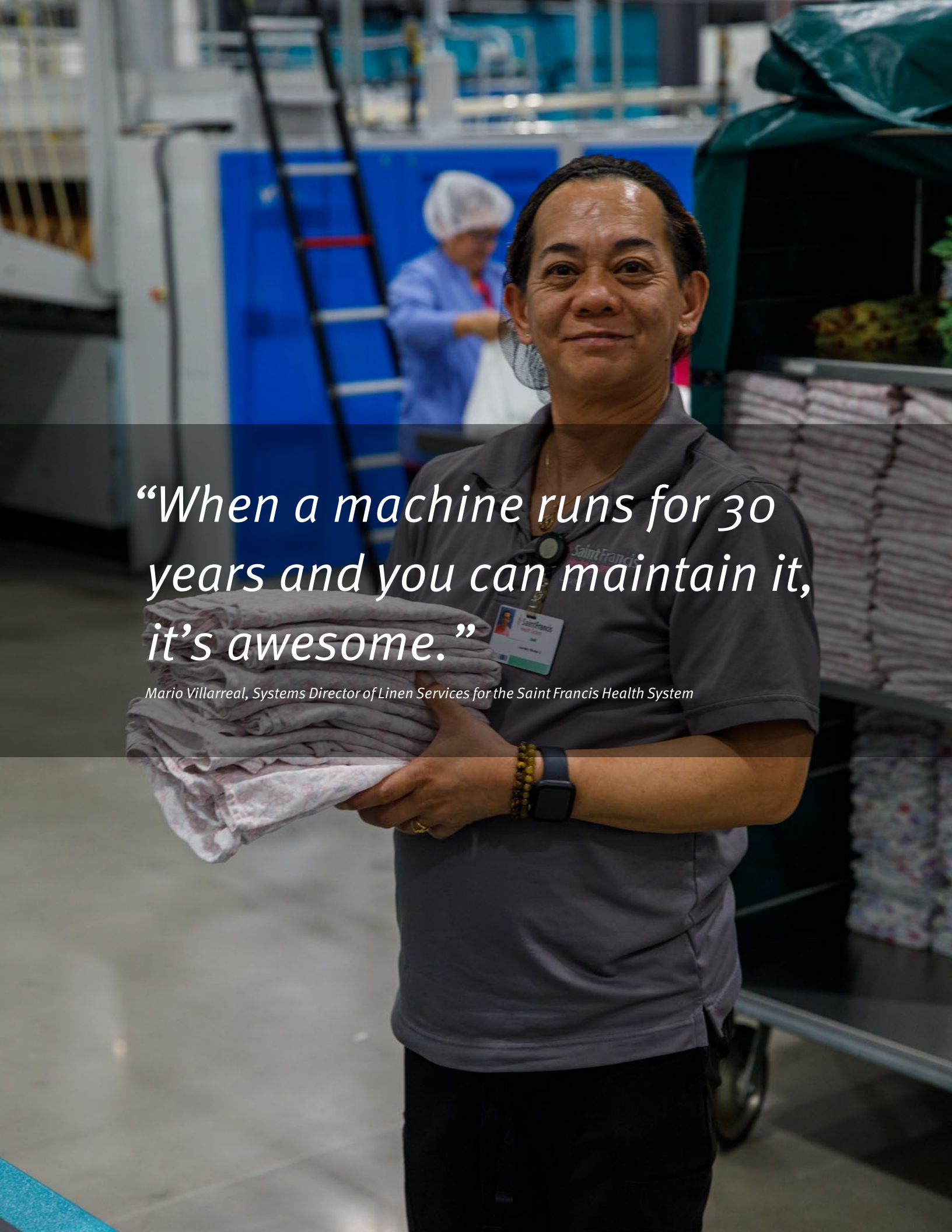
LAVATEC 
Laundry Technology Inc.



New flatwork equipment from LAVATEC partner VEGA Systems, includes 2-roll and 3-roll ironers and a blanket folder. Cover Image: All new LAVATEC equipment includes multiple dryers and a pair of continuous tunnel washer systems. Standing in front of one of the machines is, from left to right: Mario Villarreal, Systems Director of Linen Services; Michael Cowie, laundry manager; and laundry supervisors Samantha Hinson, Mario Alejandro, and Justin Pascual.

Most successful business organizations tend to place trust in solutions - often with partners - that work across the board, ranging from best practices and protocols to benefitting from highly skilled personnel, equipment, and technology. The Saint Francis Health System headquartered in Tulsa is part of that elite group. Having cultivated a distinguished reputation for years, they are now the largest private employer in Eastern Oklahoma.

Over the last 30 years the award-winning network, which includes four hospitals and more than 100 clinic location across eastern Oklahoma, gradually outgrew its laundry space at Saint Francis Hospital. The 1,112-bed flagship facility not only is the biggest hospital in Oklahoma, but also the 11th largest in the United States.

A photograph of Mario Villarreal, a man with dark hair, wearing a grey polo shirt with a Saint Francis Health System logo and a name tag. He is holding a large stack of folded, light-colored linens. In the background, another person in a blue uniform and hairnet is working near a blue machine in a laundry facility. The scene is brightly lit with industrial equipment.

“When a machine runs for 30 years and you can maintain it, it’s awesome.”

Mario Villarreal, Systems Director of Linen Services for the Saint Francis Health System



One of the most impressive pieces of equipment they called upon for three decades was a LAVATEC tunnel wash system that delivered results for approximately 145,000 hours. When their new laundry facility opened on June 8, 2025, they retired the machine. The facility now houses all new LAVATEC continuous tunnel washers, dryers, and extraction presses, as well as ironers, folders, and rail systems from its vendor partners.

“This is the first place I worked with LAVATEC equipment, and I would never change again,” said Mario Villarreal, Systems Director of Linen Services for the Saint Francis Health System. “The equipment is very simple and once you understand how to fix it in case anything happens, it will run. When a machine runs for 30 years and you can maintain it, it’s awesome.”

An award-winning and growing Midwest Healthcare Gem

The Tulsa metro area is thriving. With more Americans looking to relocate in southern states, Tulsa County’s population increased 12 consecutive years from 2010 to 2022, including a nearly three percent uptick from 2019-2020, the year prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Part of the allure besides mild temperatures stem from the grand buildings and cultural institutions constructed during the boom era when Tulsa was known as the Oil Capital of the World. Downtown’s Art Deco district is nearly as famous as

the city’s ballet, opera, and symphony companies. Tulsa is also the official capitol of Route 66, drawing the attention of many international tourists with diners and attractions from yesteryear.

Population growth led to a diversified economy which has also flourished. Represented by companies from the aerospace, energy, finance, and technology sectors, it paved the way for more healthcare services in the northeastern part of the state.

Saint Francis Health System now employs over 12,000 people, including 1,000 physicians. A designated Level 1 Trauma Center, Saint Francis Hospital is its premier facility and has earned the respect of organizations with global impact.

U.S. News & World Report recognized them as the no. 1 hospital in Oklahoma for the ninth consecutive year with its 2025-2026 Best Hospitals rankings, based on quality standards, patient experience and outcomes, expert opinions and other care-related indicators. Becker’s, a leading national healthcare publication with over one million subscribers, added them to their Great Hospitals in America list in 2025.

Premier, a leading technology-driven healthcare improvement company, ranked the health system as one of the top 15 medium-sized health organizations in the United States. No other Oklahoma hospital made the list.



“I think U.S. News and World Report paid us the ultimate honor when they said that across service lines and quality measures, Saint Francis defined excellence,” commented Lisette Coston. The Executive Director of Support Services, she has worked for the Saint Francis Health System since 1987.

“Our 12,000 team members make this possible by providing the best possible care to our patients with the comprehensive services we have to offer.”

Six years of Preparation and Ready for Future Expansion

Planning for the new laundry facility began in 2019. It took one year to complete construction of the 200,000 square-foot building, which has 45,000 square-feet of space dedicated to a laundry that employs 58 people who currently work one Monday-to- Saturday shift. After reviewing all their options, the decision was made to build it a short distance from the main hospital campus.

“The biggest challenge was whether to keep it in-house at Saint Francis Hospital, or move it off-site,” recalled Coston. “At first it was determined we should stay, but we were limited on ceiling height and landlocked by space. With 80% of our volume coming from the main campus, the only way we could do a renovation was to relocate the tunnel washer and cut it in half. LAVATEC was the only vendor willing to do it.

“The amount of attention their organization has provided at every level to help us run our equipment has made a significant difference.”

Mario Villarreal, Systems Director of Linen Services for the Saint Francis Health System

“After evaluating the expense to stay in-house at our original site,” continued Coston, “it turned out to be about equal. At that point, it made sense to move and expand, which allows us to support system growth and partner with other healthcare institutions to process their laundry.”

In 2025, the laundry facility processed more than 17.6 million pounds of linen. This resulted in an increase of 2.5 million pounds compared to 15.1 million pounds in 2024.

Villarreal has a complete arsenal of LAVATEC equipment to handle the greater workload. The LT50 tunnel washer with 110-pound capacity is supported by an LP572 single-stage extraction press, which significantly reduces residual



“We built this new laundry facility for growth.”





moisture by applying up to 40-bar pressure. A set of four TT-745 premium dryers, each with 292-pound capacity, manages this workload.

The LT100 tunnel washer is built with a 220-pound wash capacity and works in tandem with an LP583S extraction press, which exerts up to 50-bar maximum pressure. Combined with a separate set of six TT-745 dryers, Villarreal says they benefit from the increased efficiency of reduced drying times and lower energy and worker costs.

“During the course of our 30-year relationship with LAVATEC, equipment reliability has been a main factor. The amount of attention their organization has provided at every level to help us run our equipment has made a significant difference,” said Villarreal. A 45-year laundry industry veteran, he represented Saint Francis Hospital when they were inducted into the LAVATEC Hall of Fame as a charter member at the 2025 Clean Show in Orlando.

Saint Francis Health System also took advantage of LAVATEC’s vendor partnerships to provide more firepower for the laundry facility. New flatwork equipment from VEGA Systems include 2-roll and 3-roll ironers and a blanket folder. Linens are

transported to and from each station with various methods, including WSP’s Soil and Sort and Soil Rail, and the Clean Rail and clean linen takeaway system.

“From an overall perspective,” said Villarreal, “the end result is we reduced the number of hours to run our new equipment because it is much more efficient. Everything adds up so it will result in benefitting us multiple ways, including lower utility costs.”

Villarreal also has high praise for the reliability of LAVATEC’s service accountability.

“When we have needed them, their Service team is good,” he noted. “As with any new start-up, there are little issues that pop up. For example, when we had a cylinder shaft break, we spoke to their team and they shipped us a new part that we had the next day.”

Villarreal projects the linen workload to increase again this year. His team is ready for it.

“We built this new laundry facility for growth and have the washing and drying capacity to triple our volume. When the time comes, we would just need to add more ironers and folders. That’s why we built it into our current footprint.”

About Lavatec Laundry Technology, Inc.

Delivering dependable commercial laundry equipment engineered for higher returns throughout their lifecycles has always been the Lavatec Laundry Technology (LLT) mission statement. A rarity among manufacturers of continuous tunnel washers, Lavatec LT offers center transfer, bottom transfer and double-drum construction options, plus a full range of readily integrated, end-to-end laundry system components: washer extractors, extraction presses, centrifuges, dryers, conveyor systems, pickers, feeders, ironers and folders. Simple design, durable construction, user-friendly operation and low maintenance are hallmarks of Lavatec LT machines. A global leader with equipment in laundry operations throughout Europe, the Far East, South and North America, in the United States alone, over 6,000 Load Warriors are in place. For additional information, visit www.LLTusa.com.

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