



The new \$1.4 million Pet Emergency Treatment Services facility at 930 N. Queen St. will open to the public Feb. 14.

Vets pool resources to build \$1.4 million city clinic for pets

By Carla Di Fonzo
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After three years of planning, local veterinarians will finally see their dream of a full service animal clinic come true.

Pet Emergency Treatment Services Inc., a \$1.4 million clinic, will be open for business Feb. 14 promising first-rate care seven days a week for clients of the four-legged, furry and feathered variety.

"This was a three-year project that 30 area veterinarians helped bring to light as shareholders," said Dr. Jeff Pendleton, of Harrisburg Pike Animal Hospital.

"All of us felt that our smaller, private clinics weren't enough to service our clients; now we'll have the space to make up for that."

PETS, located in the former Red Rose Suzuki body shop, 930 N. Queen St., includes a treatment area, operating room, private consultation office and kennel.

It is designed to complement existing veterinary services, which will continue to operate elsewhere in Lancaster County.

"Choosing just the right location was very important to us," Pendleton said. "We wanted a central location that Lancaster County residents would find convenient, and we decided to move into a downtown building rather than build on a new plot of land."

Dr. Tom Gemmill, of West Lancaster

Animal Hospital, said it was a logical choice, although it made the project about \$20,000 more expensive.

"We didn't want to go on virgin land in a farming area because our business has always had an agricultural basis, and we didn't want to contribute to the sprawl," Gemmill said.

Once the location was chosen and Benchmark Construction Co. Inc. was hired to build the clinic, the 30 PETS shareholders had to contend with the unique challenges of building in a high-density urban setting.

Besides attending meetings before the Manheim Township Zoning Board, they had to deal with numerous building requirements and regulations.

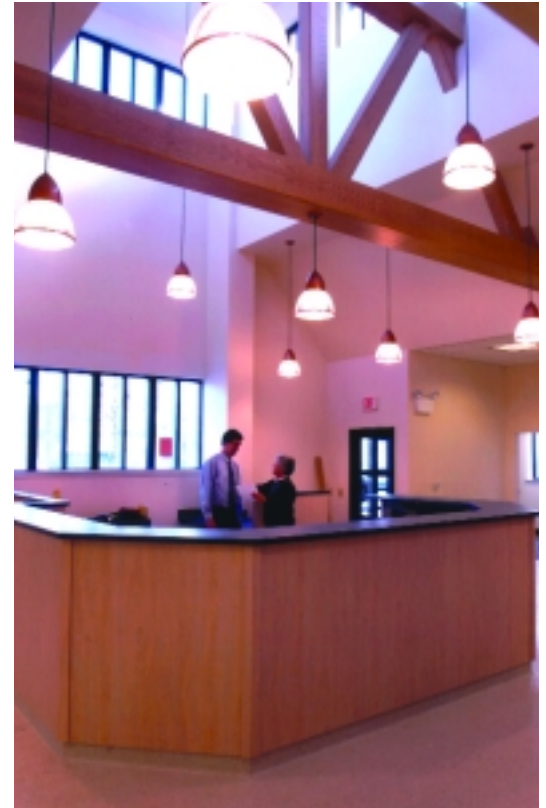
"Originally, there were 38 windows in the building," Gemmill said. "But there's something called the BOCA Code that required 31 of these windows to be bricked up to keep fire from entering our building from the property next door."

"Luckily, we have plenty of windows and a skylight in the reception area that lets in a lot of natural light," he said, "so the alteration hasn't hurt anything."

The building's exterior received a facelift that includes a presidium copper roof with matching trim. The clinic will be wired with a nighttime security system.

Some shareholders made as many as three

Project manager Chris de Vitry, right, and business manager Ruth Stetter stand in the reception area of the new PETS building.



\$1,000 "loans" to the project to keep construction going, but Pendleton said they all feel it was worth it.

"At West Lancaster Animal Hospital, there are only two examination rooms and a small waiting room," he said. "On Christmas Eve we had clients backed out in the parking lot waiting to get in."

"Here we'll have 7,000 square feet to work with, five exam rooms, a pharmacy lab and two full-time vets," Pendleton said.

"Then the rest of the shareholders will work on a rotating schedule on the weekend —though we are looking for a third full-time vet to round things out."

Gemmill said the facility will be unique.

"Between the suburbs of Philadelphia and the suburbs of Pittsburgh, there won't be another clinic like this," he said. "We plan on giving the best possible service to the areas." The clinic will host an open house from 1 to 4 p.m., Feb. 8.

Gemmill compared the new PETS building to Lancaster General Health Campus.

"What the health campus did for humans we'll do for the pet population," he said. "Essentially, we want to give state-of-the-art care to everyone in Lancaster County."