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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State- Of- The- Art Animal Health Center Opens In Escondido, A Six-Year Dream Fulfilled

The new Acacia Animal Health Center, at 655 West Citracado Parkway, Escondido, opened for business this week, fulfilling a six-year dream of Hospital Director Gary Gallerstein. The new facility is a 12,800 sq-ft building on an 83,000 sq ft site in south Escondido. It more than triples the space of the old Center, a 3400 sq ft structure next to the Palomar Family YMCA on North Broadway.

Designed and built by worldwide veterinary facilities design/construction specialists BDA Architecture and CMP, Inc., of Albuquerque, New Mexico, the Health Center is divided into four separate and distinct parts: Dog and Cat Hospital, Bird and Exotic Pet Hospital, Pet Lodging, and Administration.

The hospital portion of the building includes seven exam rooms, two treatment rooms, two intensive care units with oxygen and heating/cooling cages, two isolation rooms, two surgery suites, plus areas devoted to radiology, dentistry, diagnostic laboratory, and pharmacy.

In its lodging portion are canine boarding units, feline condos, and an avian/exotic bird section. The building also includes two laundries and food preparation areas, human and canine hospitality areas, kids' nook, conference/meeting room, and a Zen Garden.

The building has a character all its own. As described by building owner Gary Gallerstein, D.V.M., "There is the serious and clinical side of the hospital, and there is also—in the building's pet boarding area—the whimsical side." Visitors will see a large front courtyard with artificial grass and a bench depicting a dog, as well as metal animal caricature cutouts along the walkway leading to the Center's front door. Within the building is a hallway full of animal caricatures and, further on, a Zen Garden, outfitted with benches depicting a rabbit, turtle, and pig. The garden has been designed with the Center's support staff in mind. "Working in an animal hospital isn't easy. It is very stressful, very emotional," says Gallerstein, who co-owns the practice with partner Dr.

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Carmine G. Bausone. “There are lots of ups and downs in the course of a day, and I just wanted to give the staff a quiet place to relax and kind of get away from it all when they take their break.”

“There are many issues involved in what I call ‘bulletproofing’ an animal hospital,” Gallerstein explained. All have been addressed in the state-of-the-art building, which includes a highly sophisticated airflow system, which eliminates the odors associated with an active animal care hospital. Other design features include specialized corner guards, vinyl wall coverings, epoxy floors, porcelain tile with epoxy grout, semi-gloss paint, and integral colored concrete. {A detailed listing of Special Finishes, Lighting Systems, Power Systems, and Specialized Plumbing is included in this press kit}

Special noise control features were built in throughout the facility. These include low and high frequency noise reduction walls, including special sound-absorbent wall coverings in the reception area, and high noise reduction ceiling tiles throughout.

“First and Foremost, an Animal Hospital”

A dream that took six years to go from conception to reality, the new animal hospital and pet lodging facility will attract attention from several quarters. Those driving by on Interstate 15 will see the building sign reading

ACACIA
Animal Hospital
Pet Lodging

Those in Escondido who were part of the campaign several years ago to overcome the negative, anti-building tenets of Proposition S, which mandates a public vote for any proposed addition to Escondido’s built environment requiring a zoning change, will see it as a triumph, of sorts, of a win-win project against formidable odds. “There have been nine land use propositions that have tested Prop S, and ours is the only one that has won approval,” Dr. Gallerstein said.

In the planning of the new building, Dr. Gallerstein said the main focus was “First and foremost that Acacia is an Animal Hospital.” It currently has five veterinarians on staff as well as a highly trained support staff, including six registered veterinary technicians and a highly trained bird and exotic bird nursing team. Its clientele is composed of two-thirds dogs and cats and the balance in birds, rabbits, rodents, ferrets, reptiles, hedgehogs, frogs, pot-bellied pigs, and more.

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Its services include the following:

- Medicine Surgery Dentistry
- Emergencies and Urgent Care
- Acupuncture (coming soon)
- In-House Diagnostic Laboratory
- Laser Surgery, Digital Radiology, Ultrasound, Endoscopy
- Pharmacy
- Multi-Species Pet Lodging
- Basic Grooming, including Hydrosurge Bathing
- Professional Dog Training
- Professional Bird Training

Acacia Animal Health Center is among the 15% of the 22,000 animal hospitals nationwide that have been accredited by the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA), an association with an extremely rigorous set of standards and inspections, voluntarily agreed to by each member. It is peer recognized, as only the highest quality veterinary hospitals are accredited.

The Whimsical Side of Acacia

The “fun” side of Acacia is its Pet Lodging Facility, named “All Seasons, A 5-Paw Resort at Acacia.” Separate and distinct from the hospital, it has a separate staff, separate laundry areas, separate food preparation areas, and separate airflow. Its distinctive facilities carry such names as Bird Bungalows, Hare Haven, Cat Condos, and Luxury “Sweets”, as well “The Dig Inn” for dogs. The six “sweets” for dogs are in the new building, with 15 more to come on line about six weeks from now. Each will include what Gallerstein calls “homestyle accommodations”: extra-large tiled rooms, flat screen TV, a personal fan, piped in “Music for Critters”, and a fresh sheepskin rug every day. Each TV set will be tuned in to The Animal Planet network, he says. Luxury Sweets also include VIP (very important pet) care, he adds. “The Dig Inn” is described as “barless, gutterless, beautiful, and spacious.”

The Cat Condos are playful with a flat screen, wall-mounted TV, while the Bird Bungalows consist of 32 stainless steel cages, individually separated with paneled walls and compete with a central play area.

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There's also a soon-to-be constructed outdoor aviary for birds to perch outside during the day while under the watchful eye of trained bird personnel. The Cat Condos are spacious and playful with a flat screen, wall-mounted TV. Finally, there is also Hare Haven, which includes special accommodations for rabbits, rodents, and even reptiles.

Outside the building visitors will see a symphony of landscaping. Those bringing their pets for treatment, or boarding, will be encouraged to make use of the good-sized putting green of artificial turf just to the right of the entrance—the staff calls it the “Pea’dle Yard”. Here, two 5-gallon buckets are buried in the ground, one to pick up the contributions and the other holding a pooper-scooper immersed in disinfectant.

Just Approved

Also within the next two months, expect to see the center's 20 ft tall freeway oriented sign, which recently gained approval from the City and Escondido's Design Review Board.

Summing It Up

Acacia Animal Health Center will continue to fulfill its mission, found on its website, of “providing outstanding pet care and client service for those pet owners who desire outstanding pet care and service” as well as its vision, “. . . . To dedicate ourselves to enriching the human-animal bond for the pet owners of North San Diego County through awareness and education.”

An excellent contribution to Escondido and its built environment, Dr. Gallerstein is understandably proud of the new facility. But to him, the bottom line is that “We are veterinarians and animal health staff who dedicate our careers to the animals, and that is what is most important.”

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