

Tewksbury

Doctor plans horse hospital in Hunterdon

By SCOTT HOVANYETZ
Staff Writer

TEWKSBURY — An equine surgeon is preparing to open a state-of-the-art horse hospital in the Fairmount section of the township.

Greg Staller, who has an office in Bedminster, will break ground Monday on the hospital, slated for 8 acres at routes 517 and 512. Construction is expected to be complete in seven months.

The facility will be the first of its kind in the township, said Robert F. Heffernan, Board of Adjustment chairman.

"We do have one or two veterinary equine doctors in Tewksbury, but none of them do operations," Heffernan said. "More than likely, horses will be coming here from other areas of New Jersey."

There will be some horse stalls, a facility where horses can be operated on and stalls for recovery.

The structure will have a residential character and look like a horse barn, Heffernan said.

Staller is one of five veterinarians in the state certified to perform surgery on horses. He has run a private practice in the Pottersville section of Bedminster since 1995 and travels to other veterinary facilities to perform surgery.

Last year, he traveled to Belgium with the U.S. Equestrian Team to a world championship tournament.

The horse hospital, which will be known as the Running "S" Equine Veterinary Center, will feature an "overhead monorail system," a hoist with an overhead track that will transport horses from stalls to the operating table.

The system will be installed to ensure the horses suffer the least disruption possible on their way to and from surgery, said Lizzy Staller, Greg's husband and office manager.

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New Jersey has few animal hospitals that do equine surgery full time, Mrs. Staller said. One, the Mid-Atlantic Equine Medical Center, is on Frontage Road in West Amwell.

Other than that, the other two closest hospitals qualified to perform all types of equine surgeries are at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia or Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., Mrs. Staller said.

The Running "S," named after a brand of cattle once owned by the doctor's family in California, will be a full-service facility, capable of handling neurologic, orthopedic, orthoscopic and emergency surgeries.

Her husband only has offices in Bedminster, Mrs. Staller said. He and his staff make house calls, taking their practice to the patients in trucks.

When the Running "S" opens, the entire operation will be moved to Tewksbury, Mrs. Staller said. Susan Rochelle, an architect from Milford, designed the facility in a rural style that should fit in well with the township's character, she said.

"It's really exciting," Mrs. Staller said.

"It's going to be a really pretty facility."