



Photo by Dana Kacedon

HORSE DOCTORS Greg Staller (right) and Paul Weitz are all smiles after breaking ground on Monday for a new equine surgical clinic in Fairmount. The clinic should be completed early next year.

New Center Will Offer Latest In Horse Surgery

TEWKSBURY TWP. — Ground was broken on Monday for a million-dollar, state-of-the-art equine surgical and veterinary center in Fairmount.

Construction of the Running S Equine Veterinary Center is scheduled to begin soon, with opening planned for early 2001.

"Our facility will look much like an old Tewksbury farmhouse with a barn attached, but the facilities within are most definitely twenty-first century in design," said George Staller, D.V.M.

Designed by architect Susan Rochelle of Milford, the facility will be on the corner of Routes 512 and 517 near the Christie Hoffman Farm Park, which includes miles of equestrian trails. The center will include an operating room, examination rooms, a radiology room, general offices and eight stalls, two designed specifically for orthopedic surgery patients. Plans for an additional barn to house patients and further diagnostic capabilities are currently on the drawing board.

"A facility of this caliber will serve the community well," Dr. Staller said. "We will be able to offer a high-end radiology center similar to that available at the well-known New Bolton Center of the University of Pennsylvania Veterinary College."

One of five board-certified equine surgeons in the state of New Jersey, Dr. Staller graduated from the University of California at Davis in 1987, and did his internship and a surgical residency at New Bolton Center. He has practiced veterinary medicine in Pottersville since 1995. He and his associate presently care for their equine patients through a mobile practice. Exams are performed on the farms, and when needed Dr. Staller performs surgery at other equine hospitals.

"I felt the need for a state-of-the-art equine surgical center in central New Jersey," Dr. Staller noted. "The Running S facility will fill a need for the horse community throughout the state."

Of the approximately 49,000 equines living in New Jersey, Hunterdon County is home to about 6,500 of them, according to the Department of Agriculture. Ranked second in the state Hunterdon is also home to many high-

caliber performance animals.

Many top Standardbred race and breeding horses live in Hunterdon and surrounding areas.

With so many horses located in the area the need for specialized veterinary services is high. While most equine veterinarians operate mobile practices, a few like Mid Atlantic Equine Medical Center just outside of Ringoes and the Equine Trauma Center in Alexandria Township can perform in-house surgery. Others offer in-house care but not surgery. Local horsemen are often referred to New Bolton Center which is a two- to three-hour drive from Hunterdon County.

Dr. Staller hopes the Running S will eliminate some of those long drives. Several variances were granted by the Tewksbury Board of Adjustment including a use variance since the area is zoned for residential lots, according to zoning officer Walter Hawk.