Animal hospital holds opening, showcas

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STAFF WRITER

Dogs, cats and exotic pets have a new place to go for emergency care in Southern Maryland. The Mid-Atlantic Animal Specialty Hospital held a grand opening celebration Tuesday at their new offices in Huntingtown.

The facility offers not only traditional veterinary techniques but also modern, innovative rehabilitation processes for animals. An aquatic treadmill, advanced dentistry and neuromuscular electrical stimulation are all available to pets in need of veterinary care.

Calvert County's five commissioners and representatives from the Calvert County Chamber of Commerce helped cut the ribbon to the new veterinarian hospital Tuesday afternoon.

"I want to thank all of you for your tireless support," co-owner Dr. Bruce Nwadike said at the reception. "Rodney [Oakley, co-owner] was the one who shook the right hands" to get the building off the ground, Nwadike said. The veterinarian said he was happy to become part of the Calvert County community.

"The backbone of this county is our small businesses," Chamber vice-chair Larry Weckbaugh said. "It's all about making our quality of life as best as possible."

The new facility is one of the first in Southern Maryland to feature board certified surgeons. Nwadike and Oakley worked together for over a decade in the veterinary field and completed their dreams with the opening of the Huntingtown hospital last August.

M.A.S.H. will specialize in orthopedics, surgical oncology, neurology, oral surgery and reconstructive surgery. The masterpiece of the facility is their Westcoast Water Walker underwater treadmill, which is used for physical rehabilitation after pet surgery or injury.

"It's amazing how many advances there have been in the human medical field [in the last decade] and now we see the parallels in veterinarian science," rehab specialist Amie Hasbach said. "Most dogs love the water … and there has been a big push for underwater physical therapy."

The treadmill rests inside a tank about four feet tall. The tank is partially filled with 88 to 96 degree water. The floating sensation along with the therapeutic heat of the water helps injured dogs walk along the treadmill, Hasbach said.

"It can help with leg and shoulder injuries as well as recovery after spinal surgery," Hasbach said.

The hospital prides itself on not only using the most modern, high-tech equipment but also on its ability to improvise. Life preservers, abdominal workout balls, weights and a variety of other items hang on the walls of the rehabilitation room and are often employed for rehabilitation.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony featured canine obedience demonstrations by the Prince George's County Department of Corrections. Bay Area Recovery Canines and Mid-Atlantic Rescue dogs performed search and rescue demonstrations as well.

"Well, I am the animal commissioner," Commissioner Linda Kelley said when asked to speak first at the reception. Kelley's pot-bellied pig, Franklin, is almost as well known as she is in Calvert County.

"We had to take some of our exotic pets to North Carolina [for medical treatment]," she said. "Now we can get it done right here in Calvert."

M.A.S.H. is located at 4135 Old Town Road in downtown Huntingtown. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. For more information on the many services offered by M.A.S.H., contact the office at 301-843-8290 or 410-414-8250.