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Animal center to open new clinic Monday

■ **New clinic more than double the size of old facility**

By Paul Ivce

Special to Treasure Coast Newspapers

PALM CITY — For more than 30 years, as long as he has been a veterinarian in Palm City, Dr. Rex Sentell has dreamed of the medical center he will open on Monday.

With room for every type of diagnostic and treatment equipment Sentell could imagine, the 13,712-square-foot Palm City Animal Medical Center is the fulfillment of his longtime dream. The new clinic, which also includes the Snips & Snoozes grooming

and kennel facility, is more than double the size of the building next door that Sentell is vacating.

That clinic, which Sentell hopes to lease out, was expanded three times since he opened in 1981. The clinic finally outgrew any further expansion of the building at 3090 S.W. Mapp Road.

"I've always wanted a first-class facility that was good for the clients, comfortable with a family-type environment," Sentell said during a tour of the new clinic. "This community has really been good to me, and this is trying to give back to the community and my patients."

A waterfall in the lobby is symbolic of Sentell's "nice but not extravagant" approach to the design, completed by BDA Architecture, an Albuquerque, N.M., firm that

specializes in animal care facilities and has designed more than 500 of them.

Stuart-based commercial and residential construction and development firm Team Parks Inc. was the general contractor.

Sentell said the waterfall's sounds are soothing to animals and help keep dogs from barking. The multicolored tile pattern in the lobby reception area "makes it seem like a walk in the park," Sentell said.

"I wanted to have the best environment and the best equipment and the ability to do everything I can for the animals," he said.

To that end, a CT scan is among the modern equipment being installed.

"It probably won't pay for itself, but it will give me the ability to

diagnose diseases that probably couldn't be done any other way," he said.

An avid diver, Sentell has decorated the two main hallways with his undersea photos and also plans to display works by local professional artists.

Coinciding with the opening of the larger clinic, Sentell hired three more people: kennel manager Olga Escobar, who was a veterinarian in Colombia but is not yet certified in Florida, a pharmacy technician and pharmacy assistant. That brought the staff to 30.

Sentell also recently gained American Animal Hospital Association accreditation, one of only six animal hospitals in the Treasure Coast and the second in Martin County with that distinction.