



Rural Development • Rural Business Service • Rural Economic Development Loan/Rural Energy Grant

VETERINARY CLINIC EXPANDING TO MEET INDUSTRY NEEDS

The West River Veterinary Clinic (WRVC) is providing essential animal services in the largely agriculture region of southwestern North Dakota. Initially founded as a mobile practice in 1969, the demand for services quickly brought the need to build a permanent clinic. Since then, it has survived economic downturns in agriculture by diversifying and adapting to industry changes. The full-service mixed animal practice offers preventative care, medical treatment, individual animal and herd consultation, surgery, grooming, boarding, retail sales, cremation and 24-hour emergency service.



Rendering by Nostdahl Liptack Architects of how the veterinary clinic will look when completed in 2016.

While the clinic has always been a mixed animal practice, the way medicine is practiced has changed. All facets are now driven by demand for current technology and highly trained professionals. Thus, each of West River’s veterinarians is becoming species focused.

Serving a region of 20,000 people, WRVC has grown by 15 percent each year for the last three years. To build upon this growth, it became essential to construct a new, modern clinic. Yet, the three young veterinarians who own the practice needed financial help. USDA Rural Development was able to assist by partnering with Slope Electric Cooperative to provide a \$2 million Rural Economic Development Loan (REDL), which provides zero percent interest for 10 years. To provide some cost-savings, WRVC also received a grant from USDA to install a geothermal-enhanced heating and cooling system to supplement their electric utility source.

Dr. Ethan Andress with WRVC said, “This loan and grant is critical for us to achieve the goals of our project for the community. Rural residents deserve to have the same care and access as their city counterparts and USDA helps make this project economically viable.”

Construction has begun on the new 12,000-square-foot facility. The clinic will offer all of the same services, but will increase exam rooms, retail space and boarding capacity. To accommodate the modern needs of veterinary service, there will be a pharmacy, laboratory and isolation area. With the practice’s new focus on equine services, space is also being dedicated to stalls, a padded surgery room and an outdoor pen for treatment.

WRVC currently employs five veterinarians and ten additional staff members. With the new clinic anticipated to open in April 2016, WRVC plans to hire three more full-time veterinarians.

Obligation Amount: \$2 million Rural Economic Development Loan; \$92,850 Rural Energy for America Program grant

Date of Obligation: FY 2014 and April 2015

Congressional District: Representative Cramer, ND-1; Senators Hoeven and Heitkamp

Partners: Slope Electric Cooperative (REDL)

Demographics: Hettinger (pop. 1,226) and the surrounding region in southwestern North Dakota.