

2020 SUCCESS STORY

WILLISTON



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WESTERN VETERINARY CLINIC

WILLISTON, ND – The owners of Western Veterinary Clinic (WVC) in Williston are celebrating the third anniversary of their expansion and remodel. The construction project was started in 2017 to accommodate WVC's growing mixed animal practice. The buildout nearly doubled the clinic's size and made it more functional and attractive.

"We went from three exam rooms to six with additional workspace and opened up the lobby considerably," said Dr. Lee Garbel.

The \$1.2 million project included a 1,400 square-foot addition and 1,500 square-foot remodel. The renovation also gave the clinic more retail space for pet products and room for another veterinarian.

While the original clinic served WVC well for several decades, co-owners Dr. Lee Garbel, Dr. Jody Smith and Dr. Heidi Folden-Willard, began running out of room for their clients and patients in the mid 2010's.

"WVC was started in the 1970's by Dr. Bob Walton and Dr. Lloyd Sorenson," said Garbel. "Gradually, the previous owners retired, and we slowly bought

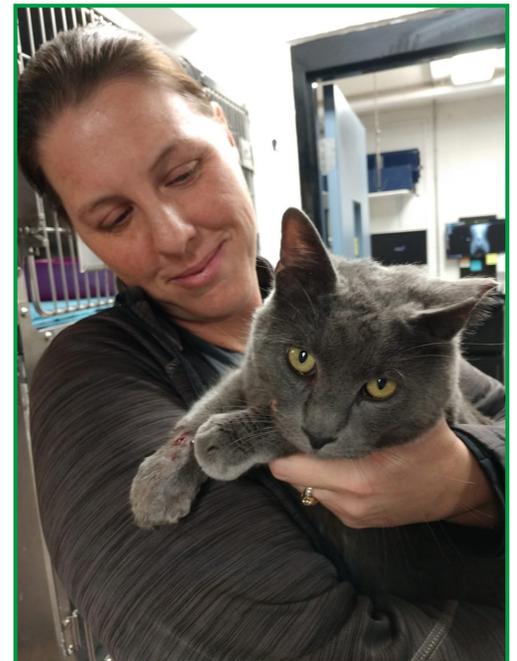
in. Currently we have three owners, five full-time veterinarians, one part-time veterinarian and 15 staff members."

To help them finance the expansion, the owners turned to advisors at the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and American State Bank and Trust (ASB&T) in Williston. Keith Olson, SBDC Regional Director, provided no-cost advising and support while Zach Nelson, ASB&T Assistant Vice President and Assistant Commercial Loan Manager, assisted with the loan.

Garbel said Olson and Nelson were helpful with the loan process.

"The business had been operating in Williston for some time with very long-term stable doctors," said Olson. "We utilized the Flex PACE Interest Buydown program, which is a great program for growing businesses."

The Flex PACE program is funded by the Williston STAR Fund and Bank of North Dakota (BND). BND provides a roughly 2:1 match to the STAR Fund. In 2017, WVC received \$82,000 from the



STAR Fund and \$152,000 from BND to buydown the interest on its loan.

"The project used the STAR Fund and BND Flex Pace Program to receive about \$234,000 in interest buydown," said Nelson. "These programs are instrumental in helping local businesses invest and/or reinvest in our community. The money granted to



Western Veterinary Clinic's expansion will help support the growing veterinary demands of our community for decades into the future."

The expansion has helped WVC, which sees mainly small animals, provide more daily appointments with shorter wait times. Clients and their pets can also enjoy a more comfortable lobby and larger exam rooms.

"The buildout was a way to expand the customer base and provide an opportunity to recruit new vets to



ensure continued longevity," said Olson. "The Williston area is growing, and vet services are crucial as many people move with their pets."

While the expansion helped ease WVC's growing pains, Nelson said he's ready to help again, if needed.

"It makes my job very easy interacting with customers like them who have a passion for what they do. I'm excited to see what they have in store for the future and stand ready to provide any service I can to help them achieve their goals."