

Vet lab on 'front line' of health

CSU unveils its new Diagnostic Medicine Center

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CSU officials on Friday formally opened the university's new \$42 million veterinary Diagnostic Medicine Center, a cornerstone of state and federal efforts to track the spread of animal ailments such as mad cow disease, while also serving local pet owners and area ranchers.

The building was finished in June; it houses diagnostic labs, a clinical pathology lab and the Animal Population Health Institute.

State taxpayers provided funding for the building, which covers 88,000 square feet and brings together workers and equipment that had previously been shoehorned elsewhere.

"Our staff has been doing first-class work in third-world facilities," said Dr. Lance Perryman, dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

Dr. Barb Powers, who runs the new facility, said the building will help make work more efficient.

"We have places to put our people rather than coat closets," she said.

And new CSU President Tony Frank, a veterinary pathologist by training, joked that he's "one bad decision" away from returning to teaching in his field.

"The consolation is that if I do have to come back here, it's a very nice



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CSU President Tony Frank, foreground second from right, cuts the ribbon as Lance Perryman, dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, and Dr. Barb Powers, director of Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratories, assist Friday at the opening of the new Diagnostic Medicine Center.

building," he said.

Turning serious, Frank said the center epitomizes CSU's mission of education, research and service. And he said that with the spread of swine flu and other illnesses that move from animals to people, the center is "very much on the front line of human health."

One component of the building, the

Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, processes more than 500,000 diagnostic tests each year and provides animal diagnostic services for veterinarians, the agriculture industry, animal owners and state and federal agencies for animal disease diagnosis, monitoring animal health and protecting public health.

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The lab is one of seven selected nationally to test for bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or mad cow disease. The Animal Population Health Institute encourages collaboration and expertise exchange in veterinary epidemiology among scientists at CSU, institutions and government agencies throughout the world, CSU said.

The building is located at the James L. Voss Veterinary Teaching Hospital campus off Drake Road west of College Avenue.



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Medical technologist Miriam Staples, left, uses a refractometer to check protein in plasma, and Connie Peterson checks white blood cells on a microscope Friday in the new Diagnostic Medicine Center.