

REGION | STATE

Here's a place for pudgy pooches to run

Dog wellness programs will be offered at the park.

HERMITAGE, Pa. — Dogs will now have a safe place to romp.

Hillcrest-Flynn Pet Funeral Home and Crematory and Hillcrest Memorial Park are opening a secure, private dog park emphasizing pet wellness on a quarter-acre at 2619 E. State St..

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was set for today, and a grand opening and open house are planned for Saturday and Sunday.

Hillcrest Dog Park and Wellness Center will be the first free-play park for dogs of all breeds in Mercer County and surrounding areas. Dog owners will be able to let their dogs exercise and interact with other dogs in a safe, enclosed park. It also will be used as a venue for clinics,

demonstrations and seminars to learn more about pet health.

Healthy dogs

"We want to help people prolong and improve the quality of their dog's life so they don't have to use us as quickly," said John Flynn, funeral director and supervisor, who oversees Hillcrest-Flynn Pet Funeral Home and Crematory and now the dog park.

He is surprised this has never been done in this area before.

"If you have an overweight dog, where do you turn? We plan to have dog walking groups and provide equipment in the park to make it convenient to exercise your dog. We want people to know that there are healthier options to promote pet well-being," Flynn said.

The current roster includes puppy classes, agility demonstrations and wellness programs to be held on the

premises.

"On this end of things, we see pets that sometimes go prematurely, and it has motivated us to create an all-encompassing center to both exercise dogs and provide programs to enhance pet health and longevity," said Roberta Knauf, pet funeral director of the funeral home and crematory.

The park

The dog park will be complete with custom playground gym equipment, serpentine and horseshoe-shaped exercise tunnels, enrichment toys, a soft play surface, and a main area for large- and medium-size dogs as well as a self-contained small dog and puppy area.

The fenced, lighted and camera-monitored facility will be open year-round and 24 hours a day through a key-entry gate. Dogs must meet temperament and AKC Canine Good Cit-

DOG PARK | Open house

Where: Hillcrest Dog Park and Wellness Center (unless otherwise marked, off business Route Pa. 62, next to Kraynak's.)

When: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

What: 10 a.m. begins supervised free play for dogs; 11 a.m. is the agility demonstration; noon to 1:30 p.m. is the pet costume party and games; 2 p.m. obedience demonstration; 3 p.m. demonstration/guidelines for the AKC Canine Good Citizen Evaluation. Throughout the day there will be pet adop-

tion information, ongoing wellness information and refreshments inside the Hillcrest-Flynn Pet Funeral Home and Crematory.

Cost: Normal costs to use the dog park once it's open will be \$10 weekly; \$30 monthly; or \$295 yearly. There will be a 50 percent discount given the first month.

Activities for July include: Puppy training, agility, pet grief support group and a pet chiropractor.

To register for programs and events, call (724) 347-5100.

tion qualifications, and dog owners will be required to complete a member application and present proof of current vaccination and license. Flexible membership plans are available.

For the convenience of dog owners, the dog park will feature Wi-Fi connection for lap-top Internet use,

as well as picnic tables and benches for socializing and watching dogs play.

In addition to the dog park and wellness programs, events, such as fundraisers, will be held on the property to promote pet adoption and to socialize with other dog owners.