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# ECAD looks build 5,000-square-foot addition on Winsted campus

BY KURT MOFFETT REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

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WINSTED — Less than two years after opening its new training center at 149 Newfield Road, ECAD is ready to expand.

ECAD, which stands for Educated Canines Assisting with Disabilities, has submitted plans to the town's land use office for a 5,000-square-foot addition on its 14-acre campus. The Planning and Zoning Commission is scheduled to begin reviewing the plans at its Jan. 27 meeting.

ECAD co-owner Dale Picard said the building will allow him and his wife, Lu, who co-owns the business, to move their administrative offices from the old house at the bottom of a fairly steep hill much closer to the main training facility at the top of the hill. The addition also will be used to train dogs

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between 6 months and two years of age.

The addition will necessitate the hiring of three or four more employees, Dale Picard said. There are now 20 employees, including full- and part-timers. That’s nearly double the 11 staffers Picard had after closing his business’ dog training facility in Greenburgh, N.Y.

“I’m very happy,” Picard said of the growth of the business.

The decision to close in New York came after that state shut down its residential treatment centers for troubled youths in the Dobbs Ferry section of Greenburgh in 2016, Picard has said. Many of ECAD’s clients were from those treatment centers.

The Picards founded ECAD in 1995 and moved its headquarters to Connecticut in 1998.

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During training, the dogs – mostly golden retrievers, and black and yellow Labradors — learn 89 commands over 18 to 24 months, depending on the dog’s maturity. Service dogs need to be able to make decisions that will

benefit the patient, and repetition is key to that ability, the Picards have said.

ECAD opened its \$1.4-million, 9,000-square-foot training facility in the summer of 2018. The center depends heavily on donations and last year raised \$1.6 million, Picard said. This

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year, the fundraising goal is \$2 million. The addition will cost \$1 million.

Assuming all goes well with financing and obtaining town approvals, Picard said he expects the addition to open in the spring of 2021.

Anyone who would like to donate can visit [Ecad1.org/build](http://Ecad1.org/build).



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|            | 6:00 pm Retirement Seminar @ Thomaston Public Library        |
|            | 7:00 pm East End Community C Meeting @ Waterbury ARC Inc.    |
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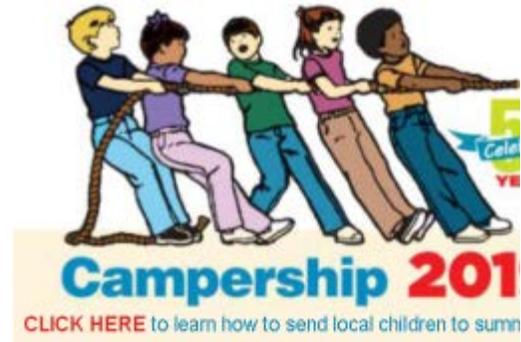
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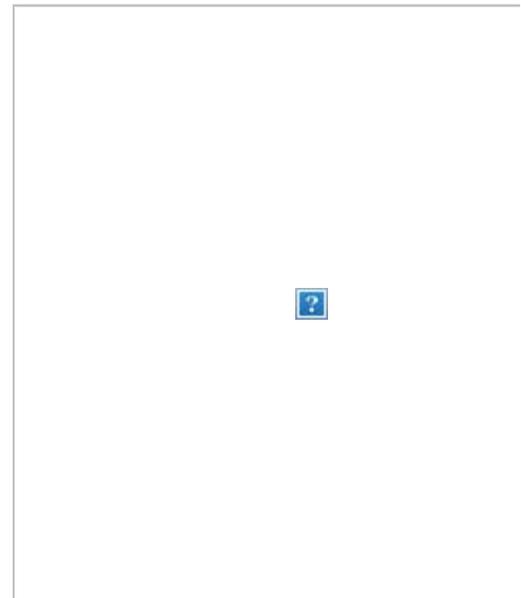
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