

Purina to Roll Out Red Carpet for Dogs in 2010

New indoor event center in Gray Summit, Mo., is expected to draw large dog shows.

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Illustration of the planned show areaThe Purina Event Center, a new multimillion-dollar indoor facility designed to accommodate thousands of dogs and their owners and handlers at shows and trials, has yet to be built, but reservations are now being accepted for events starting in the fall of 2010.

Plans for the construction of an 84,000-square-foot center at Purina Farms in Gray Summit, Mo., were unveiled Nov. 24. Barbara Fawver, a spokeswoman for Purina PetCare Co., said the St. Louis-based company expects to hold 40 to 60 events each year at the new center.

Purina has been holding outdoor dog shows and events at Purina Farms for 15 years, Fawver said. The Event Center was designed to complement existing venues for outdoor dog shows, lure coursing, agility, obedience, herding, and earthdog trials.

“Purina Farms is centrally located in the heart of the country and is easily accessible to people from all over,” she said. “Gray Summit is only 45 minutes from downtown St. Louis and the Lambert-St. Louis International Airport.”

Among the “Best in Show” amenities at the Purina Event Center will be:A 45,000-square-foot main exhibition hall with custom padded flooring.A 13,500-square-foot benching and grooming area with access to the dog bathing room and water station that can double as an exhibition hall for smaller shows and trials.A fully equipped show office complete with built-in sound system, phone and office equipment, plus work and storage space.A second-floor meeting room that can be used for hospitality for judges or volunteers or for educational seminars.Handling changing areas and bathing rooms.Food service and catering will be available as well as banquet facilities that can accommodate 350 people.Parking for vehicles and RVs; RV hookups include electrical, water and sewer. Drop-off entrances will be available for exhibitors to unload grooming supplies and equipment.

Purina aims to attract all-breed dog shows and national specialties, as well as agility and obedience trials. The facility was designed for some of the largest canine events, Fawver said.