

Doctor enjoys high-tech edge

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Dr. Robert Peppercorn is a self-described gadget fanatic.

So it's not surprising that the Yuba City dermatologist has always reinvested money from his clinic in new equipment so he can offer patients the latest treatments, building an array of 14 lasers.

"I like to have every piece of equipment, every piece of technology," Peppercorn said. "I like to have every possible tool that a dermatologist can use."

The gadgets have turned out to be one key to building his thriving practice. As potential patients hear about new services and treatments - often featured in magazines - he can say that yes, he does offer them.

"There certainly is a national trend of people trying to make themselves feel good and look good," Peppercorn said. "We do not do extreme makeovers here, we just try to get people to feel better."

Now, the Yuba City dermatologist is expanding his Del Norte Boulevard facility into what is billed as one of the largest dermatology and allergy clinics in Northern California. The \$1.5 million, 9,000 square foot addition will give the Advanced Dermatology and Laser Center of Northern California a total of 13,500 square feet. The new building was designed by Estrada Engineering and is being built by Hudspeth Construction. Both are Yuba City firms.



Peppercorn's new addition will have the area's first full-service medical skin spa with an esthetician, a massage therapist, laser hair removal, non-invasive laser skin rejuvenation treatments, Botox center, permanent make-up care and cellulite treatment facility. It will also have an outpatient surgery suite.

Patients have sought him out for new procedures such as the laser treatment of varicose veins.

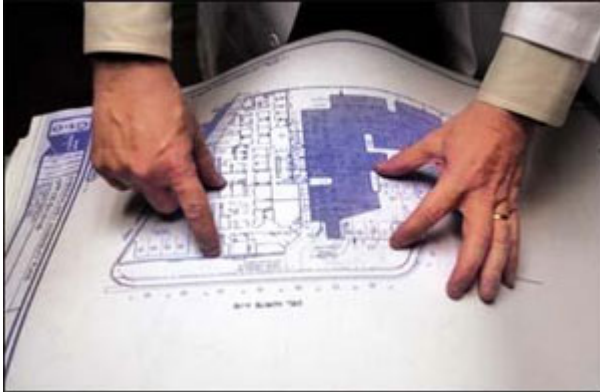
The varicose veins can get "pretty nasty" the doctor said, sticking out a half inch in some cases.

Treatment used to involve going to the hospital for vein stripping that required cuts down a patient's leg.

But with the use of lasers, patients can walk out of the clinic in 90 minutes feeling good, Peppercorn said.

Peppercorn said he owes much of his practice's success to a customer-service oriented office where patients are treated with respect. That, as much as having the latest technology, makes people satisfied with his work, Peppercorn said.

He has also done more marketing and public outreach than many of his peers since coming to Yuba City more than 20 years ago. He bought newspaper ads when his peers scoffed at the practice. He also has a local cable television show, The Medical Explorer.



Peppercorn, 51, said when he first came here and started appearing on television, doctors would wonder who he was, doing "all these things on TV."

"Now, I'm associated with the town and with the medical community," Peppercorn said.

And his practice - which has 50,000 registered patients - goes well beyond this community, reaching up to Nevada County and down to Lincoln.

Peppercorn recently opened a new office in Lincoln adding to satellite offices in Penn Valley and Colusa.

The practice employs 31 people, including three dermatologists. The expansion will increase the staffing to 38.