

## Former MWW exec gone to the dogs

MIKE PLATANIA JANUARY 9, 2017 3  
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Jeff Kellogg outside the Woofy Wellness dog care center in Sandston. *(Mike Platania)*

When Richmond-based MeadWestvaco through a massive 2015 merger became WestRock, Jeff Kellogg was left with a big question.

The 47-year-old, a vice president at MWW at the time, took a buyout that ended a 15-year career at the packaging firm.

“It was a ‘What do I do now?’ type of thing,” Kellogg said.

He went home to his family, including his black lab, Poe. His wife reminded him that he'd spent years fantasizing about the dog care industry, and this was his chance to chase that dream.

"I realized at that point I needed to control of my own destiny and become an entrepreneur," he said.

So Kellogg opened Woofy Wellness, a dog care center in Sandston that – with the help of potential patents and an idea for franchising – he hopes will turn the traditional canine care business model on its head.

"I don't want to sound like I want to be the next Bill Gates, because I don't, but it's a pretty cool opportunity to revolutionize the way something's being done. We don't want to lose sight of that as we build out," Kellogg said.

Woofy Wellness offers an a la carte menu that includes a dog chauffeur service, grooming and spa treatment, training, veterinary service, and an off-leash daycare/boarding service.

Its Woofy Buses, a fleet of five school buses-turned-pet transporters, make six daily stops around the region, in Ashland, Mechanicsville, the Wyndham area and downtown, taking dogs to the Wellness Ranch, a 2-acre center at 5912 Lewis Road.

The buses were designed to be safe for dogs, and the pickup service was crafted to simplify transporting dogs to and from daycare.

At MWV, Kellogg had traveled all over the world, and said he learned the importance of having free time at home.

"Not only did we want to make the best quality canine care center in Richmond, we needed to find a way to make it really, really convenient so people can get their weekends and weeknights back," Kellogg said.

Once arriving at the ranch, the dogs exit buses and peruse the no-crate, no-kennel facility. Dogs are grouped outdoors based on personality, not age, and the company trains dogs to socialize and behave with others.

Kellogg said he plans to add several more buses and stops, and the ranch has extra acreage to use when necessary.

Kellogg said he initially searched for real estate in Hanover County, but ran into roadblocks due to the unique nature of his business. Woofy Wellness isn't a normal kennel service, and its vet services and dog transportation blurred some lines.

“(Hanover County’s) planning and zoning folks couldn’t get their heads around the project, because it wasn’t like anything they had even seen, they couldn’t classify us as an existing type of business and wouldn’t approve our plans,” Kellogg said.

While Kellogg doesn’t have a background in animal care, the team he assembled does. Behaviorist Bill Howard studied under Linn Boyke, a partner of the famed “Dog Whisperer” Cesar Millan, and veterinarian Erin Dexter has run a vet service since 2007.

Woofy Wellness is self-funded but aims to grow and add locations in 2017, in Northern Virginia or Houston, Texas. The business has five full-time employees, and Kellogg said he hopes to expand to 12 or 15 by the end of 2017, not including future franchisees or licensees.

“We’ve got lots of patents filed around the business itself, around the buses, those types of things, so that allows us to grow by franchising and licensing nationally,” Kellogg said.

Kellogg has welcomed the switch from meetings in the corporate world to caring for Richmonders’ dogs.

“It’s really rewarding. We’ve got dogs here that were going to get surrendered because of their behavior problems, and we were able to get a hold of them and teach the dogs, teach the owners how to take care of the dogs, and we saved the dogs.”

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## 3 Comments »

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1.



**Bruce Anderson** [January 9, 2017 at 9:31 am](#) - [Reply](#)

Great idea. Good luck to you!



2.

**Chrissy Ragland** January 9, 2017 at 1:40 pm - Reply

Great place and great people, always friendly!



3.

**Sheila Henley** January 9, 2017 at 2:02 pm - Reply

My Doberman puppy has visited the daycare many times. He loves Woofy Wellness!