



—KEVIN BLOCKER

Palouse Pooch Playground co-owner Heidi Mitchell watches over a handful of dogs at her new pet daycare, located just off the Palouse Highway.

Palouse Pooch Playground debuts south of Spokane

By Kevin Blocker

kevinb@spokanejournal.com

Heidi Mitchell lives south of Spokane on a 5-acre parcel of land just off the Palouse Highway.

A passionate dog lover, Mitchell is quick to observe the numbers of dogs on leashes whenever she and her husband, Scott Mitchell, venture into town.

“If you don’t have a yard for a dog, it’s estimated that 90% of your pet’s life is spent on a leash,” Mitchell says.

So, while walking last year with a friend whose dog was on a leash, the idea sparked of starting a business dedicated to creating a daytime place for dogs.

Mitchell debuted Palouse Pooch Playground, at 7028 S. Waneta, at the beginning of November.

On the Mitchells’ property, the couple has set up a pair of fenced enclosures

laid out on artificial turf. One pen is 40 feet wide and 48 feet in length while the other is 16 feet wide and 32 feet long. She and the family’s Labrador retriever, named Lightning, stay in the fenced pens with their customers’ dogs until they’re picked up.

The Mitchells also purchased a 48-foot-long shipping container equipped with a portable heater, so Mitchell and her canine crew have a place to shelter from the elements when necessary, she says.

Operating hours are 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and price rates vary, averaging \$20 to \$25 per day, she says.

For example, a dog owner can buy a \$100 package, which is good for four playground visits a month. A 20-day pass for a month will cost \$400.

“I have the ability to adjust packages to the package you want for your dog,” she says.

Mitchell says her husband and two sons also help with the operations.

“It’s really a family business,” she says. “I can go into the house and have Scott or one of our sons provide a break.”

Mitchell was laid off from manufacturing company Pyrotek Inc. late last year. Then, when COVID-19 arrived in the U.S., she was unable to secure work in the field as manufacturers laid off en masse.

That’s when she began giving greater consideration to Palouse Pooch Playground, which is under the corporate name Palouse Pooch LLC.

“I love it, I just love,” says Mitchell, who holds an undergraduate degree in communications from the University of Washington. Her resume includes stints working at Microsoft Inc. and the Seattle SuperSonics, the city’s former NBA team.

“I would’ve never imagined I would’ve done something like this,” she says.