

8 AND SPEAKING OF DOGS ...

Jeff Graves used to work at a commercial insurance brokerage. But “it takes a very special person to be passionate about insurance.” He wasn’t.

So Graves, of Roeland Park, quit his job and looked around for something else. Ideal scenario: something outdoors, working with his hands.

What he came up with was a business where he works with his feet. It’s called **KC Dog Runners** — think dog walking, only faster. The phenomenon has caught on in other cities, so Graves figured why not here, too.

The dog running service, launched more than a year ago, now has three part-time employees and more than 20 regular clients. Most of the pooches are midsize dogs, but Graves, 34, laughs as he describes a couple of 5-pound Yorkies just south of the Country Club Plaza: “Those little suckers would run fast.”

Why Graves is a 10: KC Dog Runners isn’t just for pampered pets, though. Graves is recruiting two-legged runners to meet up some Saturday mornings at Wayside Waifs, Animal Haven or Pet Connection to give shelter dogs a 30-45 minute workout.

“They just think it’s the greatest thing for their dogs,” Graves says.

The dogs, we’re guessing, think it’s pretty awesome, too. (Sign up at www.kcdogrunners.com.)

| Tim Engle, The Star



SHANE KEYSER | THE KANSAS CITY STAR

Running with the dogs is Jeff Graves’ business, but he also volunteers his time with shelter dogs, like this energetic pooch from the Pet Connection shelter in Mission.