

**GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT
TO THE
BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS
FOR THE MONTH OF
FEBRUARY 2009**

At the meetings on February 9 and 23, 2009, the General Manager or his designee provided the following updates, summary of activities, and information about events in January and February 2009.

Statistics

In Calendar Year 2008 the Department averaged a 20% increase in intakes over 2007. However, in January 2009 our Intake Rate (3,321) was only 1.7% above the same period in January 2008 (3,265). That is still a 21% increase over 2006 (2,744). This may suggest a leveling off. We will of course continue to watch our Intake Rate to see if the worst is behind us or if this is just a momentary reprieve from the influx of animals unequaled since 2002 (3,365).

The Department's Adoption Rate for January 2009 (1,747) is up 18% compared to January 2008 (1,472). This is the highest January Adoption Rate in the Department's history.

January 2009 New Hope Placements (332) is down 13% compared to January 2008 (385).

The January 2009 euthanasia rate (680) is down 17% compared to the euthanasia rate in January 2008 (820). This is the lowest January Euthanasia Rate in the Department's history.

Critical Incident near North Central

On Sunday, February 22, 2009, four people were shot during a private party at the loft apartments across the street from the North Central Animal Care Center. ACT Carl White rendered comfort to one of the victims until paramedics arrived. No other city employee, volunteers or animals were involved. While active, activity at the crime scene blocked driveways at North Central temporarily.

Department Administrative, Operations & Medical Divisions:

Administration

Changeover to Wachovia Bank

The changeover for all our banking and lock box activities continues to be a major focus of our Administration, Accounting, Licensing, and Systems groups. We are optimistic that many of the changes required by Wachovia's 100% on-line reporting will lead to efficiencies in the coming year. But that will be because of significant efforts on our end. Early April is the targeted changeover completion date.

Budget

On Friday, February 20, 2009, the Department met with the Mayor's Office and City Administrative Officer to discuss a 30% cut to the 09/10 budget. All City Departments are being asked to come back with a revised budget. The Department will continue to argue that because of the cuts taken in the current fiscal year, the on-going partial use of Mission Animal Care Center and the existing 8% vacancy rate in the Department that cuts for Animal Services should be less extreme. However, with the State and City's fiscal crisis looming over us all, the CAO continues to look for deeper savings in the current year and next year.

Spay/Neuter Vouchers

Despite a \$100,000 cut so far this fiscal year to spay/neuter funding, demand for both the low income Free spay/neuter (\$70 value) and the \$30 discount coupons continues to rise. This is probably the result of both the economic downturn and the new spay/neuter law. The Department receives funding each month from the City's General Fund for coupons and to pay for the spay/neuter van services. Since passage of the spay/neuter ordinance, the demand for spay/neuter has been so great that our Animal Care Centers routinely run out of coupons before the month's end. This has forced us to limit the number of \$30 coupon books we distribute to the public through our rescue partners so we have enough at our Animal Care Centers to make it to the end of each month. We are in the process of implementing criteria for distribution of the Free Spay/Neuter Coupons (value \$70) to ensure they are indeed going to seniors, disabled, and other residents whose income is under the HUD low income

ceiling of \$30,300, by requiring DWP Lifeline and Low Income bills to be presented. The CAO's request for a 30% cut to next year's budget would necessitate reductions to the S/N fund.

Controller Audit

On December 4, 2008, the Controller released an audit of the Prop F Animal Facilities Bond Program. Most of the 17 recommendations were directed at the Bureau of Engineering, with only six directed to Animal Services. The joint response of our two Departments to the audit was submitted to the Controller on February 5th. In large measure the audit, which was performed by outside experts, lauded the Program. In particular, they made recommendations to assist BOE with being more on target with cost estimating. For Animal Services, the audit recommended better communication between staff assigned to the Program and the Department Management (including the Board) and community stakeholders. Often, value engineering decisions necessary to keep the projects on budget were not discussed or even reported to the Board or stakeholders, creating a gap between expectations and the final product. They also recommended more and better training for staff moving into the new facilities.

Strategic Planning Process

On Thursday, February 19, 2009, 25 employees met at our East Valley Animal Care Center to help develop the Department's Strategic Plan. A total of 32 employees are directly participating in this process, however, input will be sought from many more. These 32 employees form four teams of 8 employees. Over the next couple of months, these teams will be working together to develop Departmental Goals for the next fiscal year and beyond, as well as implementation plans for accomplishing those Goals.

Orange Bone Partnership

On February 11 2009, Last Chance for Animals and the Orange Bone Pet Store hosted a star studded celebration of the partnership formed with LA Animal Services and other rescues to provide shelter dogs instead of puppy mill dogs for sale. The event was very successful and garnered some very positive press.

The new South LA project

A meeting was held with the staff of the current South LA Animal Care Center to accept feedback on the new center design elements from employees who have worked in the local area. A number of suggestions and design tweaks came out of that discussion, such as re-assigning some office locations and improving the flow of the receiving area with a few targeted changes. According to BOE, most of the recommended modifications can be integrated without a significant increase in cost or a slowdown in the schedule. Please remember that the new South LA facility will be an ADDITION to that area, not a replacement of the current South LA Animal Care Center.

Marketing

The *LA Times* is considering running the following ad whenever they have available space:

The City of Los Angeles enacted a new law that requires all cats and dogs to be spayed or neutered, with some exemptions allowed. Spay/Neuter is a humane life affirming means to end pet euthanasia. For more information please contact LA Animal Services or visit www.laanimalservices.com.

This ad has already run twice and we are monitoring to see if the Department experiences an increase in the number of inquiries coming into our Call Center and animals care centers. The Department is doing its best to make sure all our employees are well equipped to respond to ANY spay/neuter questions they encounter. We are also offering training to any employee who does not feel completely comfortable explaining the City's spay/neuter law.

On-Line Licensing

The Department met with the City Controller, IT Dept, and the City Attorney to develop a plan to overcome the challenges to on-line licensing. The initial meeting was very productive. We have set a target date to have this service on-line by July 1, 2009. It will require changes to the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

Pet Cam

Following the success in promoting the Puppy Mill Survivors through the use of an on-line Puppy Cam,

we recently completed 3 weeks of promoting a litter of kittens on a web cam streaming live on our website. This was made possible through the generosity of The Found Animal Foundation. The kittens were available for adoption on February 9, 2009 at the West LA Animal Care Center. The volume of traffic visiting the web cam during the 3-week period was 800,000.

Following the success of the recent puppy and kitty cam efforts, (which were provided by the Found Animals Foundation), the Department has decided to look into initiating our own in-house Pet Cam. The cam will provide the Department another marketing tool to encourage traffic into our Centers in the hopes of further increasing adoptions.

Beverly Hills

The contract with Beverly Hills went into effect on February 1, 2009. To date, the transition has been smooth.

Operations

Enforcement Activities

Field calls generated by ACOs decreased 3.3% for January 2009 as compared to January 2008 (2,318 vs. 2,396). However, Unable to Make (UTMs) were down 37% from 4,087 in January 2008 to 2,574 in January 2009.

East Valley

Cats: The new awnings have been installed over the windows for the Community Cat Rooms at East Valley. The awnings are meant to reduce the heat in the rooms. The air conditioning units will be installed shortly to complete the requested work.

Rabbits: We moved the rabbits to a more prominent area in the kennels. New cages have been ordered to complete the renovation.

SMART (Small Animal Rescue Team)

The Department formalized The Small Animal Rescue Team and we are in the process of finalizing a written policy and procedure protocol supported by a training regimen. This Team will be activated when the Department is called upon to rescue animals in trees, in the LA River, wash basins, under buildings, man made lakes, storm drains, sewer systems, animals stranded on a beach jetty, beached marine mammals and birds, animals stranded on rooftops, small animals fallen over cliffs or ravines, and/or animals trapped in walls. This Team is receiving specialized training and equipment and will have the expertise to safely and successfully rescue animals from these precarious situations. Recently, the Team was activated to extract a cat trapped atop a 30 foot tree. The rescue was covered by the media. This Team will soon have a presence on our website alongside the Department's Air Rescue Team (DART Team), which is our large animal rescue team, that partners with the Fire Department to use their helicopter when necessary, and has been so successful over the years rescuing many of horses from canyon fires and other predicaments.

ACTF (Animal Cruelty Task Force)

A reminder that the ACTF has not been disbanded, it has been decentralized. We now have an ACTF Officer in each Center ready to respond to any cruelty or neglect complaint that comes into their respective Centers. We are still partnering with LAPD and the City Attorney's Office on this Task Force. In fact, we are very close to formalizing the partnership with LAPD through an interdepartmental MOU. The MOU reinforces both Departments' commitment to the Task Force and it is designed to clarify each Department's roles on the Task Force, something that has been missing until now.

Special Enforcement Actions

These are scheduled every Thursday and are rotated through each of our Centers. An ACO from each Center has joined forces to review problematic areas in the City, to pick up and rescue stray animals, and issue notices for violations of dogs found at large. North Central hosted the first event and picked up 7 dogs. South LA hosted the second event and picked up 11 stray dogs. East Valley picked up 14 dogs of which 7 were returned to their owners with citations issued.

Legal Training

The Department formalized a training partnership with both the County's District Attorney's Office and the City Attorney's Office. Attorneys from both offices will circulate through all our Centers on a weekly basis providing specific training on animal control ordinances and enforcement as well as offering our employees advice and answering ordinance and enforcement questions. The key topics will be tethering and how to deal with abandonments resulting from the foreclosure crisis. We are finalizing a policy and procedure statement on the latter issue.

Emergency Preparedness

The Department established an Emergency Preparedness Steering Committee to focus on four primary areas: Training, Equipment, Human Resources (including succession planning) and Emergency Facilities (identifying all potential possibilities and drafting MOUs). Also, refresher training was provided to 9 employees on how to deploy our Mighty Mover.

Medical

Western University Update

Dr. Prupas met with Second Year students at Western University to discuss finalizing the terms of a formal relationship. Items discussed included a possible fourth year rotation at LAAS, recruitment of 100 volunteers to foster neonates and spay/neuter opportunities.

Dr. Prupas successfully recruited 30 vet students to participate in this year's Baby Bottle Foster Parent Program. The thirty new participants are signed up for orientation.

In House S/N Update

All Centers are now performing in-house spay/neuters which allows our pets to go home as soon as they are adopted.

Upcoming Events

Furry Valentine Adopt-a-thon

LA Animal Services, in partnership with the Found Animals Foundation and the Pet Care Foundation, conducted the *My Furry Valentine* adoption event at all six Animal Care Centers on Saturday/Sunday, February 14/15. Animals were available for adoption at a special low price of \$43 for a dog, \$28 for a cat (second cat free!) and \$25 for a rabbit. This is a 60% to 80% savings off regular adoption fees. These low adoption fees included spay/neuter surgery, microchip, vaccinations and in the case of dogs a license.

LA Animal Services placed 343 pets into loving homes during this two day event. That is over a 100% increase when compared to the same weekend in 2008 when 171 pets were adopted.

A Daily News article on Dionne Warwick's Valentine's Day visit to our East Valley Animal Care Center to help promote adoptions through our A House is Not a Home without a Pet program ran on Sunday, February 15th.

Low Cost Vaccination Clinic

Will be held at West LA February 19, 2009 -- this will be our new provider's first clinic (Southern California Veterinary Vaccine Clinic).