

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

At the meetings on January 12 and 26, 2009, the General Manager or his designee provided the following updates, summary of activities, and information about events in December 2008 and January 2009.

Announcements:

- 2009 is LA Animal Services' 100th Anniversary.

2008 Overview:

Adoptions: 20,994
New Hope Placements: 5,297
Total: 26,291

Adoptions:

December 2008 was the highest month for adoptions (2,212) since the Department started keeping statistics (the second highest was 2,206, set in July 2008).

In December, a Secret Santa stepped up and paid the Adoption Fees for nearly 350 families in the three days before Christmas (\$22,000). This prompted a second Santa to step up and donate \$500 to help families adopt a pet.

2008 realized a 29% increase in adoptions over last year. This is the most animals the Department has ever placed in one year!

Intakes:

Went up 20.5% (54,191 compared to 44,964 in 2007). The increase was largely due to the housing foreclosure crisis. The last year the Department took in this many animals was in 2002.

Euthanasia:

Went up 30% (19,617 in 08 compared to 07 = 15,012). While 2008 showed an increase it was to the level we saw in 2006 at 19,226. The last three years achieved the lowest euthanasia rates in the Department's history. The worst was 1971, when over 110,000 animals were euthanized.

Department Administrative, Operations & Medical Divisions:

Administration

- **Strategic Plan**

The Department has begun work in earnest on a five-Year Strategic Plan for Animal Services. In November 2008, we were gifted with the guidance of Varouj Abkian, Assistant Director of Sanitation, the well-respected author of Sanitation's strategic planning process. In January, we finalized our strategic objectives for the Department and began to assemble employee teams to recommend goals and programs to achieve the objectives in 2009-2010. The GM will be meeting with the unions to apprise them of the process, with which they are already familiar from the strategic planning process in other Departments that have been assisted by Mr. Abkian. The proposed final goals for 2009-2010 will be presented to the Board.

- **Permits Database**

The Department's Information Technology Division developed a database program that registers information on all animal-related businesses in the City that have permits under the Municipal Code. Any member of the Department can search the database to find out the current status of a permittee, and the application automatically calculates permit expirations to create notices. Inspections and complaints can also be logged in the database, which should be helpful now that our permits officers are enforcing the stricter state laws on pet store conditions that went into effect on January 1st.

- **Bank Transfer**
As a result of an RFP process, the City will be closing its relationships with Bank of America and most Departments will be moved to accounts with Wachovia. This will include all our credit card transactions, the daily cash deposited from the animal care centers, and the lockbox system that processes animal license renewals. This transition started in the fall and the coordination with Bank staff and the Department will accelerate now to complete the transfer early this year.
- **New Fees**
In November of 2008, the City Council approved the fee study provided by the Department in December of 2007, and the Council adopted the new fees proposed by the Board about one year ago. The Department is awaiting the completion of the Municipal Code changes necessary to enable the new fees. The ordinance should go back to the Council for adoption very soon. We can apply the new fees 30 days after the ordinance is adopted and signed by the Mayor.
- **Early Separation Incentive**
Every Department was asked by the Mayor to provide an analysis of the impact of a program of separation and/or early retirement incentives. At this time, we have no information about whether any such program will be proposed or what the terms might be. Generally, our analysis suggested that the Department would by necessity need to backfill more than 50% of positions that might be vacated, and that the cost of sick time, overtime, and vacation payouts would negate any salary savings the first year, but savings might be achieved in future years.
- **Pet Store Alternative to Puppy Mill Animals**
The GM met with Clark Duval, owner of The Puppy Store. His retail pet shop is now adopting puppies and small breed dogs from our Centers and selling them in his store. Since December 2008, Mr. Duval has adopted 31 dogs from LA Animal Services Care Centers.
- **Beverly Hills Contract**
Management met with principals from the City of Beverly Hills to discuss the operational tactics of the new contract, which begins February 1, 2009. We will continue to meet monthly to insure good service and to promote open lines of communication.
- **Canvassing**
A licensing meeting was held to further discuss the role of our Canvassing Team towards improving their productivity and efficiency and to assist Captain Jorge Figueroa in his new role as Supervisor of Special Operations.
- **West LA and Harbor Spay/Neuter Clinics**
The new Spay/Neuter Clinic at West LA, operated by Value Vet, planned to open for business on February 1st. The vet staff was provided with a tour of their operations prior to opening. Clinico is slated to open at Harbor later in February.
- **New Vehicles**
Fleet Service has notified us that we will be receiving new replacement vans. Staff is working with Fleet Service to request minor improvements to the caging sizes and other small maintenance items. Originally, we were to receive 13 vans, but due to budget cuts we will be getting 11 replacements.

Operations

- **Shelter Population Management**
Transfers between Centers have increased (from 144 in Nov/2007 to 314 in Nov/2008) to facilitate higher adoptions in response to the increased impoundments. Our animal population is now slightly below capacity, thanks to the hard work and high adoptions accomplished by staff. I commend AGM Davis and Capt. Helen Brakemeier for their leadership in shelter management.
- **Emergency Plan**
The Golden Guardian Exercise (Nov 13 & 14, 2008) and the Sesnon and Marek Fires last year served as an excellent impetus to review and update the Department's Emergency Plan. This

review is expected every January in all City Departments. I commend Chris Carroll for taking the lead on updating this critical document.

- **Animal Cruelty Task Force (ACTF)**

The ACTF has been reorganized to afford better efficiency of staffing during the current hiring freeze. The MOU with LAPD is still under review. Management met with City Attorney's Office in effort to streamline cruelty cases and we are meeting with the District Attorney's Office on training and identifying similar efficiencies.

- **LAX Border Patrol and Survey Results**

The December 11th press conference about the Puppy Mill Survivors received tremendous media coverage and resulted in over 500 people attending the auction, many coming to an LAAS Care Center for the first time. The Muni code required that each puppy be made available through an auction if more than one party wanted to adopt the animal. More than \$20,000 was raised in adoption fees to help offset the care these animals received while in our charge. Pet Adoptions on that day also were up 97% at EV and 47% system wide.

- **Special Enforcement Sweep (SES)**

The Department conducted a Special Enforcement Sweep (SES) in the North Central District. On Thursday, January 22, 2009, one ACO from each District joined forces at NC to concentrate their efforts primarily on picking up loose, stray animals and enforcing licensing. A total of 12 dogs were picked up and 6 citations were issued. This activity will continue one day each week revolving through each of the districts. The next SES is slated for South LA.

Medical

- The Department is working with the Southern California Veterinary Vaccine Clinic to formalize the process and procedure for conducting low cost vaccine clinics at our Centers once a month. They will begin February 19 at WLA.

Upcoming Events

- The Department worked with Found Animal Foundation (FAF) and The Pet Care Foundation (PCF) on "My Furry Valentine" Event planning, which will be held February 14 and 15 at all Centers featuring discounted fees. FAF and PCF will host special events at WLA and EV, respectively. A deeper discount will be offered for cats in the interest of spurring higher feline adoptions. FAF also installed a "kitty cam" at WLA to further focus interest on cats prior to the event.
- The Department has attended planning meetings for "We Spay LA", LA's Official Spay Day, to be held February 28, 2009 at the Northeast Animal Care Center's spay/neuter clinic. Clinico and other vendors will perform up to 100 surgeries for residents of Council Districts 6 and 7. Representatives from Councilmembers Alarcon and Cardenas offices attended the meeting.