

**GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT  
TO THE  
BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS  
FOR THE MONTH OF  
MAY 2008**

At the meetings on May 12, and May 27, 2008, the General Manager or his designee provided the following updates, summary of activities, and information about events in May.

**Announcements:**

Congratulations to **Commissioner Ponce** on the Be Kind to Animals Week event at the North Central Animal Care Center on May 9, 2008. More than 200 children were in attendance. The LA Zoo, Caesar Millan, Dick Van Patten, LAPD, Councilmembers Reyes, Huizar, and Cardenas, and Monica Garcia, Board President of LAUSD also were in attendance. It was a well orchestrated and well executed event.

Congratulations to **Commissioner Khero** on his reappointment by the Mayor to the Animal Services Commission.

Welcome to **Kathy Davis, our new Assistant General Manager of Operations**, who started her new position with the Department on May 27, 2008. Kathy brings 17 years of experience in Animal Services and Code Enforcement acquired through serving both a large and small city. Kathy comes to Los Angeles from Dallas where she held the position of Director of Code Compliance, which included Animal Services. In Dallas, Kathy was instrumental in reorganizing Animal Services over a 5 year span; drastically reducing complaint response time; reversing a long-standing volatile relationship with the Animal Shelter Advisory Board; building consensus with animal welfare organizations throughout the larger Dallas metropolitan area; expanding Dallas' Cruelty Investigation Unit to focus much needed attention on prosecution of criminal cases; developing Dallas' animal welfare public education campaign, implementing a feral cat program, overhauling the City's animal control ordinances, and helping design a new state-of-the-art animal shelter. When Hurricane Katrina hit Louisiana, Kathy worked quickly with staff to open Dallas' first emergency shelter for pets arriving with New Orleans evacuees. Dallas received State recognition for these efforts.

We are moving from the old Harbor facility to the **new Harbor Animal Care Center** on June 2, 2008.

We have begun transferring evidence animals to the **Mission Animal Care Center**. If we are unable to open it, we will still be using the facility for evidence animals, the Animal Cruelty Task Force, and possibly for other animals as well, which will free up kennels for adoptable animals in all of the Animal Care Centers throughout the City.

The West Valley Animal Care Center is working with **Pierce College** to begin a dog grooming course that will be taught by Pierce College professors.

The Department has issued a press release on the **impact of foreclosure situation** and how it has increased the numbers of animals coming into our Care Centers. There has been a lot of media coverage of this which has resulted in the possibility of a new program coming soon working with realtors. The Commission will be updated on the progress of the program.

### **Fiscal Year 2008-2009 Budget:**

A memo was sent to all Department staff on May 21, 2008 regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 08/09 Budget. Every City Department was asked to cut back on expenditures, even in the current fiscal year. To balance next year's budget, the City cut multiple programs from each Department. What this means to Animal Services is a reduction of shelter hours to seven a day and restricting the use of the new Mission Animal Care Center in the Northeast San Fernando Valley to house evidence animals and special operations, with no general public services. The Mayor's proposed budget also showed many job cuts. For Animal Services, after taking into account our vacancies, we would still have had to revert several supervisors to lower positions and lay off over 30 ACT and other positions. This represented over 50% of the entire City's lay-offs.

The Department management explained to the City Council the serious consequences of such severe cuts and we asked them to retain as many people as possible. We have been developing alternatives to keep from losing supervisors and staff. In public hearings, members of the humane community and rescue organizations came out in support of the important work that we do every day to care for the lost and homeless pets of this City. City Council said that it made a difference, to the point that Councilmember Cardenas made a motion to restore \$500,000 to the budget to give us more time to educate the public that the Department will be reducing hours. Councilmember Alarcon has made a motion that may result in \$1 million being restored to the budget. The entire budget hit the Department took was \$2.5 million and we have a chance of seeing \$1.5 million restored which, if these motions are approved, will result in the Department not having to lay off any employees, no supervisors reverting back to other positions, and we will be able to open our Mission Animal Care Center as a full-service facility.

Also, there was a rumor that despite the fact that the Department was taking a \$2.5 million cut, the City was offering the General Manager a 20% pay increase. That never happened. There has been no discussion among the City's General Managers about taking a pay increase and even the Mayor had the opportunity for a pay increase and turned it down. We are all fiscally aware of the situation and would not entertain such a proposition in this type of climate.

### **Financial Audit:**

Laura Chick released her audit of revenues and expenses for the Department on May 27, 2008. We have been looking forward to it and welcome the Controller's findings and recommendations, and thank her for her comprehensive look at the Department's finances. Many of her findings of the audit do not come as a surprise as they are items that the Department has identified itself. The Department has

been working systematically to address and resolve many of these long standing and deeply entrenched issues that we have encountered over the last couple of years. This audit serves as a real tool and as a confirmation of our findings.

The Department now has a full management team in place on the Executive level and our capacity to focus on the problems identified by the audit is substantially enhanced.

The audit highlights dog licensing as an issue and potential revenue source. Coincidentally, the Department is about a month away from bringing a report to the City Council that reviews our licensing program in depth and outlines a number of ways in which the Department can move forward with some positive solutions.

### **RFP Updates:**

The Department received 4 proposals in response to the **Spay/Neuter Clinics RFP** from 2 organizations: Clinico for Harbor, North Central, and East Valley, and Value Vet for West LA. We received no proposals for West Valley or Mission. The Department is in the process of reviewing these to make sure that they meet all of the requirements and we will report back to the Commission with respect to the qualifications of the proposals and what we plan to do with the other two facilities.

### **Department Operations & Medical Divisions:**

#### **Training**

The Training Division continues to train our ACTs in animal cruelty recognition and how to distinguish skin conditions from real cases of cruelty and how to document cruelty cases for prosecution. Our training now is the most sophisticated it has ever been.

#### **Staffing**

The Department signed on a new Veterinarian, Dr. Lynn Whitehead, who was the Vet at the California Wildlife Center in Malibu. She will be training with Dr. Feldman and starting in July at the East Valley Animal Care Center.

Four veterinary externs from Western University will start working at different times in the Department this summer.

#### **Bottle Baby Foster Program**

The Bottle Baby New Hope Coordinators are continuing to recruit fosters for the neonates that are coming in huge numbers. We are offering two types of foster training: scheduled group classes and one-on-one training to accommodate all potential fosters.

### **Department Events:**

The Department participated in an event called the **1<sup>st</sup> Annual Pet Care Fair**, at Woodley Park in Van Nuys on May 24, 2008, which the Department helped to plan with Councilmember Cardenas' office. It was very successful with approximately

1000 people in attendance with their pets. The Department ran a low-cost vaccination clinic and microchip clinic. We ran out of vaccines and gave rabies vaccinations non-stop for more than 7 hours. We gave out 4 books of Spay/Neuter coupons in one day, which is more than is typically given in one month at East Valley. The Amanda Foundation has booked 2 months worth of surgeries just from this event. We also microchipped 131 animals, 100 of the microchips were purchased by the Councilman's office and provided free to the public. Six older dogs were adopted and 27 licenses were issued.

The **Grand Opening celebration for the Harbor Animal Care Center** is scheduled for June 21, 2008.

The Department will be participating in the **LA Zoo Adoption Event** on June 28, 2008. This will be the first time we have held an adoption event with the Zoo. Other communities that hold this type of adoption event often adopt out hundreds of animals in one day and we are hoping for the same success rate.