

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

At the meetings on April 14, and April 28, 2008, the General Manager or his designee provided the following updates, summary of activities, and information about events in March and April

Announcements:

The Department's center managers, animal care technicians, and members of the medical staff met for a one-day training session on the Department's "**Plus One, Minus One Program**," which helps staff manage their shelter population while limiting the rate of euthanasia. Following recent episodes of the Oprah Winfrey Show that exposed the tragic condition of puppy mills, the Department saw a short-term 52% increase in adoptions. Due to the housing collapse however, the Department has also seen a significant increase in animal turn-ins. Department staff continues to work on a variety of strategies to improve adoptions, including relinquishment counseling.

The Department has begun enforcing the wild animal **permit guidelines**, shutting down a circus elephant act in Panorama City on April 10 that was found to be in violation of City permit requirements approved by the Board in January.

Council Member Bill Rosendahl motioned that the City Council support the **Humane Farm Animal Care** initiative to protect farm animals.

The Department is working on an ordinance for regulating wild hybrid cats in the City of Los Angeles. The **Animal Rescue Team** has been formed to respond and save animals trapped on roofs, high trees, storm drains, etc., which contrary to popular belief, is not a core service of the Fire Department. The Department has also deployed more officers to the Venice Beach area to enforce regulations that prohibit dogs from running off-leash on the beach, which can particularly endanger beached marine life.

Several **public relations** professionals have approached the Department about forming an ad hoc committee of professional marketers and public relations specialists to assist the Department in developing marketing strategies and plans.

The Department continues to work on improving its **records retention system**. Boxes of old records have been sent to the City's records retention facility to make room for more current records.

Fiscal Year 2008-2009 Budget:

The Mayor held a news conference on April 11 to announce the difficult choices ahead with regards to the City's Budget, noting that the deficit gap for the upcoming fiscal year would be over \$400 million. The Mayor will give his State of the City Address on April 14 to discuss the City's top priorities in public safety, as well as this year's Budget Process

and its review of each Department's expected budget. The Mayor's proposed Budget will be released on April 21 and will begin review by the City Council on April 28. General Managers and members of the Mayor's Policy and Budget team will be participating in these hearings before the City Council's Budget and Finance Committee.

LA Animal Services staff has been working closely with the CAO and the Mayor's Office to identify the necessary reductions in next year's Budget, while maintaining the highest level of service to the community. As anticipated, the Department is expecting a reduction in operating hours and possible layoffs. The Department has also established weekly meetings with high-level managers at the Bureau of Engineering to better identify areas where efficiency can be increased. The Department continues to move forward with the Strategic Planning Process to assist in identifying the necessary changes for the ensuing Budget Year.

RFP Updates:

The Department recently conducted a proposers' conference for interested parties for the **Spay/Neuter Clinic RFP**, with eight entities represented. Proposals are due to the Department on May 6. The **Pet Health Insurance Sponsorship RFP** has been released, and the Department received two proposals. The applications from Veterinary Pet Insurance and Pets Best are currently under review. The Department will soon be releasing an **Animal Electronic Identification System RFP** for a new provider and registry of microchips. The Department's current contract with Avid will expire in August 2008.

Spay/Neuter:

Spay/Neuter Ordinance

The Spay/Neuter Ordinance technically went into effect on April 8. However, there will be a six-month grace period to encourage the public to voluntarily comply with the ordinance. The Department will begin enforcing the ordinance on October 1, 2008. The Department was recently served a lawsuit by Concerned Dog Owners of California, challenging the Ordinance.

Spay/Neuter Advisory Committee

Council Member Richard Alarcón recently communicated to Council President Eric Garcetti the need to proceed with establishing the Spay/Neuter Advisory Committee. Once the Committee is in place, the Department will be able to regularly provide staff reports to the Board.

Department Veterinary & Medical:

Medical updates

A protocol to provide Lysine in the feline diet, which may help mitigate URI, is now being implemented in the Department's Animal Care Centers. Recently, Chief Veterinarian Steve Feldman and Dr. Monique Di Santo attended the Feline Medicine Seminar in Glendale on April 13 to learn more on how to treat URI. Dr. Di Santo and the staff at the South Los Angeles Annex will soon have the capacity to perform sterilization and other minor surgeries. The Department plans to install digital x-ray machines at the Northeast Valley and North Central Animal Care Centers. Dr. Theresa Lee is working with Fix Nation to perform cat surgeries on the weekends at

the North Central Spay/Neuter Clinic. The medical team is trying to organize feline maternity wards at all of the Department's Animal Care Centers during kitten season.

Training

Los Angeles County Public Health is working closely with the Department on a number of initiatives including disease recognition seminars for other animal control organizations in the Southern California area. The Department is looking into hosting an animal control regional summit. The Department also plans to provide reptile and exotic bird recognition training. The Department recently purchased new cameras for the medical staff to document the injuries and conditions resulting from cruelty and neglect. The Department also is looking into alternative ways of euthanizing injured wildlife animals in the field.

Staffing

The Department continues to interview veterinarians. The Department regrettably announces the loss of Dr. Subhakar Rao's services, who left to go back to private practice. Western University has finally approved LA Animal Services as an internship site for its fourth-year veterinary students. The first students will start their rotation with the Department in August 2008.

Bottle Baby Foster Program, STAR Program and Vaccination Clinics

To address the demands of the neonate season, staff has been trained on the Bottle Baby procedures, the New Hope Coordinators are carefully managing the New Hope Program, supplies and kits have been purchased and distributed to each Center, and the Central Foster Baby protocol for dispensing complimentary prescription medication is being implemented. The Department is also providing in-house vaccination clinics for public pets once a month. The Department received its largest STAR Program donation to help provide orthopedic surgery for an injured stray named Rollie that was brought to the East Valley Center after being found roaming the streets of Van Nuys. Since being treated by the medical staff, Rollie has been adopted out by a New Hope Partner for extended care.

Staff Reassignments:

A member of staff has been reassigned to temporarily serve as the **Volunteer Program Manager**, recruiting volunteers for the Department. The City just recently decided to schedule an exam for interested individuals to apply to fill the vacant position permanently. Another staff member been assigned to oversee **Special Events**.

Department Events:

On April 6, the Department co-hosted "**Tour of Life**" in Venice Beach, adopting out 22 animals. On April 25 the Department participated in the "**Earth Day Adoption Event**." The "**Volunteer Recognition**" event took place at the Rose Bowl on April 27. The Department also participated in the April 27 "**Best Friends LA Super Adoption Festival**" in North Hollywood. Other upcoming events include the "**Be Kind to Animals Week**" on May 10, 2008.