

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

At the meetings on August 11 and August 25, 2008, the General Manager or his designee provided the following updates, summary of activities, and information about events in August.

Announcements:

Morale and Public Service Level Crisis

Deep cuts in the Department's 2008-2009 budget were forcing the layoff of about 28 animal care workers, a reduction in public operating hours from 55 hours a week to 40, and the continued public closure of the beautiful new Mission Animal Care Center. Animal Services is the only City Department slated for such deep cuts and the negative effect on employee morale is palpable. Further, this unfortunate action that hurts employee morale and public service come as we face significant increases in animal impounds and the upcoming pressure of enforcing the new spay/neuter ordinance.

As of August 25, 2008, the Department received a commitment from the Mayor's Office that there will be no layoffs as anticipated and discussed in our last Commission meeting. There are a lot of details that need to be worked out but **the 28 positions targeted for layoff are safe!** The Mayor's Office is directing Personnel to cease the layoff placement process.

Mission Animal Care Center in the Northeast Valley remains closed to the public.

The Department has been able to attract a **volunteer Marketing Committee** to assist the Department with developing ads and public services announcements (PSAs), to tell the public about the Spay/Neuter Ordinance. The entire Hispanic Caucus of the LA City Council and several celebrities have produced PSAs for the Department.

A **House is not a Home** without a Pet program was launched on August 25, 2008. Keller Williams will be featuring a full page ad in the Caravan MLS magazine.

The Department has been in discussions with the Disney Studios regarding the upcoming release of their new film, **Beverly Hills Chihuahua**. The Department wants to leverage the movie's visibility to mitigate situations like pet store sale of puppy mill puppies and the over sale of Chihuahuas.

The **Humane LA Workshops** continue. The 1st workshop was about Spay/Neuter, the 2nd workshop was about Rescue Groups, and the next workshop is about Fostering on September 4, 2008 in Studio City. All of the workshops can be viewed on Channel 35 and are available on the Channel 35 and LA Animal Services website.

Department Operations & Medical Divisions:

Training

The Department will host the Second Regional Animal Summit. Local animal agencies will share information on topics such as: rescue agencies applying for privileges, sharing information about animals designated as "Do Not Adopt," and dangerous dogs moving from/to jurisdictions

Medical

Chief Veterinarian

After extensive recruitment efforts, a new Chief Veterinarian has accepted the Department's offer and will start in September. Dr. Steven Feldman has served as acting Chief Veterinarian for over a year and has done an outstanding job helping the Department recruit nearly a full team of veterinarians. There is

only one veterinary vacancy remaining. Dr. Feldman will continue with the program.

Shelter Operations

Pet Adoptions

The Department reports a 20.20% increase in 2008 YTD pet adoptions (15,178) compared to YTD 2007 (12,627). The increase in July 2008 adoptions was 27.42% (2,774) compared to July 2007 (2,177). The Department has over 140 contractual partnerships with animal rescue organizations. The mission of these organizations is to help place animals that the Department may have difficulty placing. New Hope placements represent 25% of total pet adoptions.

Record Breaking Adopt-a-thon

The Department conducted a two day Pet Adopt-a-thon on July 19th and 20th in response to an increase in the number of animals surrendered to City shelters for reasons associated with the housing foreclosure crisis. The Adopt-a-thon placed 539 pets, making it the most successful adoption event in the memory of any staff. The Department is planning additional adoption events in August and September to help alleviate overcrowding.

Animal Impounds

Animals continue to come into the City's Animal Care Centers in larger than usual numbers in 2008, with an 18.38% increase YTD (30,635) compared to the same period of time in 2007 (25,878). Pets relinquished for reasons related to the housing crisis increased 28% YTD (2,202).

Euthanasia

The increase in Animal Impounds has led to an increase in the number of animals euthanized. This is the first increase in pet euthanasia in the past six years. The Department successfully reduced pet euthanasia over 50% in the past six years, and 22% in 2007. YTD 2008 has seen a 37.38% increase in euthanasia (10,217) compared to 2007 YTD (7,437). However, when the numbers are normalized to account for the increase in impounds, the euthanasia rate is up 3.49%.

Achieving No-Kill

Phase I of No-Kill is achieved when no healthy animal is killed due to a lack of space or resources. Phase II is achieved when we end the killing of animals in need of medical treatment. YTD 118 cats and 384 dogs were killed due to insufficient holding space and/or resources. These healthy pets represent the challenge to achieving Phase I of the City's "No-Kill" Goal.

Field Operations

Dog License Canvassing Program

The Department's Canvassing Program increased Dog License sales 46.35% (824) in July 2008 generating \$43,510. A comprehensive study of the Department's dog licensing program containing a number of programmatic recommendations will soon be released.

Pet Store Inspection Form and Requirements

The Pet Store Inspection Form and Requirements have been finalized, based on a new state law. A letter has been sent to all permitted pet store operators in the City to advise them about the new pet store requirements that will go into effect January 1, 2009. These rules and regulations also are on our website and a copy of the requirements was mailed with the letter. Officers are being trained on the new requirements.

Animal Cruelty Taskforce Seizure

ACTF seized 44 Chihuahuas from a residence after being called in by LAPD. The 34 adult dogs and 9 puppies are currently being evaluated by medical staff at the Northeast Valley Animal Care Center. Cruelty charges are being considered at this time and there had been no reports of hoarding at this address prior to the seizure.

Puppy Mill Task Force

The Department, in partnership with Jim Bickhart in the Mayor's Office, has established a task force

whose mission is addressing the illegal trafficking of animals from overseas and Mexico. The Department is also working with all the animal control agencies in the LA region.

Administration

Preparing for Spay/Neuter Ordinance

The Department is working internally and meeting with the City Attorney's Office and the Finance Department to develop plans to enforce the new spay/neuter ordinance. The Department's enforcement capacity relating to this ordinance, which was not augmented in this year's budget, was audited by the City Controller whose report was released on August 19, 2008.

We have updated our website and created a new page dedicated to information about the spay/neuter law and how to comply. We have the new application forms on-line for permits for unaltered dogs and cats, and will be continuing to refine our forms and adding information rapidly over the next weeks.

The Big Fix Spay/Neuter Program

The City partially or totally subsidized 39,910 spay/neuter surgeries in FY08 compared to 37,886 in FY07 for a 5.34% increase. This is a 15.75% increase over FY06.

Spay/Neuter Mobile Van

The plan to continue mobile spay/neuter services is to negotiate a new multi-year agreement directly with the Amanda Foundation. We believe that the City can support a finding that the need to competitively bid this contract is not practicable or advantageous. According to Charter Section 371 - Requirement for Competitive Bidding, there is an exemption for contracts: "...determined by the contracting authority, for professional or expert services for which the contracting authority finds that competitive bidding is not practicable or advantageous."

We have initially discussed this approach with the Mayor's office and others and met with Amanda Foundation on Friday, August 8, 2008, to discuss terms. The meeting went well. We are preparing a first draft agreement while the Amanda Foundation supplies some financial information and proposals to the Department.