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Inclusive solution to animal services sought

By: Thomas Miller

In my new role as Placer County's Executive Officer, I would like to give you a brief update regarding Placer County Animal Services and the steps we are taking to serve growing communities in the future.

Animal Services is an important county service. It has been and always will be important to the Board of Supervisors that we provide this service in the most efficient manner while meeting the needs of the community.

The meeting of our Animal Ad Hoc Committee on Tuesday, Nov. 15 included city managers from Loomis, Lincoln and Colfax, as well law enforcement personnel from these cities and Roseville. Community partners representing several non-profit animal service agencies were also present, including Friends of Placer County Animal Shelters, Auburn Area Animal Rescue Foundation, A New Hope, Fieldhaven and Placer SPCA.

Health and Human Services Director Dr. Richard Burton introduced new Animal Services Program Manager Mike Winters, who provided an update of significant improvements that have been made recently at Animal Services.

City representatives described their progress in updating contracts with the county and their current and future needs for animal sheltering and services.

Government officials listened to the concerns from representatives of community agencies who partner with the county in providing services to animals. They voiced the need for new and improved shelter capacity and for additional programs to serve animals and the community.

Though progress has been made, all agreed that more work remains to be done.

As next steps, four major tasks were defined. Work groups were assigned specific challenges, with each group agreeing to bring back a proposed work plan next month.

The County's Animal Services Program Manager will continue to make interim improvements to the animal shelter and to animal service programs. Other county staff will update the county's report on animal shelter needs and cost estimates.

Representatives of the cities will recommend where sheltering services should be located to best serve families in the foothills as well as in South Placer County. A separate work group will develop a regional plan for the North Tahoe/Truckee area.

Non-profit community partner agencies will make recommendations on how they can best interface with Placer County Animal Services to expand the critical services they provide to animals and our community.

We'll hold a follow-up meeting in mid-December to review our progress and define the next steps.

Many improvements have been made by our non-profit community partners, other improvements by the county.

At this point there are issues to be addressed by the cities, by county staff and by our non-profit agency partners. This process can bring tremendous benefits.

Placer County will welcome recommendations from the community and from other animal partnership agencies. Updates on our progress will be provided to the Board of Supervisors and on the county web site.

There is much we can achieve together. We welcome your support to animals.

Thomas Miller is Placer County's Executive Officer.

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