

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ANIMAL SERVICES/RESCUE ORGANIZATIONS MEETINGS**

The process of meeting with the Rescue Organizations started November 2003. At this meeting the Rescue Organizations identified their issues and concerns with the processing and care of animals at Animal Services. In December, Animal Services staff met and discussed the issues and concerns they had experienced in working with the Rescue Organizations. Once all concerns were compiled, interest based negotiations training was given to both the Animal Services staff and Rescue Organizations. The issues were categorized into three topics: Treatment, Policy and Communications. From these three identified topics, three working committees were developed to address the concerns.

The groups started meeting in February 2004. Each group met approximately every two weeks and had a facilitator from the Chief Executive Office. These groups were comprised of 5-15 representatives of rescue organizations, 3-8 staff members from Animal Services and 1-3 staff members from the Chief Executive Staff. Overall the groups met approximately 11-15 times to discuss the issues and concerns and to come up with the following recommendations.

The recommendations as listed, were compiled by the Chief Executive Office facilitators based upon their understanding of the issues and concerns of the Rescue Organizations. Following each recommendation, in ***bold italicized*** print, is the Department of Animal Services response to each recommendation. Each response is preceded by the words COMPLETE or IN PROGRESS, followed by an explanation of what Animals Services did or did not do, relative to the recommendation. COMPLETE means Animal Services does not intend to take any further action beyond what was described in the response. IN PROGRESS means Animal Services intends to pursue further action.

### **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

1. It is recommended that Rescues be given an initial call on intake of the animals into Animal Services in order that they have time to set up a foster home, veterinary appointments and transportation.

***COMPLETE – Animal Services continues to make every attempt to contact Rescue Groups as soon as possible. We have over 60 rescues on file. Per Food and Agriculture Code Section 31108(b), Rescues are encouraged to watch our website as it is updated hourly.***

2. More time should be given for the rescues to get an animal out of the facility. It is recommended that Animal Services give rescues 48 hours to respond to a call as to whether they would like to take the animal or not. If Animal Services does not receive a call in that time frame, Animal Services should proceed with “standard” protocol regarding the animal.

***COMPLETE – We continue to make every attempt to work with Rescue Groups and allow a 48 hour response or longer, depending on the facts of each individual case.***

3. It is recommended that a memo be placed in the computer that specifically explains why an animal has failed temperament testing. There needs to be a "paper trail" for each animal.

***IN PROGRESS – We have a minimum staffing level due to budgetary constraints and need additional technology to meet this recommendation. The addition of PDAs for shelter staff should help create a paper trail for all shelter functions. Funding for PDA's and laptops may be available mid-budget year due to salary savings from unfilled staff positions during Summer and Fall 2005.***

4. It is recommended that if there is a pre-adoption payment on an animal, and the animal has either health or temperament issues causing it to fail temperament testing, the person who placed this payment should be informed as to why the animal failed. The public should be given the option to still adopt the animal (unless clearly aggressive) or that they have the option of still adopting the animal should it go to a rescue organization (as a result of the temperament test failure). The public will be given the rescue organization's telephone number, if requested.

***COMPLETE – This recommendation is currently in place. Adopting an animal that has failed temperament is a liability for the County, however, rescues can take any animal regardless of health or temperament pursuant to Food & Ag Code 31108 (b).***

5. It is recommended that a system be put in place to ensure that animals are not euthanized due to memos in the computer not being read. A suggestion would be to color code the cage card to indicate that a rescue has been notified and is taking the animal (cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, etc.); for the dogs and larger animals, it is suggested that a yellow tag be attached around the neck.

***COMPLETE - The recommended process is too labor intensive. The current policy is to review all information prior to euthanasia and this recommendation still would require staff to review animal records prior to euthanasia. The current policy is to use the Chameleon software system, which is a more efficient method. Holding employees accountable for their conduct lessens the chance of mistakes being made.***

6. It is recommended that if an animal is suspected of having a contagious disease, but a rescue organization chooses to take it anyway, the Rescue or a representative must come that day to pick it up. If this is not possible, the animal will be euthanized to protect the other animals at the shelter.

***IN PROGRESS - We are currently over crowded and have no space or buildings available for isolation. At the request of the Animal Advisory Board and the CEO staff, County construction experts toured the site in December 2005 with the intent of installing one or more modular buildings by Spring 2006 to serve as isolation wards. Our experience has been that rescues rarely can respond by 5:00 p.m. of the day they are contacted. Installation of a new isolation ward could allow this recommendation to be tried.***

7. It is recommended that a separate Rescue message phone line be established at Animal Services that is similar to the "Bite Dog" line. Rescue organizations could leave messages and be assured it will be received and addressed by the appropriate staff member in a timely manner, since the message may make a difference in the life of an animal.

***IN PROGRESS – We are installing a hot line for Rescues. The radio dispatcher who also serves as the switchboard operator will be assigned to check for messages periodically throughout the day. The Bite Dog line was disconnected approximately one year ago.***

8. It is recommended that Animal Services have a designated position of Rescue Coordinator. Many of the recommended communication improvements can be achieved with the addition of a Rescue Coordinator. It is desirable to have this position as a full-time paid position, but it is understood that with today's tight budgets this may not be immediately possible. Therefore, the Communication Committee recommends that the position initially be a volunteer position. A position description has been developed for this position, which lists the skills, and qualifications that are necessary for the Rescue Coordinator.

***IN PROGRESS – The former Staff Services Coordinator, who was recently promoted to Business Manager, is assigned to review and update all rescue contracts, which are seriously outdated. This person also coordinates the 250 volunteers. Of the volunteers now used, none would be available on a full time basis. Because of our seven day a week operation and rotating work schedules the most efficient practice is to refer rescues to the on duty staff. The new Director will decide which staff position will have permanent oversight of the Rescue process.***

9. It is recommended that if Stanislaus County Animal Services staff makes a decision that, an animal is to be sent through a rescue, that decision must not be reversed, especially at the last minute, without consulting the rescue organization. A system must be developed to decide which animals will go to rescue.

***COMPLETE - It is our policy to not reverse decisions on rescues without first consulting the rescue.***

10. It is recommended that staff who conduct temperament testing, contact breed-specific people to assess temperaments of the less well-known breeds or breeds who are not suited to many of the families who come through the facility. It is suggested that there should be a "breed-specific" temperament test for some breeds.

***IN PROGRESS – In December 2005, shelter staff were assigned to revamp temperament testing protocols, implement standardized procedures and implement video recording of temperament tests. This recommendation will be considered for inclusion in our revamped procedures.***

11. It is recommended that any animal that is not put up for adoption must be made available to rescue.

***COMPLETE – Rescues can adopt or rescue any animal by notifying staff of their interest in the animal.***

12. It is recommended that there is an end to the mandatory two (2) week waiting period on the animals in the Adoption Center (dogs) and Cat Adoption Room that has been in place which hinders rescue organizations. A more amicable compromise would be one week so that Animal Services staff would have animals available to the public during peak adoption times (Wednesday nights and weekends). It is suggested to allow Animal Services staff to override this lesser wait time if the well being of the animal is in jeopardy. It is also suggested that the decision be made by two Shelter Attendants on duty at the time. It is understood that no rescue volunteer shall pressure the staff to override the wait time.

***COMPLETE - In December 2005 the wait period was reduced to one week. Rescues are contacted regardless of the wait period if it is in the animal's best interests. If Rescues desire to adopt prior to the one-week holding period, they may do so at full adoption prices. Rescues receive a discounted rate after the one-week period.***

13. It is recommended that if an animal is taken by a rescue organization before the stray time is over, it must be held by the group in foster care until the completion of the stray time. It is suggested that a release form must be signed by the Rescue organization or it's representative to allow for a paper trail on each animal taken.

***COMPLETE - We currently allow rescues to foster prior to the end of the stray holding period, however, this is on a case-by-case basis, usually for medical reasons. The current software system allows for a "paper trail."***

14. It is recommended that the Modesto Bee be contacted about establishing a "Rescue Column" in the classified ad section. A letter from Mr. Rodriguez to the Bee endorsing this idea was recommended.

***COMPLETE – The former Director is not known to have sent an endorsement letter to the Bee. The Interim Director would be willing to do so, but would want to see the format and guidelines of the proposed column prior to writing a letter of endorsement.***

***The Rescues are encouraged to independently contact the Bee to proceed with this recommendation.***

15. It is recommended that Parvo test kits be provided to the shelter through donations/contributions by rescue organizations, other local groups, fund-raisers, or grants so that dogs and puppies could be tested in situations where parvo is suspected.

***COMPLETE – Animal Services does test dogs that show symptoms of parvo. A parvo test will be negative on a dog that does not already display physical symptoms. We gladly accept donations.***

16. It is recommended to expand and publicize the Shelter foster animal program.

***IN PROGRESS – We have approximately 73 fosters in place and staff constantly attempts to recruit new fosters. The Business Manager will ask the Bee to publish an article about fostering.***

17. One additional recommendation is that the groups continue to meet on a regular basis. It is not necessary for the groups to meet weekly or bi-weekly but once a month or once a quarter is recommended. The groups are to the point that facilitation is not needed. Rather the meeting becomes a standing forum for the exchange of ideas and provide ongoing process improvement opportunities.

***COMPLETE - Since facilitation is not needed, the groups, as private citizens, are free to meet at their leisure. The County has determined that the forum for presenting ideas or suggesting improvements is the Animal Advisory Board, pursuant to Board of Supervisors Resolution #91-1344, dated September 24, 1991. The Advisory Board meets the first Friday of each month and can meet more frequently or form ad hoc committees as they deem necessary.***

## **POLICY COMMITTEE**

### **Spay and Neuter Policy**

1. It is recommended that a Spay and Neuter ordinance be adopted.

***COMPLETE – The Pet Overpopulation Ordinance was adopted July 12, 2005, became effective August 12, 2005, and enforcement began on October 1, 2005. All cities within the county have adopted the ordinance except Turlock and Oakdale, which provide for their own animal control.***

2. It is recommended that there be free or low cost clinics every month. Volunteer will staff clinic and people would be given rides that no longer could drive or have transportation.

***IN PROGRESS - Animal Services currently holds monthly low cost vaccination clinics and distributes spay and neuter vouchers at the clinics. Animal Services is also working with the Animal Services Auxiliary to provide a free or low cost spay/neuter clinic in early 2006, based upon ASA's ability to obtain volunteers. The Interim Director has offered use of the "Neuter Scooter" for free or low cost clinics, but the County has not budgeted for this type of clinic so this will require a grass roots citizen volunteer effort and volunteer veterinary services. This will be a project dependent upon citizen action and resources.***

***Animal Services currently has no volunteers willing to perform this function.***

3. It is recommended to have a cat only clinic.

***COMPLETE – Animal Services has met with Joann Morgan from Animals at Risk and they have a plan to spay/neuter 25,000 cats in the near future. This will be a private venture by Animals At Risk Inc. When a County Veterinarian is available we participate with Alley Cat Guardians, in bi-weekly clinics and have spayed or neutered over 1,000 cats in the last year.***

4. It is recommended that the Neuter Scooter be taken out to the worst areas in Stanislaus County for Spay and Neuter clinics. These clinics should be run by volunteers and needs to go to apartment complexes and Mobile Home parks.

***IN PROGRESS - Animal Services is working with the Animal Services Auxiliary to provide a free or low cost spay/neuter clinic in early 2006, based upon ASA's ability to obtain volunteers. The Interim Director has offered use of the "Neuter Scooter" for free or low cost clinics, but the County has not budgeted for this type of clinic so this will require grass roots citizen volunteer effort and volunteer veterinary services. This will be a project dependent upon citizen action and resources.***

5. It is recommended that veterinarians volunteer their services at the needed clinics.

***COMPLETE - The Interim Director has met privately with several veterinarians and the NSJVMA. The veterinary community is divided on this subject. Some veterinarians provide many free or low cost services, while others believe they have no obligation to do so. Animal Services considers this to be a matter of free choice on the part of private citizens.***

6. It is recommended to use Auburn's non-profit clinic as an example for a clinic in Stanislaus County.

***COMPLETE - We have met with Joann Morgan from Animals at Risk and they have a plan to spay/neuter 25,000 cats in the near future. This will be a private venture by Animals at Risk.***

7. It is lastly recommended that veterinarians volunteer for Alley Cat Feral Clinics at Animal Services.

***The Interim Director has met privately with several veterinarians and the NSJVMA. The veterinary community is divided on this subject. Some veterinarians provide many free or low cost services, while others believe they have no obligation to do so. Animal Services considers this to be a matter of free choice on the part of private citizens.***

### **Feral Cat Policy**

1. It is recommended that Stanislaus County have a new policy for Feral Cats that is progressive thinking and action oriented.

***COMPLETE - Without some specific detail that defines what progressive thinking means and what specific actions that are being recommended, Animal Services cannot respond to this recommendation. Currently, Animal Services complies with State and local law and conforms to the budget and policies approved by the Board of Supervisors.***

2. It is recommended that a pamphlet be published on trap-neuter-return that is to be displayed at Animal Services with other pamphlets at 1010 Tenth Street.

***COMPLETE – Alley Cat Allies, a world-wide organization dedicated to feral cats, supplies pamphlets about trap-neuter-release programs and they are available at Animal Services. If there are other specific pamphlets that are being recommended, they should be given to Animal Services for our review.***

3. It is recommended that the City of Modesto be contacted and adopt the same policy on feral cats. Most strays that come in to Animal Service are from the City of Modesto. The city needs to attach trap-neuter-return flyers to City of Modesto water flyers.

***COMPLETE - The City of Modesto has adopted the Pet Overpopulation Ordinance.***

4. It is recommended that Animal Services staff educate trap-neuter-return humane trapping when giving out traps.

***COMPLETE - Instructions and a pamphlet are provided when traps are rented to citizens.***

5. It is recommended that feral cat organizations be at Animal Services at least once a month to educate public and employees.

***COMPLETE – Feral cat groups were contacted at least twice and have not responded.***

***There are no public meeting or conference rooms at Animal Services. The outdated and cramped front lobby of the animal shelter is often crowded with customers and sometimes the scene of dog fights. The environment is not conducive education.***

***If feral cat organizations wish to provide training they must first submit the curriculum for Animal Services review before Animal Services will allow or endorse promulgation of the information on government property.***

6. It is recommended that field officers give pamphlets on trap-neuter-return where they see a problem and call feral cat people for help.

***COMPLETE – Alley Cat Allies, a world-wide organization dedicated to feral cats, supplies pamphlets about trap-neuter-release programs and they are available to field officers. If there are other specific pamphlets that are being recommended, they should be given to Animal Services for our review.***

***Feral cat groups have become less responsive to Animal Services due to their own limitations.***

7. It is recommended that feral cat people are called for help. Alley Cat Guardians can help with feral cat problems and help to find solutions for the problem. An example would be when a person comes in with trapped cats. Staff should find out what the problem is and remember that killing the cat is not solving the problem.

***COMPLETE - It is not our responsibility to investigate why the person brought the cat in as we have no power to compel the truth nor to punish a lie. The law requires that we be a depository for strays and provides no legal authority or funding for investigating why a cat is a***

*nuisance. Further, it has been our experience that feral cat groups have become less and less responsive, citing that they are “filled up” and cannot handle any more cats.*

8. It is recommended that Seattle Washington Feral and Stray Cat program is used as a model in Stanislaus County.

***COMPLETE - This will be referred to the new Director for his or her consideration.***

9. It is recommended that all tipped feral cats that are brought into Animal Services are returned to their colonies. Currently the County veterinarian is tipping cat's brought in by Alley Cat Guardians in the trap-neuter-return program. This committee recommends that this practice stop.

***COMPLETE - When an ear tipped cat is brought to the shelter, we contact Alley Cat Guardians so they can return the cat to the colony. If a Kitty Caretaker is on file for that general area they could be contacted to see if they are missing a cat and want it returned. However, there are only three Kitty Caretakers registered with Animal Services.***

***The decision to ear tip a cat will be based upon the veterinarian or the person or organization bringing the cat to the shelter. The purpose of ear tipping is to alert trappers that the cat has already been vaccinated, spayed and neutered and that trapping again is not necessary.***

***The new Director will have to decide if there should be a limit on the number of times the same feral cat is brought to the shelter, before it is dispositioned as if it were a stray, abandoned cat. The assumption is that the trapped cat was brought to Animal Services because it was a nuisance.***

10. It is recommended that there is a feral cat exhibit at Animal Services. The area should be fenced in using cat fencing. This area will have feral cats in it and examples of shelters, feeding stations, etc. The intent is that this will educate the public on feral cats and fencing. Local suppliers should be contacted and asked to donate fencing and materials for the cat exhibit.

***COMPLETE - The Department of Animal Services is not authorized, staffed, funded or designed to be a zoo, museum, game preserve or nature park.***

11. Lastly, it is recommended that the Agricultural Farm Bureau be contacted. Farmers need to spay and neuter cats and trap-neuter-return the feral cat population. If needed more cats can be supplied to these farmers.

***Farmers are included in our Pet Overpopulation Ordinance if they desire to be Kitty Caretakers. It is the personal decision of the farmer whether they want to care for feral cats or dispose of them. Feral cat groups are free to contact the Farm Bureau with this recommendation***

## **Temperament Evaluation Policy**

1. It is recommended that no intake evaluation be done on owner-surrender animals unless there is obvious aggression towards people or other animals. The animal needs a "cool down" or adjustment period as the stray animals receive.

***COMPLETE – initial temperament testing is done so the animal can be vaccinated and placed in the adoption center if it passes. However, if the animal does not pass, it is re-evaluated in 3-5 days.***

2. It is recommended that there be no evaluation of puppies 3 months and under (generally the ones in Kennels 29 & 30), or cats and kittens.

***COMPLETE –All animals need to be evaluated for health and temperament. To deny testing of puppies, kittens and cats would be a huge disservice to the public.***

3. It is recommended that dogs with obvious aggression towards people or other animals should be euthanized.

***COMPLETE – People aggressive dogs are euthanized after the mandatory hold time. Animal aggressive dogs are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Animal aggression does not automatically mean it will not be placed for adoption or rescue.***

4. It is recommended that food aggressive dogs be graded on a scale of 0 – 5. The aggression can be due to deprivation/starvation the animal has experienced prior to entering the shelter. It is believed that the way the dogs/puppies are currently fed in the kennels fosters food aggression. Rubber pans do not hold enough for the number of dogs/puppies in the kennels at one time. It is suggested that feeder bins be installed.

***COMPLETE - Food is always available to dogs in the kennels. The problem with bins is they can hold so much food that there is a lot of waste and/or digestive problems should the food become wet and moldy. We use multiple bowls in cages with multiple animals.***

5. It is recommended that fear aggressive dogs will be evaluated on a case by case assessment. Evaluation can not always be determined by eyes or body language since specific breeds vary.

***IN PROGRESS– All dogs are evaluated on an individual basis. In December 2005, shelter staff were assigned to revamp temperament testing protocols, implement standardized procedures and implement video recording of temperament tests. This recommendation will be considered for inclusion in our revamped procedures.***

6. It is recommended that animals shall not be failed for shyness, timidity, non-response to toys or stimuli. It is recommended that animals should only be failed for clearly dangerous behavior.

***IN PROGRESS – Dogs are evaluated on a case-by-case basis and it is determined what is in the best interest for the dog and the public. If it is felt the dog would not be a good candidate for our adoption center, rescues are contacted. In December 2005, shelter staff were assigned to revamp temperament testing protocols, implement standardized procedures and implement video recording of temperament tests. This recommendation will be considered for inclusion in our revamped procedures.***

7. It is recommended that evaluation be done by staff in a team of 2 and videotaped with results placed in the computer.

***IN PROGRESS – Staff are currently updating our evaluation process and seeking price quotes for purchase and installation of digital video equipment to record evaluations. Current shelter staffing levels are never higher than 4-5 persons, and often are only 3 persons. With current budgeted staffing levels, we would not have two persons available for evaluation on a regular basis.***

8. It is recommended that there be consistency in documentation. It was suggested that memo's be made by the various staff when they observe actions/attitudes/antics of each animal during its hold time. It will give a better picture of what that animal may be like once adopted.

***COMPLETE – Staff have been trained on using the Chameleon software program that allows for animal behavior profiling. Memos are used in the Chameleon program. The addition of PDA's will also enhance staff's ability to document behaviors.***

#### **Surrender/Hold/Owner Relinquished/Euthanasia Policy**

1. It is recommended that every animal, be it stray or owner-relinquished, be held for a minimum hold-time of 4 business days, not including the day of impoundment.(i.e. minimum 5 days total). It is recommended that the following exception apply for owner-relinquished animals, to allow for immediate euthanasia:
  - a) history of aggressive or vicious behavior previously documented by Animal Services
  - b) non-treatable injury or illness
  - c) nursing animals without a mother (unless a foster home or rescue can be found to take them)

***COMPLETE - We comply with the mandated holding period for all animals.***

2. It is recommended that adoptable or potentially adoptable animals will be held beyond the 5-day minimum hold time providing there is a suitable kennel, cage space, area, or foster home (even if the space is not usually used for this purpose). Large dogs unable to be housed properly in the Adoption Center need to remain in the main kennels and be marked "available for adoption".

***COMPLETE – As long as there is space available, we hold adoptable animals beyond the 5 day mandated holding period, and make allowances for large breed animals to remain in the kennels.***

3. It is recommended that when the shelter approaches full capacity, creative contingency plans need to be instituted. Examples of such contingency plans may include but not be limited to:
  - a) half-price adoption fees
  - b) various types of discounts: such as for senior citizens or for large breed dogs
  - c) recruitment of more foster homes

***COMPLETE – We do attempt to be creative. We do give discounts and waive fees entirely for hardship cases. We have offered feral cats for free to Rescues during December 2005 due to overcrowding and disease, but have virtually no response. Senior citizens receive a 50% discount on licensing fees and “senior dogs” and “senior cats” (over age 7) are adopted out at discounted fees. We aggressively promote fostering. There is a limit to how many discounts we offer, as the shelter is a government agency supported by taxpayers dollars and it is the policy of the Board of Supervisors that we generate revenue to recoup our costs.***

### **501(c)(3) Guidelines Policy**

1. It is recommended that subsidiary/rescue organizations can get a letter from parent organization and keep it on file at Animal Services. This would allow Rescue organizations to rescue animals using the non-profit number of the parent organization.

***IN PROGRESS - Animal Services has developed a contract based upon the Sacramento MOU and the contract is awaiting approval by County Counsel.***

2. It is recommended that the 501(c)(3) list be validated

***COMPLETE - The Business Manager is performing this function.***

3. It is recommended that the Chief Executive Office research the requirement further with the IRS and obtain an opinion in writing on who can use the non profit numbers.

***COMPLETE - Animal Services has conducted this research and included this information in the new rescue contract.***

4. It is recommended to review the sample from the City of Sacramento of their Memorandum of Understanding between their Animal Shelter and Rescue Organizations.

***COMPLETE - The Business Manager visited the Sacramento Shelter and reviewed their MOU and used it as a guide to develop a better form that is now being reviewed by County Counsel.***

### **Education Policy**

1. It has been determined that the volunteer door greeter program is not working. It is recommended to partner with the Animal Services Auxiliary to train volunteers and build a volunteer door greeter program.

***COMPLETE - It is not likely that we would be able to locate a core group of volunteers who would be willing to cover a full day work schedule, seven days a week. Volunteers typically only work a few hours a day, one or two days a week. Training, scheduling and monitoring the volunteers would be an inordinate effort.***

***The Animal Services Auxiliary performs this function on a part-time basis. Persons interested in supporting the door greeter concept should contact or join ASA.***

2. It is believed that Animal Services needs more knowledgeable volunteers. It is recommended to sell the volunteer opportunity.

***COMPLETE - Animal Services volunteers are screened by United Way. We have an active marketing program to enhance our volunteer base. However, we can't force people to volunteer and don't want to turn people away because they aren't experts about dogs and cats.***

3. It is recommended to have less signage in the lobby of Animal Services

***COMPLETE - We have removed some of the signage, but we are constantly asked to display some new brochure, poster or educational pamphlet for the various special interest groups.***

### **Scanning**

1. It is recommended that both cats and dogs are scanned three times.

***COMPLETE - Animals are either scanned in the field or upon arrival to the shelter and again prior to euthanasia. Scanning also occurs prior to any in-house surgeries, transfer to an outside veterinary facility or at time of foster or adoption.***

### **TREATMENT COMMITTEE**

1. It is recommended that all dogs are vaccinated upon entry. The Animal Services Director and Veterinarian will come up with a protocol and send this out to all members of the Committee. Also, committee member, Debbie Jehebar will request donation from Golden Valley Kennel Club for the cost of the vaccinations.

***COMPLETE - There is a difference of opinion in the veterinary community on the usefulness of vaccinating every animal that enters the shelter. It is not economical or practical to immunize an animal that potentially will be euthanized before the immunization takes effect. The current budget does not provide for this level of vaccination. This decision will be left to the new Director and the new County Veterinarian.***

2. It is recommended to vaccinate and test adoptable cats upon entry. These cats will be placed in the front cat room and in the hallway (overflow). There will be no follow-up on these cats.

***COMPLETE - The former County Veterinarian had instituted a protocol for vaccinating adoptable cats upon entry to the shelter. Any friendly cat can be placed in the front cat room upon entry. They will be tested and assessed for adoption after their stray period.***

3. It is recommended that the facility improvement suggestions be forwarded to the Animal Advisory Board for their consideration.

***COMPLETE – This document has been provided to the Animal Advisory Board. The Advisory Board sent a letter to the Board of Supervisors on December 16, 2005 recommending many of the same suggestions. The following week, construction experts assigned by the Chief Executive’s Office visited the shelter to form a plan to remedy immediate needs.***

### **QUICK FIXES**

During the meetings there were a few issues and concerns that were identified as “quick fixes”. Animal Services has reviewed the following concerns and started to implement them. The “quick fix” concerns that are being implemented are as follows:

#### **More Spay and Neuter Clinics**

1. A member of the Rescue Organizations has agreed to write a policy and review it with the County Veterinarian. This policy will invite community veterinarians to volunteer their time at clinics to spay and neuter cats and dogs in the low income communities.

***COMPLETE - It is unknown who the member of the rescue organization is. We have met with Joann Morgan from Animal at Risk along with the veterinary community and a plan has been developed to spay/neuter 25,000 cats in the near future. This plan includes the partnering of rescue groups and community veterinarians. This is a private venture by Animal At Risk, Inc. Animal Services currently has a monthly clinic and promotes the SCATE Program.***

2. October 16 is National Feral Cat day. A resolution is recommended for approval by the Board to approve October 16<sup>th</sup> as Feral Cat day in Stanislaus County.

***COMPLETE - This will be recommended to the new Director for October 2006.***

#### **Volunteer Door Greeter**

1. It was determined that the Volunteer Door Greeter is not working at Stanislaus County Animal Services. The manager in charge of volunteer coordination at Animal Services has been requested to review the program and evaluate why it is not working. A response is requested and options of ways it can be improved and implemented.

***COMPLETE - It is not likely that we would be able to locate a core group of volunteers who would be willing to cover a full day work schedule, seven days a week. Volunteers typically only work a few hours a day, one or two days a week. Training, scheduling and monitoring the volunteers would be an inordinate effort.***

### **Informational Sign for the Public**

1. Many of the public that are visiting Stanislaus County Animal Services are not aware of the options of how to surrender a pet. Currently a sign is being designed that will have brochures available for the public. These brochures will give the public an opportunity to look at other alternatives to bringing their pet into the Shelter.

***COMPLETE*** – *A sign and brochure holder was placed near the front door and it contains Rescue brochures.*

### **Better identification of Breed Type during the Intake Process**

1. It was determined that the description of the breed on the cages is not always accurate. A training package was purchased that will help employees and volunteers identify which breed most resembles the animal that is brought into the shelter. The staff and volunteers at Animal Services will be tested on their knowledge of breed type on a regular basis.

***COMPLETED*** - *The Shelter supervisor has implemented a training protocol for staff. The most recent breed identification training was provided to all employees on December 14, 2005. Breed identification will vary based upon the perception of the viewer.*

Document Prepared by:

Dave Young, Interim Director  
Stanislaus County Animal Services