



REPORT TO COUNCIL

City of Sacramento

915 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-2671
[www. CityofSacramento.org](http://www.CityofSacramento.org)

STAFF REPORT
 January 24, 2006

Honorable Mayor and
 Members of the City Council

Subject: Humane Society of the United States Audit (Closure Report)

Location/Council District: Citywide, All Districts

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Mayor and City Council receive and file the information presented in the Animal Care Services Citizens Advisory Committee response to the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) audit report.

Contact: Hector Cazares, Animal Care Services Manager, (916) 808-7433
 Donna Wicky, Administrative Officer, (916) 808-6719

Presenters: Hector Cazares, Division Manager

Department: Department of General Services

Division: Animal Care Services

Organization No: 3174

Summary:

This closure report provides Animal Care Services' (ACS) response and conclusion to the HSUS audit recommendations of March 9, 2001, which addressed citizen and City Council concerns regarding shelter management and operations.

Committee/Commission Action: Animal Care Services Citizen's Advisory Committee (ACSCAC) met on April 26, 2005, and approved the attached report (Attachment A).

Background Information:

On March 9, 2001, the HSUS issued an independent, comprehensive assessment of the City's Animal Care Services operations, management and administration in response to City Council's direction and a series of concerns raised by citizens. As a result of the study, 359 recommendations were made for improving ACS, of which 83 were determined to be a high priority by a Blue Ribbon Committee consisting of animal care experts appointed by the City Manager.

Nearly all of the recommendations have been completed. Priorities identified by the Blue Ribbon Committee for ACS included cleaning and disinfecting, disease control, animal care and handling, population management, animal health and behavior assessments, staffing levels, staff training, customer services and animal rescue coordination. Several recommendations were deemed unnecessary and many other improvements not listed in the HSUS report have been accomplished. Some of the major accomplishments include:

- Completing extensive renovation of all kennel runs, including water and feeding systems, sealing and painting for preventing the spread of disease;
- Requiring the vaccination of all adoptable incoming animals;
- Establishing modern sanitizing protocols for disease prevention and contamination;
- Purchasing a spay/neuter surgical trailer for use in altering and adopting animals in the community;
- Improving customer services with the installation of an improved telephone system;
- Installing improved security systems, including video and electronic surveillance systems;
- Streamlining the entire adoption process to include logistical changes through the use of photos on websites, disease testing, vaccinating, microchipping and fee restructuring;
- Reducing live animal intakes through public education and community outreach efforts, including free pet spay/neuter services for low-income City residents, reducing euthanasia rates, and increasing animal outplacements;
- A subsequent request for an external evaluation of our euthanasia policies and procedures resulting in an overall finding that was very favorable, characterizing our euthanasia program as a "high quality program".

One vital issue remains on the list of urgent priorities identified by the ACSCAC, a cattery to expand housing for the shelter's ever-increasing cat population. ACS will pursue funding for the cattery project through additional City financing and reimbursement funds from the State's Hayden legislation, also known as the "Animal Adoption Bill".

The State recently began to reimburse publicly funded shelters for implementation of the Hayden legislation mandates, which require longer holding periods for stray and owner-surrendered animals, as well as additional operational and administrative changes. The first of the State's reimbursement obligations for \$507,181 has been received and deposited into ACS's Capital Improvement Project expenditure budget for Animal Care Repairs (PN: GA12).

In addition to the cattery, the ACSCAC raised three additional issues for consideration: 1) Euthanasia policies and procedures, 2) enhancement of staffing and training, and 3) addition of meeting rooms and office space. Staff will continue to evaluate these issues and work with the ACSCAC regarding additional improvements.

Financial Considerations:

On June 5, 2001, the City Council adopted a resolution that increased services, supplies and facility maintenance in the Animal Care Services Division operating budget. At that time a Capital Improvement Project for Animal Care (CIP GA11) was established and funded in the amount of \$760,000 (comprised of \$360,000 in departmental carryover from Fiscal Year 2000/2001 and a \$400,000 transfer from Administrative Contingency). Funding in CIP GA11 has been expended and this portion of the project has been closed.

To address the final proposals of the HSUS audit recommendations, Animal Care’s Capital Improvement Project (CIP GA12) was established. As of January 1, 2006, Animal Care’s CIP GA12 has an unobligated balance of \$871,526, to be allocated for the remaining facility modifications, repairs and cattery building.

Environmental Considerations:

This report concerns administrative and informational activities that will have no significant effect on the environment and does not constitute a “project” as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines Sections 15601 (b); 15378(b)) and are therefore exempt from review.

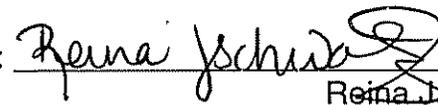
Policy Considerations:

The action being taken herein is consistent with the City’s Strategic Plan Goals to improve and expand public safety and to achieve sustainability and enhance livability.

Emerging Small Business Development (ESBD):

City Council approval of these proceedings is not affected by City policy related to the ESBD Program.

Respectfully Submitted by: 
Hector R. Cazares
Manager, Animal Care Services

Approved: 
Reina J. Schwartz
Director, Department of General Services

Recommendation Approved:

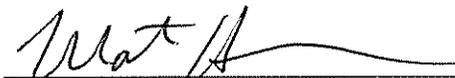

Ray Kerridge
Interim City Manager

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ATTACHMENT A

CITY OF SACRAMENTO, ANIMAL CARE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ASSESSMENT OF COMPLIANCE TO THE HSUS CONSULTATION REPORT FOR PRESENTATION TO CITY COUNCIL ON JANUARY 24, 2006

Background:

The City of Sacramento contracted with the Humane Society of the United States in 2000 to conduct a comprehensive review and evaluation of its Animal Care and Control Division's Animal Care Services current operations and programs with an eye to the future.

A site visit was conducted in November 2000, and a report containing 359 recommendations, 83 of which were identified as high priority items, was submitted in March 2001. The City appointed a Blue Ribbon Committee to conduct public hearings to review and evaluate the recommendations. The Committee elected not to consider cost when prioritizing the recommendations. After conducting four public hearings, the Committee developed an implementation plan.

During this same time period, the City allocated more than \$1 million of budget savings for one-time improvements at the shelter. Subsequently, the City funded additional capital improvements and staff positions.

The Citizens Advisory Committee, which was created as part of the package of reforms instituted at the shelter, has held public meetings to discuss the HSUS recommendations and the City's response. In addition, this year Animal Care Services contracted with Penny Cistaro, an expert consultant in shelter operations, for an evaluation of the shelter's euthanasia program.

Outstanding Issues:

In looking to the future, the Citizens Advisory Committee deemed improving the care of the cats at the shelter as a top priority. The City needs to move forward to increase the space necessary to humanely house and treat the cats under its care. The Committee recommends the immediate construction of a new cattery.

Equally as important is the need for the shelter to have a plan and goals to further reduce its current euthanasia rates. While efforts have resulted in fewer dogs coming into the shelter, an unacceptably high number of cats are euthanized each year with no decrease anticipated in the near future.

The City's continued commitment and funding to improve the quality of care for lost and homeless pets is urged. There is no doubt that the shelter has made significant positive

changes and vast improvements at this facility; it is the hope of the Committee and the community that these efforts will continue.

Summary:

The Citizens Advisory Committee found that the vast majority of the HSUS recommendations had been addressed and issues resolved, with significant improvements having been made over the course of the last four years. The Committee commends the shelter for the following:

- Renovating the dog housing areas, installing improved water and food delivery systems, adding misters.
- Separating stray dogs from adoptable dogs, providing raised platforms, beds and toys.
- Providing larger cat cages with ledges, beds and toys.
- Providing veterinary care on-site, vaccinating animals on intake, altering animals prior to adoption, caring for sick and injured animals during their stray hold period.
- Enhancing computer record keeping, improving systems for identifying and tracking animals, creating new and improved kennel cards, adding a kiosk to assist customers in finding new pets or lost animals, creating owner surrender questionnaires to assist in the placement of animals.
- Maintaining a trained staff that is service-oriented and a volunteer program that promotes pet adoptions.
- Establishing a Web site presence, installing an upgraded phone system.
- Promoting spay and neuter practices in the community through collaborative efforts, billboards, utility bill inserts and sending the SNO-Mobile into neighborhoods.
- Adopting out pets that have been assessed, altered, tested, vaccinated, microchipped and licensed and providing leashes or cardboard carriers.
- Installing appropriate signage and security systems, improving maintenance.
- Providing customers with educational materials and adoption care packets, posting flyers of upcoming events, creating binders with lost and found ads.
- Maintaining a customer friendly front counter.
- Creating a separate housing area for rabbits, rodents and other exotic animals.
- Creating an exercise area and enclosed meet and greet area for the dogs.
- Closing night drop and turning it into an intake center.
- Installing a commercial washer, dryer and dishwasher.
- Working collaboratively with the SPCA and rescue groups to increase adoptions and educate the public.
- Establishing written policies and procedures for shelter operations.

Conclusions:

The Citizens Advisory Committee concluded that the shelter has accomplished the vast majority of the facility improvements and policy changes identified as high priority in the HSUS Report.

The Housing of Cats is one significant outstanding issue that needs immediate attention. The Committee raised a number of concerns regarding the current cattery; the net result is that the cats too often become ill with upper respiratory infections after being housed in the cattery, which means a decrease in adoptions and increase in euthanasia for health reasons. The Committee questioned the adequacy of the air ventilation system and disease control measures which emphasizes the need for a larger cat housing area.

Building a New Cattery is considered by the Committee to be imperative for the City. The Committee strongly supports Animal Care's proposal to add an additional building to the current site. Existing space limitations at the shelter prevent certain specified HSUS recommendations from being implemented. Improved housing and sanitary measures are critical for the health and safety of cats that enter the shelter and ultimately are adopted into the community or reunited with their owners.

Euthanasia Policies and Procedures was an important issue for the Committee. In February, a site visit was conducted by an independent evaluator and an 11 page report was produced containing observations and recommendations. The overall findings of the audit were favorable. Nevertheless, the Committee strongly believes that the city's euthanasia rates are unacceptably high and that efforts should be continued to reduce those rates. Recommendations from the site visit have been implemented. The Committee also felt that "spot checks" should be conducted on a regular basis to ensure that proper procedures are being used and, more importantly, humane practices followed. The shelter should strive to report why animals are euthanized so that this information can be captured and used to reduce the overall euthanasia rate at the shelter.

Enhancement of Staffing and Training is urged by the Committee in order to continue the progress made in the on-site veterinary program, the volunteer and foster programs, and upgrading the skills of staff.

Addition of Meeting Rooms and Office Space was considered by the Committee to be of importance. Office space for supervisors is essential for working effectively with staff. It was anticipated that this would be addressed with the addition of a new building.

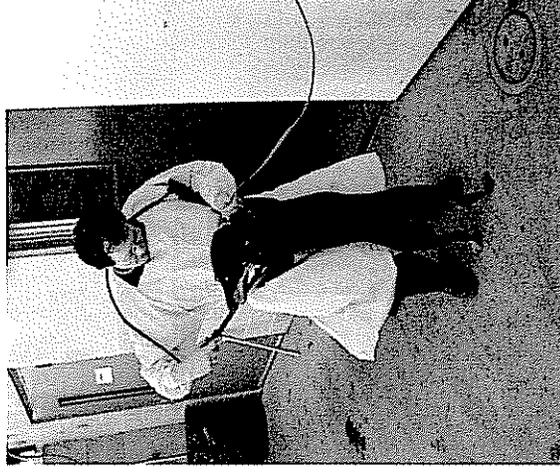
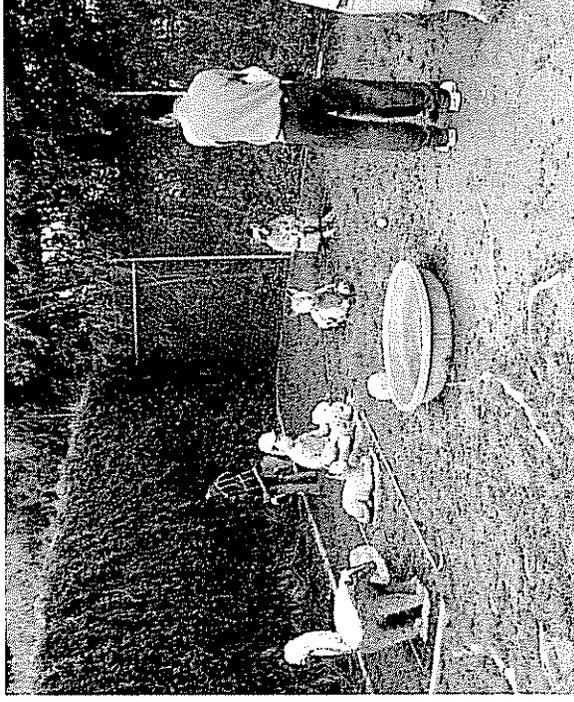


Animal Care Services



Facilities

Meet and Greet Area



Processing Incoming Animals

Facilities

**Puppy
Platforms**



**Dog
Kennels**



**Larger
Cat
Kennels**

Facilities

**Outside Animal
Exercise Area**



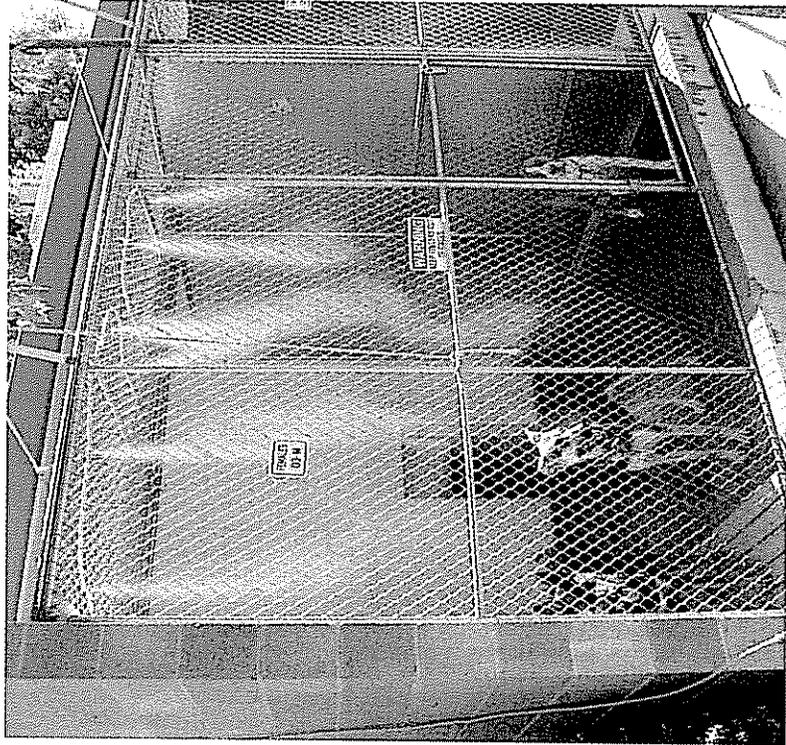
**Side Yard
Public Area**



**Front Office
Administration**

Facilities

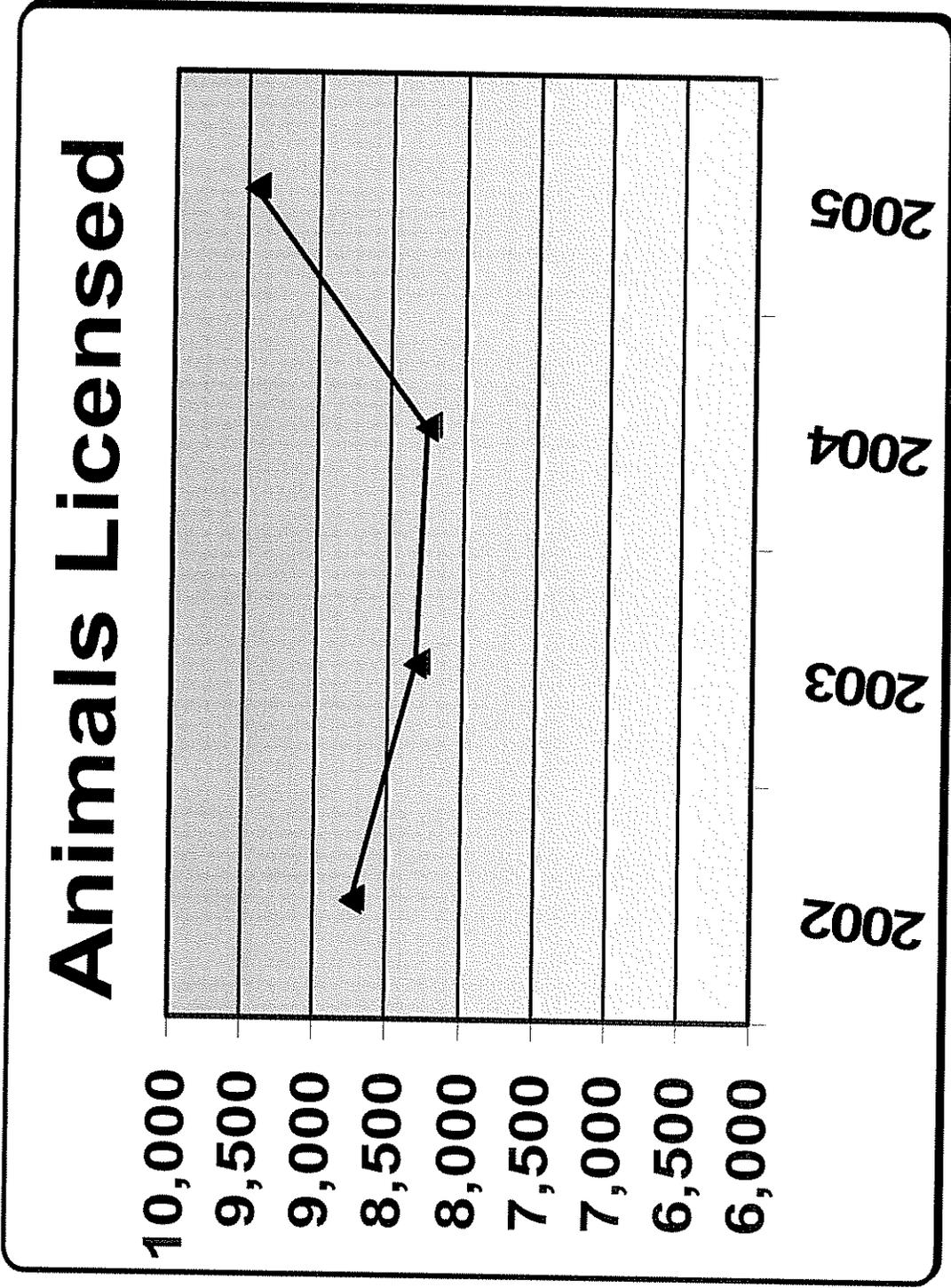
Misters & Resting
Boards



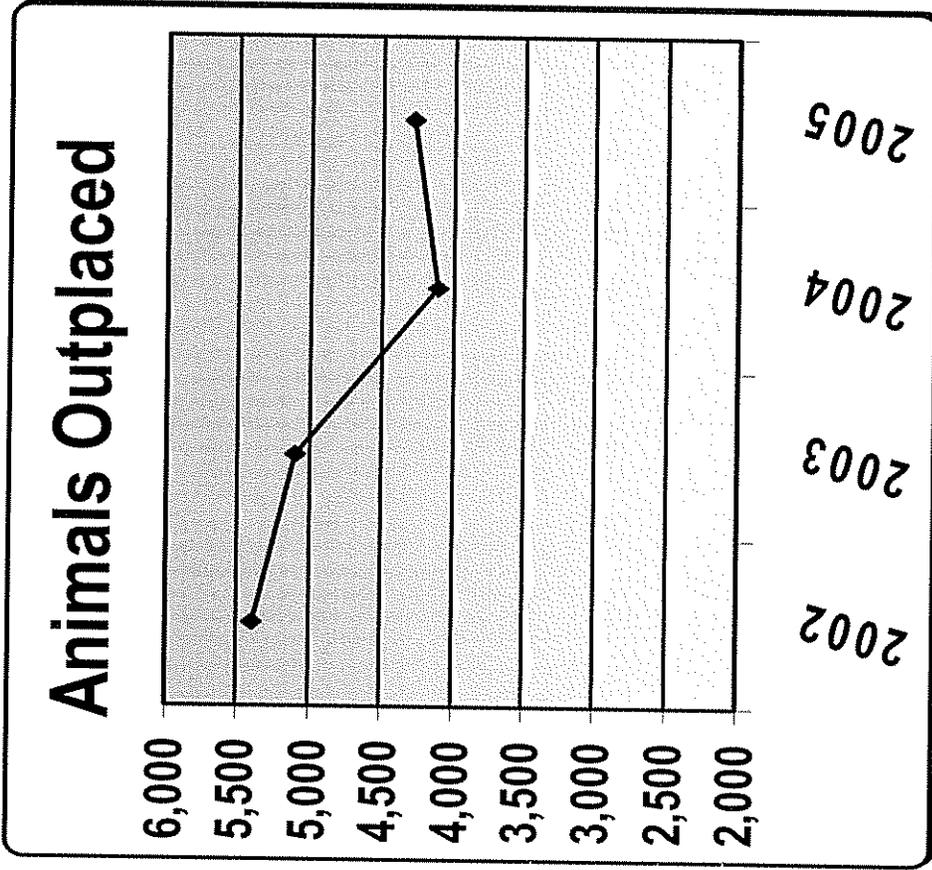
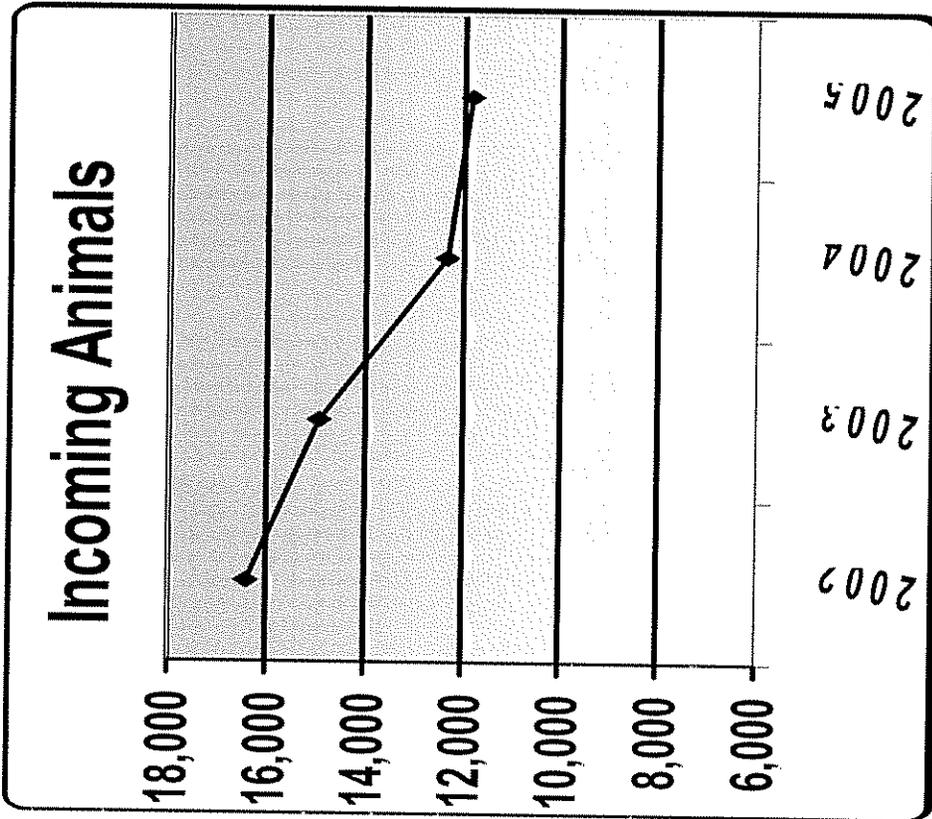
Daily Cleaning &
Disinfecting



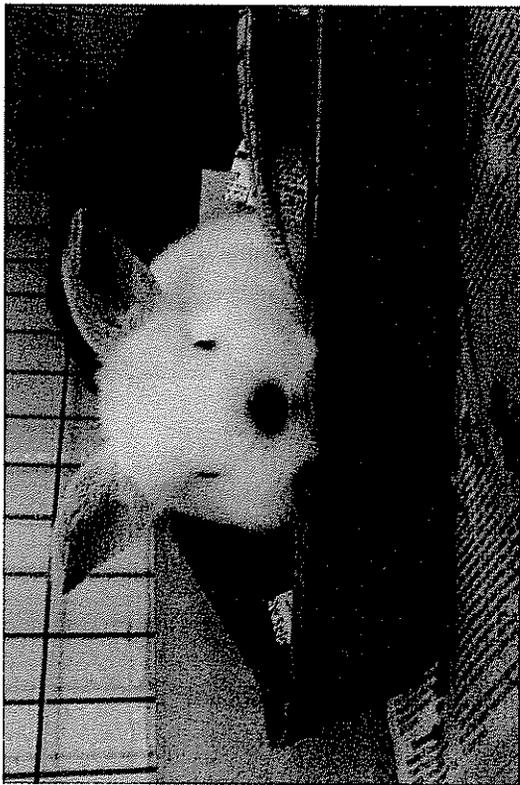
Licensing Activities



Incoming and Outplaced Animals



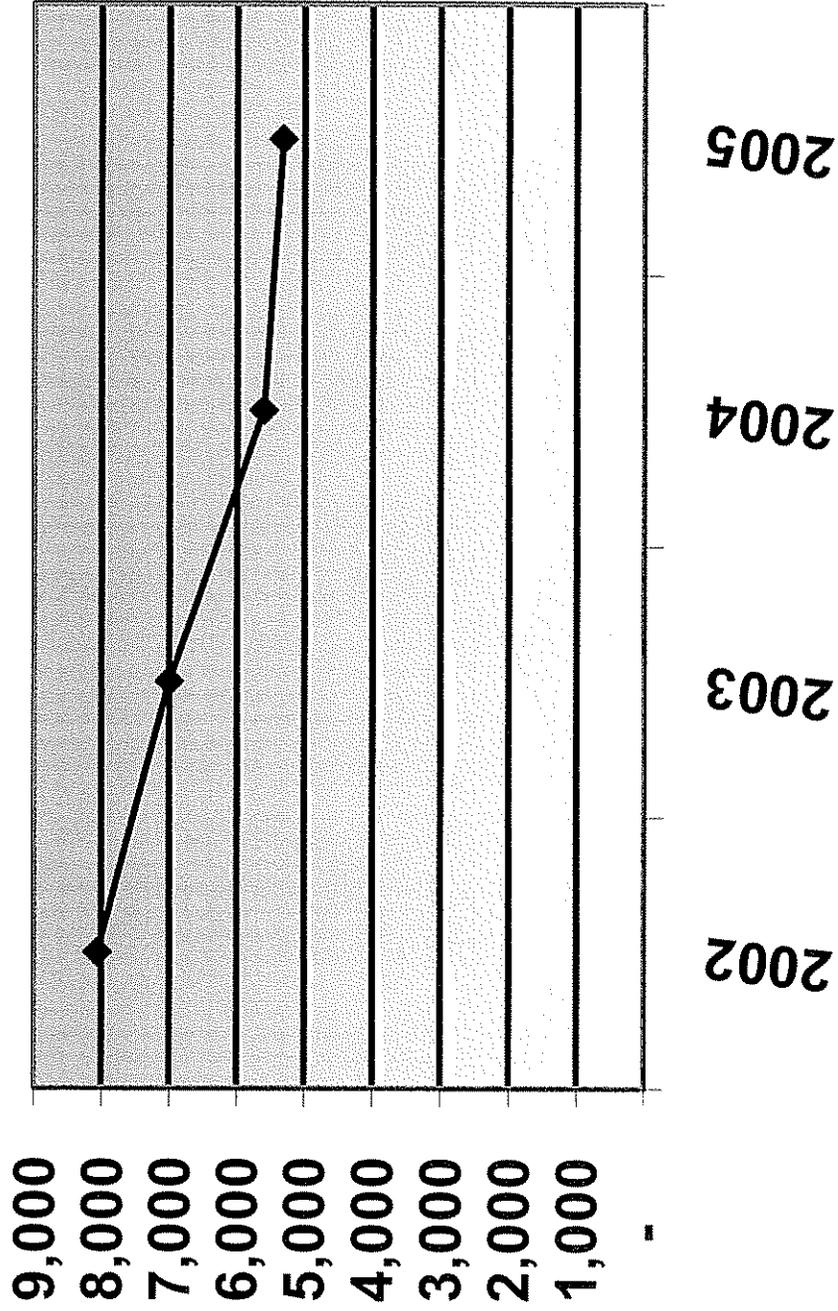
Animal Outplacements



Happy
Endings

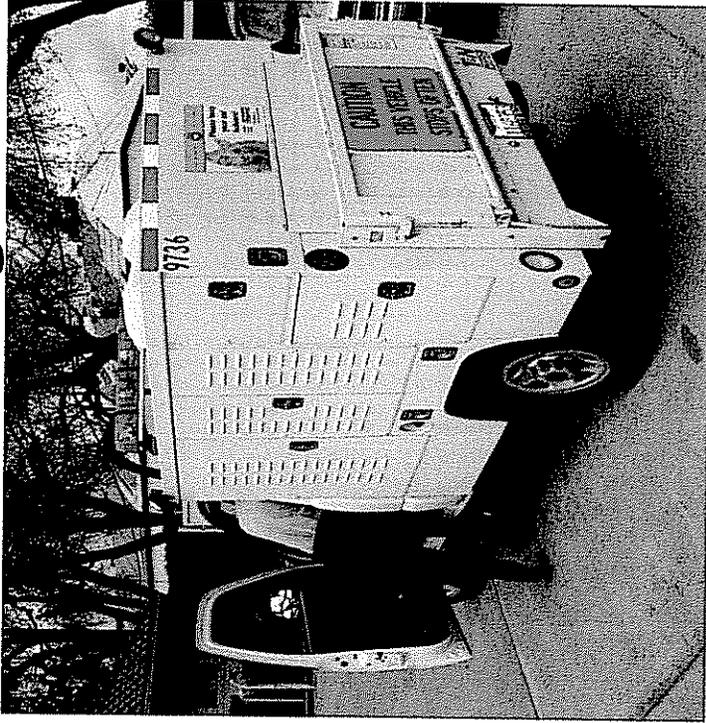
Euthanasia Rates

Euthanasia Numbers



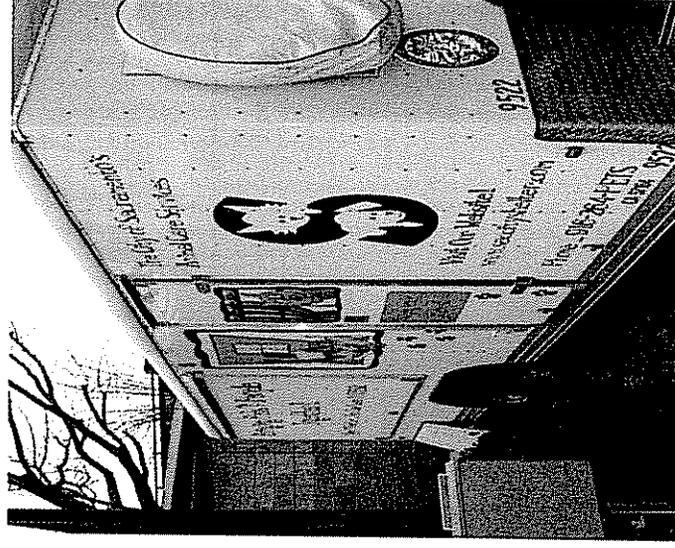
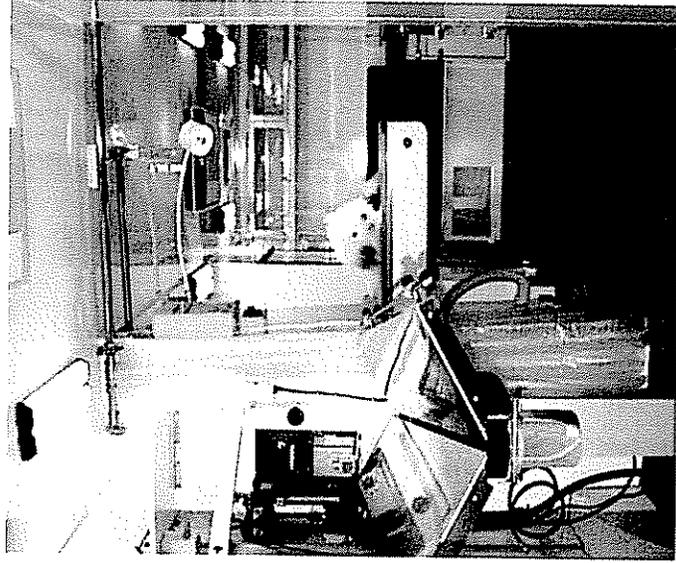
Enforcement Activities

- ✓ Dangerous Dog Ordinance (compliance)
- ✓ Animal Cruelty and Neglect Investigations
- ✓ Bite Investigations
- ✓ New Breeding Ordinance



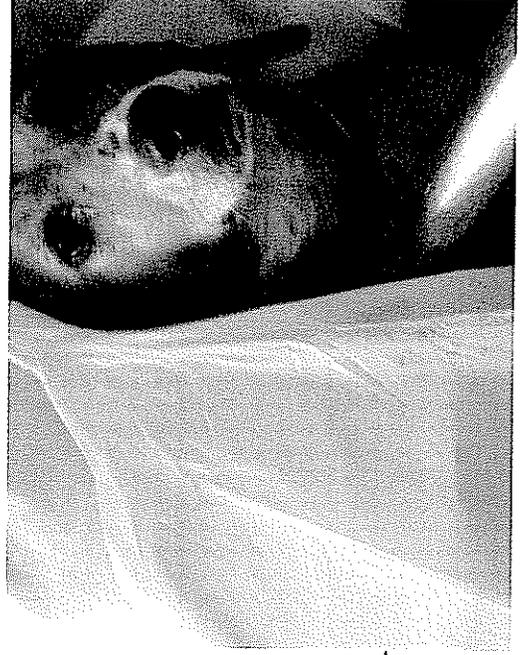
Veterinarian Services

- Spay and Neuter Surgeries: over 200 A Month
- Daily Animal Evaluations
- Developed Partnerships with Animal Care Medical Community for Improved Medical Care and Treatments for Shelter Animals (UCD)



Volunteer Program & Community Events

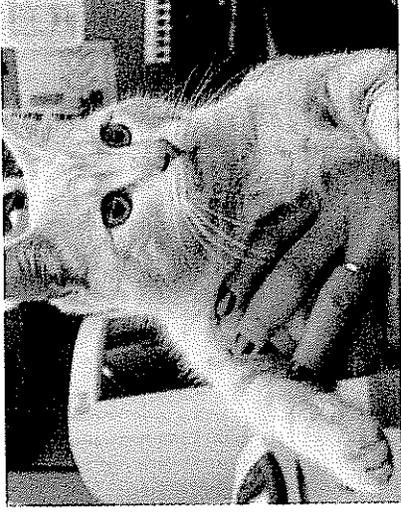
- 70 Core Volunteers
- Increased Volunteer Hours:
 - ✓ FY 2002: 4,680 hours
 - ✓ FY 2004: 12,747 hours
 - ✓ FY 2005: 13,223 hours
- Special Events
 - ✓ Katrina Rescue & Foster Care
 - ✓ Dog and Cat Training Classes
 - ✓ Off-Site Adoption Events



What's New?

Continuous Improvements:

- ✓ **Build a new Cattery facility**
- ✓ **Increase surgical facility space**
- ✓ **Expand licensing compliance and collections**



City Code Revisions:

- ❖ **Strengthen enforcement capabilities**
- ❖ **Address animal cruelty issues**
- ❖ **Combat pet overpopulation**



Community Outreach:

- ❖ **Increase Spay & Neuter Clinics**
- ✓ **Provide humane education materials and training**

