

ANIMAL CONTROL

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION

Animal Control is one of the departments subject to review by the Tuolumne County Civil Grand Jury. This report was also complaint driven.

METHODOLOGY

Members of the jury were given a tour by the Department Manager on September 2, 2009. The tour was very interesting and informative to all Grand Jury members who attended. Additional visits/interviews were done to see if certain concerns raised by complaints were valid.

NARRATIVE/FACTS

1. There are ten (10) employees and two (2) relief officers.
 - a. The full time employees consist of a Department Head, a Department Manager, a Supervisor, three (3) Shelter Attendants, a Senior Office Assistant and three (3) Full Time Officers.



2. There are five (5) vehicles to service all of Tuolumne County. These are a Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV), two (2) standard animal control trucks with cages and two (2) open bed trucks. The larger of the open bed trucks is used to pick up larger animals. At the time of the first visit just two (2) vehicles were in working order.
3. Animal Control is located at 1000 Victoria Way in Jamestown. Animal Control has been at this location for 12 years. The building is owned by the Humane Society. Animal Control rents half of the building.



4. There are 24 dog runs; the runs usually have a minimum of 12 dogs at any given time. Animal Control has a very good ventilation system for this area.



- a. A rough estimate of how the dogs are disposed of is: 15% - Humane Society, 30% - Adopted, 30% - Reclaimed, 10% - Animal Control Adoption Program and 15% - Euthanized.
 - b. All the employees appear to be caring and enjoy working with the animals. All cages are cleaned twice daily.
5. Cats have two areas. One is for mature cats and the other for kittens. Puppies are also kept in the kitten area. Both areas are well maintained. Before entering the area visitors must wipe their shoes on bleached towels for the purpose of disease control.
- a. Because of the large volume of cats, 70% of them are euthanized.



6. When a feral cat is taken in there is a four (4) day waiting period before the feral cat is euthanized. No feral cat is ever put up for adoption.
7. There is an area for after hours drop off.
- a. Any and all animals received are checked for health problems, a radio frequency chip (for possible owner's information), and a determination is made if the animal will be available for adoption or be euthanized.



8. Animal Control does not accept any pets that cannot be cared for by the owner. The owners are referred to the Humane Society for help.
9. Animal Control also works with the District Attorney's office when any citations warrant a criminal charge.
10. Funding for Animal Control is provided through the County General Fund based on a fiscal year that spans from July through June.
 - a. Additional funds are presently provided via Proposition 172
 - b. The major portion of the budget goes to personnel cost.
11. Local radio stations and the Union Democrat help to inform the public on the needs of Animal Control.
12. Animal Control employees made special mention of the Tuolumne County Chief Administrative Officer, Mr. Craig Pedro, for the constant and effective support his office has provided.
13. Animal Control also helps farm animals utilizing an existing support program in case of neglect or natural disasters.
14. Monetary donations are accepted at Animal Control. Supplies such as food or other items may be procured directly by the contributor then delivered to Animal Control.
 - a. Hurst Ranch, in Jamestown, has an open account for people to make monetary donations. Animal Control can then pick up supplies as needed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Check with the city of Palo Alto or other cities/counties that may have surplus Animal Control vehicles. Network with other areas with much larger Animal Control budgets.
2. Expand their visibility to the community about the need for donations. For example, the county's citizens may not know of the arrangement between Hurst Ranch and Animal Control for monetary donations.
3. The Grand Jury recommends the hiring of additional Animal Control Officers and Shelter Attendants to better serve the citizens of Tuolumne County when budget constraints permit.