

II. ADMINISTRATION

This section reviews the *Administration* program of the Animal Control Services Division.

A. OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

Organizational Structure and Management Practices

The Kern County Animal Control Services Division is currently operating poorly in all of its major program areas: Administration; Shelter Operations; Field Operations; and Community/Public Relations.

This is the case in spite of the sincere efforts, dedication and hard work of most of the Division's employees and the talented leadership in the Environmental Health Department and the Resource Management Agency.

The Animal Control Services Division is operating inefficiently and ineffectively primarily for five reasons:

1. LOW LEVEL OF PET OWNERSHIP RESPONSIBILITY IN THE COMMUNITY
2. INSUFFICIENT RESOURCES
3. TOP DIVISION LEADERSHIP LACKS MANAGEMENT CONTINUITY AND IS NOT EXPERIENCED IN ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICES
4. INSUFFICIENT STRATEGIC PLANNING
5. WEAK PARTNERSHIP WITH RESOURCES IN THE COMMUNITY.

Several important social and demographic factors are at play in Kern County with regard to animal control services. Citizen knowledge of responsible pet care and ownership is limited. The situation is exacerbated by the County's weak community education program. Spaying and neutering is unpopular in a large segment of the community. Furthermore, the community is changing. Over fifty percent of new home sales are to out-of-county newcomers. Values and standards with regard to animal care and ownership are changing and will continue to change.

The gap between citizen expectations regarding animal control services and the level of service provided by the County will continue to widen as the County grows if the status quo is maintained. The Customer Survey conducted in conjunction with this study is a precursor of these changing citizen expectations. Put another way, the animal control situation in Kern County is at a crisis level, and addressing these issues will require significant, and perhaps radical, departures from current practices.

Management practices in the Division reflect a program that has suffered from a lack of management continuity. The Division was moved out of the Health Department and into the Environmental Health Department in 1997 in order to improve program management. Since that time, the Division has had four Division Managers in eight years. The current Division Manager was appointed in November 2004. Within a week of this appointment, the Animal Control Services Division was sued by an animal rights advocate for noncompliance with the provisions of the Hayden Bill. As detailed earlier in this report, the Hayden Bill requires that impounded animals be kept four days, at a minimum, before being euthanized. The lawsuit and other

difficulties, including other ongoing negative local media coverage, have contributed to a “siege mentality” environment within the Animal Control Division.

This difficult environment negatively affects the day-to-day operations of the Division in many ways. Employee morale has been impacted negatively which, in some instances, has created a strong we/they attitude. Staff is afraid to make decisions for fear that they might be second-guessed by a highly involved and highly critical public. A siege mentality is an understandable and human reaction to the difficult circumstances in which the Division operates. The Employee Survey conducted in conjunction with this study, particularly the open-ended questions, illuminates employee concerns in this regard. The burden of turning these challenges around lies with the County’s elected leaders and senior management staff.

The Animal Control Division Manager, though talented and dedicated, has a limited grounding in animal control issues. This lack of knowledge diminishes her ability to provide needed leadership for the Division. In addition, the Animal Control Services Division Manager is not sufficiently involved in the budget development and monitoring process due to this function being consolidated in the Environmental Health Department.

The professional standards of the Animal Control Officers and Shelter Care Workers are minimal. There is no standardized, ongoing training and professional development program for the management and supervisory personnel. There is an almost total lack of classroom training and virtually no testing of learned knowledge or skills.

The low level of community support, which is corroborated by the Customer Survey, the low level of responsible pet ownership in the community, high volume of animal impoundments, inadequate facilities, insufficient resource allocation, and unstable and limited experienced leadership has combined to cause many problems for the Division. The following is a partial list of problems that are symptomatic of this overall condition:

- ◆ The Division does not pursue SB 90 claims for allowable reimbursements as aggressively as it should.
- ◆ Meaningful Performance Standards for the Animal Control Services Division do not exist.
- ◆ The division of authority and duties between Kern County and the City of Bakersfield creates inefficiencies and diminishes the effectiveness of animal control services.
- ◆ License survey teams have not been deployed on schedule.
- ◆ License survey team members are to be drawn from shelter staff. This will reduce the hours available to provide needed cleaning, thus increasing the probability of disease outbreaks.
- ◆ Many of the issues confronting the Division have been identified in previous studies, CAO reports and Grand Jury findings; yet, they remain unaddressed.
- ◆ The automatic telephone answering system is not tailored to the type of inquiries most often received from the public, thus leading to customer frustration.

Notwithstanding the deficiencies listed above, Citygate Associates observed many positive and constructive activities and accomplishments that have taken place in the Division. A partial list would include:

- ◆ The Division has recently been able to procure credit cards to make the purchase of minor services and supplies less time consuming.
- ◆ The Divisions computer hardware is modern and well maintained.
- ◆ Dog licenses can be purchased at veterinary offices.
- ◆ Dog licensing is done in accordance with applicable state laws.
- ◆ The Division has between 140 and 185 daily visitors and handles 137 phone calls per day.
- ◆ The Division web site is well organized and is user-friendly.
- ◆ Division vehicles are in good repair and are replaced at regular intervals.
- ◆ The Division has achieved an enviable level of Cost Recovery.

Leadership

The Division has been without continuous on-site direction from an experienced animal control professional for an extended period of time. This has resulted in systemic management deficiencies and serious entrenched problems. Clear goals and objectives of what is to be accomplished by the Division have not been defined. This has resulted in confusion and inconsistencies that have had a negative impact upon operational staff and that diminish service. Our interviews, observations and the Employee Survey corroborate this. The organizational climate does not contribute to maximum efficiency or accountability.

Accountability

Accountability mechanisms in the Animal Control Services Division are weak. Citygate Associates made the following observations:

1. The Division does not have its own mission statement that is fully supported by all employees, is easily understood by the public and reflects issues identified by the community.
2. The Division does not have clearly defined goals and measurable objectives anchored by the Division's mission statement.
3. The Division does not effectively use performance measures that measure cost, quality and timeliness.
4. The computer system is not being used to generate reports needed to effectively manage the Division
5. Budget information needed for evaluation and control is either not available or not being used to monitor revenues and expenditures on an ongoing basis.
6. The Division does not have mechanisms to initiate a continuous improvement process.

7. The allocation and management of resources are not closely linked with the attainment of specific results.

Employee Morale

Citygate found the staff in the Division to be more dissatisfied with their work than a casual observer might see on the surface. Many Division workers take pride in their work and work hard to foster a team environment. Nonetheless, we observed a staff that is very much beleaguered, frustrated and under siege. Several patterns of concerns emerged from our study, interviews, observations and the Employee Survey, including the following:

- ◆ Personal safety of the animal control officers when they are called into volatile situations created by either animals or citizens.
- ◆ Lack of training.
- ◆ Lack of consistency in administration of operating policies and procedures.
- ◆ Poor pay.
- ◆ Lack of professionalism and management skills on the part of supervisory staff.
- ◆ Lack of appreciation and knowledge by elected officials and the public with regard to the nature of staff's work.

Citygate Associates' overall sense of things is that there are so many challenges and needs in the Animal Control Services Division that no one is really sure where to start: staff is under-appreciated; staff is underpaid; the Administrative Offices are obsolete; the shelters are inadequate; there is little to no constructive relationship with the public; no one has time to do an adequate job of community education regarding responsible pet ownership; Pit Bulls are an increasing problem; veterinary services are not adequate or consistent; etc., etc. The animals just keep coming and coming!

As part of this study, Citygate conducted an Employee Survey in order to identify operational issues and to gather a wide range of information regarding how employees view the Animal Control Services Division, their individual role in the program and the pluses and minuses of being a Division employee. The following charts highlight those statements in the survey with which employees most agreed and least agreed. A more detailed explanation of the Employee Survey is provided in section 6 of this report.

10 HIGHEST RANKING STATEMENTS (MOST AGREEMENT)
(IN DESCENDING ORDER FROM HIGHEST SCORE. 5 IS THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE SCORE)

Degree-of-Agreement Statement	Weighted Average Response	Median Response	Mode	Standard Deviation
5c. I have the necessary skills to perform the tasks associated with my position.	4.38	5.00	5	0.85
12e. I believe that lowering the euthanasia rate is an important goal for the DIVISION and the County.	4.35	5.00	5	0.85
7c. I am able to make decisions and complete most of my assignments without the need to consult my supervisor or a co-worker.	4.04	4.00	4	0.66
13b. I believe serving the public is the reason for our work, not an interruption of it.	4.04	4.00	4	0.96
2a. I am adequately compensated for any overtime I am required to work (if applicable).	3.62	4.00	4	1.20
12b. The performance evaluations I have received during my employment with my division have been fair and equitable.	3.58	4.00	4	1.02
6e. The performance evaluations I have received have been completed in a timely manner and according to schedule.	3.50	4.00	4	1.18
1b. The management style of my DIRECT SUPERVISOR contributes to the productivity of my work unit.	3.46	4.00	4	1.33
12c. I believe that the County's ethical behavior guidelines are adequate.	3.42	4.00	4	0.76
1a. I am actively encouraged to try creative approaches to my work, even to the point of taking the initiative.	3.35	4.00	4	1.13

10 LOWEST RANKING STATEMENTS (LEAST AGREEMENT)
(IN ASCENDING ORDER FROM LOWEST SCORE. 1 IS THE LOWEST POSSIBLE SCORE)

Degree-of-Agreement Statement	Weighted Average Response	Median Response	Mode	Standard Deviation
4b. I believe my salary is competitive with salaries paid for positions comparable to mine in surrounding public and private agencies.	1.40	1.00	1	.058
13a. I believe that the DIVISION is receiving adequate support from County Management.	1.58	1.00	1	0.86
8a. The current compensation and promotion process rewards me for higher than average levels of performance.	1.68	1.00	1	1.04
11b. My work environment is safe, pleasant and healthy.	1.69	2.00	1	0.74
11c. I believe the safety program is adequate.	1.69	1.00	1	1.09
8c. I believe that defined career paths exist within the Department and that reasonable opportunities for advancement are present.	1.76	1.00	1	0.97
1d. I receive sufficient training opportunities in developing job-related skills.	1.81	2.00	2	0.80
5b. I believe that the current promotion policy utilized by the DIVISION is fair.	1.92	2.00	1	1.06
8e. Given the level of staffing within my DIVISION, the goals and objectives of the DIVISION are achievable.	2.00	2.00	1	1.08
7a. I believe that the current compensation policy utilized by the County is fair.	2.09	2.00	1	1.06

Performance Appraisal System, Rewards, and Discipline

The current performance appraisal system is based on a written annual evaluation of each employee by his or her supervisor. The measured skills and performance indicators vary depending on whether the employee being evaluated is a manager, supervisor or rank and file employee. Each employee has the opportunity to review the evaluation, discuss it with their supervisor and/or file written objections. During the initial years of working within a job classification, a salary step increase of 5 percent can be earned annually if merited, based on performance. Employees do not receive financial rewards, such as bonuses or profit sharing, of any kind other than ordinary salary. Formal discipline of an employee for poor performance is rare.

There is no evidence that the performance of Division employees is linked to program goals, objectives or performance indicators. However, the Employee Survey indicates that the employees generally feel their performance evaluations are fair, equitable, completed in a timely manner and according to schedule.

Policies and Procedures

In June 2003, the Animal Control Services Division instituted a Policy and Procedures Manual. Although it is simple, to the point and brief, it represents a solid beginning towards strengthening the Division's administrative infrastructure. It provides guidelines regarding duties and procedures, ACO priority activity list and protocol, daily shelter procedures, building grounds security, time accounting, availability, call outs, employee rabies immunization, firearms, uniform policy for ACO, radio/phone communications, rabies information/animal bites, nuisance complaints, inhumane investigation, animal impoundment at other agency request, dangerous animals & impoundment for euthanasia, stray domestic livestock, notice to appear, injured animals, euthanasia, and dead animals.

Additional written policies and procedures are needed in order to address, for example, disease control, complaint investigation and reporting, scanning for microchips, overtime and on-call time, documentation and control of controlled substances, inventory control of dog food and other supplies, shelter security, cash handling, fee collection, lunches and breaks, use of division property, equipment and supplies, time reporting, adoption, volunteers, hours of operation, licensing issuance and enforcement, emergencies, customer service, dress code, animal identification, and building maintenance.

Information Technology

Kern County installed the Chameleon system in 1997. As workloads increase, information technology improvements become mandatory if an agency is to fulfill its service responsibilities. All progressive major animal control agencies have installed software and hardware that enables them to keep track of service calls, animal inventory, work schedules, call frequency by area, complainant and defendant records, rabies control information, administer animal licensing, etc. These systems provide a relational database from which virtually any report can be generated. Many agencies have installed the Chameleon system from HLP Inc.

The Division's information technology resources are powerful but they are currently underutilized. The former Division Manager is conversant with the Chameleon computer

system. The current Division Manager is not. Nor are other members of the Division fully proficient in its use and potential. Moreover, The former Division Manager is conversant with the Crystal reporting system. The current Division Manager is not. The current Dispatcher is undergoing training in Crystal report development.

Chameleon has the ability to automate many aspects of kennel management. Daily monitoring of any aspect of kennel management can be performed. Intake and outcome statistics can be tracked and reports generated. These reports can cover anything tracked from counts by type, to length of stay, to euthanasia counts, and done by day, week, month, quarter, year, or specified period. Evaluation of kennel space and length of holding time is shown. Specific guidelines and rules may be entered to be applied in a consistent manner. The inherent stress in animal management decisions can be partially resolved by utilizing this feature of the software. There are outcome fields, "holds" on animals, and reevaluation features. Searches for lost and found can be accomplished quickly and easily. Furthermore, tracking through home kennel and foster care programs can be integrated into Chameleon/CMS.

Chameleon was designed to track individual case information on animals and all actions related to the animal. As actions occur, relevant data can be added to the system. As time passes, a complete history can be developed and be readily accessible. When queries for information are made using Crystal Reports, all data associated with the animal can be retrieved. Each animal can be assigned a unique ID as it is entered into the database. Chameleon/CMS's look-up capabilities make an easy job of finding, tracking, and associating animals in the database. As the animal progresses through the system, related records are tied to the original ID. Chameleon provides the overall summary profile for an animal, which can aid in making appropriate match-ups for adoption.

Chameleon also has front counter functions to sell individual licenses. Batch functions are provided for the entire license renewal process. Renewals can be generated monthly or yearly for mass mailing using Crystal Reports. Chameleon can make dramatic improvements in the license function. Staff can be given the tools to be more productive and license volumes can be increased. Both techniques translate into money for the Animal Control Services Division.

Chameleon has a comprehensive set of financial management, clinic management, field operations management and donor/volunteer management capabilities built into the system. This extensive functional automation is either being underutilized or not used at all in Kern County.

The Website

The Division's website is well organized and is user friendly. The website has pictures of adoptable animals and stray animals, has a solicitation for volunteers, has a solicitation for rescue groups to partner with the Division. The website provides opportunities to: file a complaint online; obtain information regarding other animal organizations; find information regarding the location of Division shelters and hours of operation; and obtain a link to Mapquest to provide directions to the Bakersfield, Mohave, Lake Isabella, and Ridgecrest animal shelters. The Division web site also lists current fees, and provides the date, time and location of rabies vaccination clinics.

Licensure Program

Field staff issue court citations that require purchase of a dog license and the payment of a court fine. This is very time consuming and very inefficient if it is the only method of license enforcement. In addition, fine revenue has no “return to source” provision so that the Animal Control Services Division does not necessarily share in all of the fine revenue. Ordinances that require local veterinarians to provide copies of rabies vaccination certificates to the local animal control agency and the utilization of a computer cross match between the agency’s licensing file and the rabies certificate provides a cost effective first step in the licensing enforcement system. Other trends include using e-commerce via the Internet, allowing the use of credit cards for payment, area canvassing and increases in animal licensing fees.

The licensing of cats has not been adopted by Kern County – or many other agencies either. The reasons for this involve proving the legal ownership of cats and the reluctance of the State Department of Health to require rabies vaccination and licensing of cats even though they have been increasingly seen as a potential vector for rabies in California. Without State-mandated rabies vaccination, a local ordinance requiring cat licensing would be very difficult to enforce.

Revenue Collection and Fees

As noted earlier in this report, Kern County’s overall cost recovery is as good or better than most comparable agencies in California. The Division should annually examine its fee structures to make sure the fees charged adequately cover the cost of providing the service to the extent possible. The impact of the fee amount on compliance must also be examined. For example, increased revenue projections derived from increases in redemption and surrender fees must be weighed against the operational costs if animals are not redeemed by their owners or if animals are declared stray instead of owned in order to avoid the surrender fee. The Division’s decision to no longer accept animals surrendered from the public will undoubtedly lead to more animals turned loose or surrendered as “strays.”

Supervision And Management Span Of Control

Supervision and management of the Division can be characterized as informal and collegial. This approach is essential given the fact that both the administrative office and the kennel offices are small and cramped.

Direct reports to the Animal Services Division Chief include the Shelter Manager, two Senior Animal Control Officers, one of which is vacant, and the office support staff. This is a limited and appropriate span of control under the current circumstances. At full compliment, there are 14 Animal Control Officers reporting to two Senior Animal Control Officers, which is appropriate. The Shelter Manager, with the assistance of two Senior Animal Care Workers, supervises 15 Animal Care Workers at the Bakersfield shelter. This position supervises two additional Animal Care Workers at the Mojave Shelter.

Although the Division is understaffed, supervisory and management span of control is appropriate given current levels of staffing.

Community Outreach

With public and legal attention drawn to the killing of companion animals in the state's animal shelters, local agencies and concerned no-profit groups are forming alliances to move beyond the traditional "come to the shelter" approach to animal adoption. Non-profit foster programs, outreach adoption efforts, mobile adoption, media advertising, the internet and interagency transfer of animals are all being tried to increase the number of animals adopted from local public shelters. All of these strategies, particularly relationships with local animal-based non-profits need to be developed and/or expanded. All of the communities' resources should be brought into play in order to reduce the number of animals euthanized.

Salaries and Turnover

The Animal Control Services Division has historically experienced a high level of employee turnover, particularly in the past several years. Six of Division's Animal Control Officer positions, or 42.9 percent, have turned over in the past year. Currently, 64 percent of the Animal Control Officers have **less than 5 years of experience**.

High turnover has had a negative impact upon the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. Based on the Employee Survey and our interviews, we believe the high turnover rate exists in part because Kern County does not offer competitive salaries for many of its non-clerical animal control program positions. This was reinforced by the Employee Survey responses. Citygate Associates conducted a salary survey of several of the comparison counties that are used by Kern County during labor relations.

Exhibit II-1
Monthly Salary Comparisons To Other Agencies

Position	Survey Average	Kern County	Difference	Kern County percentage +/- average
Animal Control Officer	\$ 2,904	\$ 2,430	\$ 474	-16.3 %
Senior Animal Control Officer	\$ 3,230	\$ 2,894	\$ 336	-10.4 %
Animal Care Worker	\$ 2,266	\$ 2,289	\$ 23	+ 1.0 %
Senior Animal Care Worker	\$ 3,030	\$ 2,430	\$ 600	-19.8 %
Shelter Manager	\$ 4,592	\$ 2,894	\$ 1,698	-37.0 %
Director/ Manager	\$ 7,800	\$ 6,084	\$ 1,716	-22.0 %

Note: The salary data was obtained from the following counties: Los Angeles; Riverside; Sacramento; San Bernardino; San Joaquin; Santa Barbara; Solano; Stanislaus; Tulare; and Ventura.

When establishing salaries it is important to consider the **consequences of error** factor. For example, consider the consequences of an Animal Control Officer making a mistake on the job. He or she often enters into highly volatile domestic situations wherein citizens are angry, if not violent and intoxicated. In addition, on a daily basis Animal Control Officers are confronted with violent animals. One mistake or one misjudgment could cause the tragic death of a loved animal companion, or worse, an innocent citizen. Compare the Animal Control Officer's **consequence of error** against that of other Kern County workers such as an Eligibility Worker, Groundskeeper, Office Service Technician, Road Maintenance Worker and Storekeeper II. **All of these positions have higher salaries than Kern County's Animal Control Officers.**

Citygate Associates does not claim this survey data to be definitive. Rather, it is merely indicative of compensation issues and does not portray specific recommendations for compensation adjustments. It should not serve as a substitute for a complete, thorough and analytical classification and compensation study. When this survey data is combined with our general knowledge of salaries in the animal control industry and the observed internal salary inequities, we conclude that the County needs to fully examine the salaries in the Division.

Staff Training

Adequate training is the key to employee performance and satisfaction, quality service, productivity and customer service.

Citygate observed that training and professional development in the Division are at a bare minimum and are insufficient to ensure operations are run in an efficient, effective and safe manner. Animal control activity has the potential to expose local governments to significant public liability. Areas of concern include, for example, vehicle operation, firearm usage and rabies control activities.

The Division lacks a formal training program. With the exception of SAFER training and euthanasia training there is no formal training conducted by the Division.

It is an axiom of training that people retain 10-20 percent of what they read, 50 percent of what they see, and 90 percent of what they do. Many of the tasks of the Division are activities that require the manipulation of tools and the movement of animals. These are best learned through doing. However, there is an almost total lack of classroom training and virtually no testing of learned knowledge or skills.

The shelter's Animal Care Worker employees are given a general orientation and then typically are assigned to a more experienced worker for "job shadowing." The length of this "on the job training" is most often dictated by staffing shortages, which drive the need "to get the job done" and make training a discarded priority. As a result, employees are left to fend for themselves and to "ask for help if you need it." Since most of the staff was trained in this manner, there are many different interpretations of what the policies and procedures are and how to do a particular task. This is exacerbated by high turnover with few experienced workers to provide job coaching. This leads to frustration on the part of staff, lack of consistency, duplication of effort, compromised staff safety, inconsistent and at times poor and thus dangerous animal handling, poor customer service and inefficiency.

The Field Operation's Animal Control Officers are required by State Law to acquire a P.C 832 Module A Certificate. Kern County requires that this certificate be obtained within the first six months of employment. The requirements relative to the curricula are proscribed by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training. The Arrest and Firearms (PC 832) course consists of two components, which total a minimum of 64 hours. The Arrest component has a 40-hour requirement, and the Firearms component has a 24-hour requirement.

Field Operation staff is initially deployed in the kennels to learn basic animal handling skills and animal breed identification. Concerns about consistency are the same as those noted for permanent kennel staff. When the Senior Animal Control Officer, in consultation with the Division Director determines that a person is ready, they are assigned to a more senior Officer for field training. There is no "classroom training" where State Laws, the Animal Control

Ordinance, Division policies, procedures and history are studied or their assimilation tested. Once deployed in the field by themselves there is no observation of staff to determine if proper policies and procedures are being followed. Citizens may get different answers to questions based on whom they ask. This lack of training leads to frustration on the part of staff, lack of consistency, duplication of effort, compromised staff safety, inconsistent and at times poor and thus dangerous animal handling, poor customer service and inefficiency experienced by shelter personnel.

Another training issue of concern is the lack of safe vehicle operation training. Animal Control Officers spend a large amount of time driving an assigned animal control vehicle. Our observations lead us to believe that the County's liability exposure would be decreased if Officers were provided with driver training specific to their vehicles and job duties before being deployed in the field. Specific emphasis should be placed on the completion of paperwork and the clearing of the call with dispatch before placing the vehicle in motion. The County's Risk Management unit should be consulted relative to a review in this area.

The Division is fortunate in having several Animal Control Officers who are experienced in the capture, movement and transport of livestock. This invaluable knowledge should be included in the Division's training.

The clerical staff, of which there are only two assigned to the Division, would also benefit from standardized training. There are inconsistencies between the information citizens receive over the phone and what they are told at the shelter. Everyone needs to have the same knowledge base in order for the Division to effectively carry out its service delivery responsibilities.

As noted earlier in this report, the Division Manager did not come to the Division with an animal control background. She has been faced with trying to manage the day to day affairs of the Division, deal with the aftermath of the recent court case, interact with the media, deal with the animal activist community, learn the intricacies of her new position and acquire the knowledge and skills specific to managing an animal control agency. In these endeavors, she has been assisted by the former Division Manager, the Director of Environmental Health and the Resource Management Agency Director. Her grasp of the unique issues relative to animal control programs is increasing but she needs additional outside training in order to make the transition to her new career a success.

Individual training plans should be developed for each employee. This ensures that employees receive training customized to their needs, strengths and weaknesses. Training should be available to both full-time and part-time employees and volunteers. Formal training for new employees should be expanded. Incorporation of written policies and procedures into the training will increase its benefits. Cross training of employees will improve customer service and teamwork and enable employees to fill in for other employees when they are absent.

Provision should be made to evaluate all training to ensure it is achieving its objective. Employee feedback on training is one type of evaluation. Another is to measure the impact of training on customer service ratings and work performance

Training provided by other animal control agencies and recommended by humane and animal control organizations should be considered in developing a Division training program and budget. A training guide is published by the National Animal Control Association. The Humane Society of the United States provides training classes at its national conference. The California

Animal Control Directors Association, in conjunction with the State Humane Association and the California Veterinary Medical Association, conducts statewide training in various animal control and animal health areas. The Directors Association also provides periodic regional training classes on specific subjects.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE ADMINISTRATION

The following recommendations are made in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Kern County's animal control program.

Recommendation II-1: **Effective not later than January 1, 2006, transfer the Division to report directly to the Resource Management Agency Director.**

As an immediate interim step, and to move the animal control program closer to the Board of Supervisors, the Animal Control Division should be removed from the Environmental Health Department. This should take place not later than January 1, 2006. Concurrently, the RMA Director should work closely with the Animal Control Services Manager to make sure that progress on the 5-Year Action Plan continues at a steady pace.

Recommendation II-2: **Effective January 1, 2007, consolidate City of Bakersfield and Kern County animal control programs.**

The County should immediately initiate discussions with the City of Bakersfield in order to identify the most efficient and effective approach to consolidate animal control services. The current arrangement wherein the City provides its own field operations and contracts with the County for shelter services is a good starting point. We recommend that the County and City build on this interagency success.

The RMA Director should provide the leadership necessary to ensure that consolidation of the County's animal control program with the City of Bakersfield's program occurs in a timely fashion. We believe the consolidation could and should take place by January 1, 2007.

Consolidation of the County and City programs will provide the "critical mass" to fully justify an independent department and enhance both agencies' ability to substantially improve the animal control service provided to their citizens. Consolidation will create the "critical mass" necessary to build needed facilities, improve training, minimize turnover, create an affordable spay/neuter program, improve the cost effectiveness of veterinary care, and focus and centralize community education programs.

Recommendation II-3: **Effective not later than January 1, 2007, establish the Animal Control Services program as a separate department reporting directly to the Board of Supervisors.**

Animal Control in Kern County is operating in a crisis mode. Operating the Animal Control Services program as a division creates a significant disconnect between the Board of Supervisors, the program and the County's changing customers. Notwithstanding the laudable

efforts of top management to make improvements in recent years, the current organizational structure makes it all but impossible to deal efficiently and effectively with the Division's many challenges. Understandably, it is difficult for busy policy setters, all of whom have exceptional demands on their time, to manage the day-to-day realities of the animal control crisis in Kern County. There exists a high level of frustration and concern on the part of all stakeholders: citizen/customers; appointed leaders and managers; division employees; and elected officials.

The Board of Supervisors can lead the way towards establishing a more efficient and effective animal control program in Kern County by reconsidering the organizational placement of the Animal Control Services program. Citygate has considered the various organizational placement options that are used throughout the State, e.g., Sheriff's Department, Health Department, Environmental Health Department or as stand-alone department.

Establishing the Animal Control Services program as a separate department cannot be done immediately, nor should it be done immediately. The transition should be managed carefully and take place over time in a manner that provides for organizational stability and continual progress and improvement.

Consolidation of the City of Bakersfield and County animal control programs is the most cost efficient approach to transforming the animal control program into a viable and effective department. Without consolidation and the resulting "critical mass," the Division will be forced to rely too heavily upon the resources of other County departments and agencies for important management functions. Without consolidation, it will be more difficult for the County to afford the administrative support for the Division that is needed to free up the Division Manager so the Manager can work on more strategic program objectives such as improving relations with the public.

Recommendation II-4: Develop a Mission Statement, Goals and Objectives for the Animal Control Services Division that define the purpose of the Division and desired accomplishments.

Goals and measurable objectives, anchored by a mission statement developed specifically for the Animal Services Control Division, as opposed to the Kern County Environmental Health Department, need to be established. Clearly defined objectives will make it possible to measure the performance of the Division and assist in the continuous improvement process. Goals and objectives are derived from the mission of an organizational unit. The goals and objectives support the Division's mission by providing:

- ◆ A basis for programming decisions by creating explicit expectations for performance against which accomplishments can be measured and evaluated.
- ◆ A long-range orientation for reviewing the allocation of budget resources to priority programs and projects and their impact on alleviating major service problems.
- ◆ A clear understandable documentation of the need for and commitment to continuous improvement.

A goal is a general-purpose statement describing what the Kern County Animal Control Services Division would like to accomplish in the future. Goal statements center on community concerns that are important in Kern County. The goals serve as the basis for developing directly related,

measurable and shorter-range objectives. Kern County's animal control goals should be broad in scope, timeless, subjective and related to important community needs, for example:

- ◆ “Encourage the proper care and human treatment of domestic animals and protect persons and property from harm by a program of licensing dogs, enforcing inoculation and leash laws and housing stray animals until they are reclaimed, adopted or destroyed.”
- ◆ “Embrace a variety of strategies to teach responsible pet ownership and instill a humane ethic in all members of the community.”
- ◆ “Reduce uncontrolled breeding through community education and stray impoundment.”

An objective is a statement of a desired or planned result that is measurable within a given period of time. Well-drafted objective statements are:

- ◆ Results oriented. They focus on useful results, not the process or how to achieve them.
- ◆ Specific and measurable. They define in quantitative and verifiable terms what is to be accomplished.
- ◆ Time specific. They predict when the results will be realized.
- ◆ Realistic and attainable. They can be achieved within a reasonable time and cost.
- ◆ Understandable and challenging. They can be understood by those responsible for implementation and provide motivation for successful performance.
- ◆ Relevant to the management information system. They provide a substantive basis for monitoring and evaluation and encourage regular review and revision.

Examples of objective statements that could be used in Kern County are listed below:

- Reduce the number of animals euthanized by ____percent during the fiscal year.
- Decrease the number of stray animals by ____ during the fiscal year.
- Increase revenue from fees and charges by ____percent during the fiscal year.
- Increase the number of pet adoptions during the current budget year.
- Increase the number of animal licenses issued this year by ____ percent.
- Increase the overall customer service rating for the Division from ____percent to ____percent during the fiscal year.
- Increase the employee satisfaction rating by ____percent during the fiscal year.
- Prepare a policies and procedures manual within the next three months.
- Increase the number of adoptions by ____percent during the fiscal year.

- Reduce the response time to requests for service by ____minutes during the fiscal year.
- Increase the number of customer comment cards by ____ percent.
- Prepare ____animal service information brochures during the fiscal year.
- Response time to the scene of an emergency is within 15 minutes from receipt of call on 90 percent of all emergency calls.
- Increase the number of animals returned to owner by ____percent during the fiscal year.
- Reduce the number of repeat dangerous dog attacks by ____percent during the fiscal year.
- Decrease animal per capita cost by ____percent during the fiscal year.
- Increase the number of animal sterilizations by ____percent during the fiscal year.
- Implement an automated pet licensing system within 6 months.

Recommendation II-5: Develop Performance Management System which measures the extent to which key objectives are being achieved.

Performance measures are an essential tool for managing the Kern County Animal Control Services Division efficiently and effectively. Good performance measures help focus the efforts of the Division on those activities that are essential to achieve the objectives, goals and mission of the Division. Elements of an overall **Performance Management System** would include the following:

- Mission statement
- Goal and objective statements
- Performance measures
- Performance targets and standards
- Performance reports
- Performance monitoring.

Basic categories of performance measures include:

1. Input measures which report the resources (financial, personnel, materials, equipment) used to provide a service
2. Output measures which report work accomplished
3. Outcome measures which report the results and quality of service including customer satisfaction
4. Efficiency measures that report the costs of outputs and outcomes in terms of dollars or employee hours per unit.

Employee involvement in the selection of performance measures is essential, as are the informational needs of the Board of Supervisors. Here are 10 tips:

1. Develop multiple performance measures (input, output, outcome and efficiency) for the same service and objective. A set of measures is necessary to give a complete picture of performance.
2. Balance the performance measures so that the effect of improving any one or two is weighed in relation to the impact on the others.
3. Select performance measures for which data are readily available.
4. Involve those who use and collect the data in the development of the performance measures. They can identify factors that are not within their control and cause unanticipated or unwanted results.
5. Consider customer requirements.
6. Review and revise performance measures when the mission and objectives change and if they do not adequately measure.
7. Limit the number of performance measures to a vital few. Too many confuse users and distract from key ones.
8. Obtain information on performance measures used by other animal control agencies.
9. Select performance measures that collectively provide the most practical and useful information for critical activities that are essential to carrying out the core mission.
10. For knowledge-based services, measure performance in terms of deadlines and cost targets met, quantity of work produced, extent to which work must be revised or corrected and extent to which recommendations are accepted.

Here are some examples of **performance measures** that are likely to work in Kern County:

- Response times for emergency, nuisance and other calls
- Percent increase in donations
- Percent increase in volunteer hours
- Percent of eligible animals licensed
- Percent of animals adopted
- Percent of animals claimed
- Percent of animals euthanized
- Number of cruelty investigations
- Percent of animals spayed/neutered
- Number of sustained complaints from the community concerning field services, shelter services, adoption services and licensing
- Number of annual continuous public education programs
- Number of calls per 1000 people per year

- Animal control costs per capita
- Number of calls per field officer per year
- Percent of animals relinquished by owners
- Percent of adopted animals returned
- Percent of customers rating interactions with animal services as satisfactory or better
- Number of animals impounded
- Percent of animals licensed
- Number of complaints and requests for service
- Number of animal bites
- Unit cost of issuing licenses, impoundments, adoptions, responding to calls.

Recommendation II-6: Prepare both a monthly written management report and a narrative Quarterly Public Presentation to the Board of Supervisors.

The Animal Control Services Manager should promptly prepare and distribute a monthly narrative report for the purpose of informing the public and the Board of Supervisors about the status of Division management improvement initiatives. In addition, the Manager should make a narrative Quarterly Public Presentation to the Board. Some suggestions for topics to be covered in the report and presentation include:

- ◆ The status of implementing the recommendations in the Citygate report.
- ◆ The status of implementing the Division Action Plan.
- ◆ Significant operating problems and proposed corrective action.
- ◆ The status of Board of Supervisors' referred matters.
- ◆ Projected revenue and expenditure problems.
- ◆ Division accomplishments.
- ◆ Actions taken to reduce costs and improve productivity.
- ◆ Status of new or expanded programs and capital improvements.
- ◆ Incidents involving negative publicity.
- ◆ Information on the number and types of complaints and requests for service.
- ◆ Statistics on the number of animals entering the shelter, impounded, adopted, returned to owner, euthanized and the number of licenses issued. The statistics should include comparisons with monthly targets and same period the previous year.

Performance reports should present information in ways that are easy to understand, permit comparison, meet the user's information needs and help them to draw meaningful conclusions.

Reasons for significant variances from stated performance standards, such as variances over or below 10 percent, should be explained along with proposed corrective action. An effective and credible Performance Report will include the following characteristics:

1. Describe the activity and objectives.
2. Compare planned to actual results.
3. Show trends over previous periods.
4. Present a mix of key measures for each major objective.
5. Highlight variances.
6. Explain in narrative form the reasons for the variances.
7. Describe the corrective action to be taken.

The Animal Control Services Manager should solicit feedback from the readers of the report to determine the extent to which the report is meeting their information needs.

Recommendation II-7: Develop additional detailed written policies and procedures to aid the day-to-day operation of the Division.

Division management staff should collaborate with operational staff to develop additional written policies and procedures that address, for example:

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| ◆ Disease control | ◆ Use of division property |
| ◆ Complaint investigation and reporting | ◆ Equipment and supplies |
| ◆ Scanning for microchips | ◆ Time reporting |
| ◆ Overtime and on-call time | ◆ Adoption |
| ◆ Documentation and control of controlled substances | ◆ Volunteers |
| ◆ Inventory control of dog food and other supplies | ◆ Hours of operation |
| ◆ Shelter security | ◆ Licensing issuance and enforcement |
| ◆ Cash handling | ◆ Emergencies |
| ◆ Fee collection | ◆ Customer service |
| ◆ Lunches and breaks | ◆ Dress code |
| | ◆ Animal identification |
| | ◆ Building maintenance. |

Recommendation II-8: Institute recurrent training in safe vehicle operation.

Training relative to the safe operation of agency vehicles should be developed and employed rigorously. Policies for safe vehicle use should be monitored and enforced.

Recommendation II-9: Institute recurrent training on the safe use of firearms.

Use of Firearms by animal control field staff is unavoidable unless an agency is willing to divert police officers to scenes where the humane killing of injured animals is necessary or where a rabies-suspect animal is involved. Strict policies on the safe use of firearms should be developed. P.O.S.T. certified firearm instructors should be utilized for initial and recurrent training. The safe and proficient use and storage of firearms by agency staff should be examined no less than annually and adherence to agency policies made a condition of continued employment.

Firearms are used to euthanize animals in the field where other means are impractical or would place the Animal Control Officer in danger. The use of firearms by Animal Control Officers is necessary unless an agency is willing to wait for the arrival of a police officer to perform this task. This might be possible in a city due to the small geographic size and close proximity of police staff. This is not possible in Kern County due to the large geographic area involved.

All staff carry tranquilizer guns in their trucks. Four Officers are issued 12 gauge shotguns. These are the Officers assigned to the Lake Isabella area, Ridgecrest area, the South and West area and the Senior Officer in the Bakersfield metro area. All Officers are required to qualify annually with the shotgun. The Sheriff's Department provides firearms training. In addition, all Officers undergo annual chemical capture/tranquilizer training.

Recommendation II-10: **Institute recurrent training relative to the handling of rabies suspect animals and the protocols for rabies testing.**

Policies and procedures relative to the handling of rabies suspect animals and the protocols for rabies testing should be developed in conjunction with the communicable disease staff of the County Health Department. Initial and recurrent training of field and kennel staff in this subject area should be undertaken and documented.

Recommendation II-11: **Institute recurrent training in proper lifting and restraint techniques should be implemented.**

Animal control field staff and kennel personnel share significant exposure to situations conducive to work connected injury. Primary exposures are lifting and restraint injuries to back, arm and leg joints, animal bites, automotive accidents, rabies, and Lyme disease. Initial training in proper lifting and restraint techniques should be implemented. Recurrent training of Animal Control staff is critical if an agency is to provide a public service-oriented program for its citizens.

Recommendation II-12: **Develop a comprehensive separate manual for clerical, kennel and field activities. Use these manuals as training guides.**

Recommendation II-13: **Test all staff prior to completion of probation and recurrently relative to required knowledge and skills.**

Recommendation II-14: **Conduct a training needs assessment for each employee and provide training to all employees.**

A training needs assessment should be made to identify and prioritize training needs. This will enable employees to provide input on the training they feel they need to improve their skills. Other sources of information on training needs are performance evaluations, discussions with employees on their development interests, customer feedback and complaint information. The following are topics that should be considered:

- ◆ Computers
- ◆ Customer Service
- ◆ Kennel Cleaning Procedures
- ◆ Euthanasia Technique
- ◆ Safety
- ◆ Animal Behavior and Breeds
- ◆ Volunteer Relations
- ◆ Stress Management
- ◆ Dispatching
- ◆ First Aid
- ◆ Dealing With The Public
- ◆ Complaint Investigation
- ◆ Problem Solving
- ◆ Communication Skills
- ◆ Public Relations
- ◆ Report Writing.

Individual training plans should be developed for each employee. This ensures that employees receive training customized to their needs, strengths and weaknesses. Training should be available to both full-time and part-time employees and volunteers. Formal training for new employees should be expanded. Incorporation of written policies and procedures into the training will increase its benefits. Cross training of employees will improve customer service and teamwork and enable employees to fill in for other employees when they are absent.

Provision should be made to evaluate all training to ensure it is achieving its objective. Employee feedback on training is one type of evaluation. Another is to measure the impact of training on customer service ratings and work performance

Adequate training is the key to employee performance and satisfaction, quality service, productivity and customer service.

Training provided by other animal control agencies and recommended by humane and animal control organizations should be considered in developing a Division training program and budget.

The National Animal Control Association publishes a training guide. The Humane Society of the United States provides training classes at its national conference. The California Animal

Control Directors Association in conjunction with the State Humane Association and the California Veterinary Medical Association conducts statewide training in various animal control and animal health areas. The Directors Association also provides periodic regional training classes on specific subjects.

Recommendation II-15:

The Division Manager should be encouraged to join these national and state organizations and to take advantage of the training courses specific to identified needs.