

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND ACTION PLAN

A. OVERVIEW

This report presents the results of Citygate Associates, LLC's Operational Review of Kern County's Animal Control Services Division. Citygate conducted the study between May 2005 and July 2005. The scope of the study included all major program areas of the Animal Control Services Division, including:

- ◆ Administration
- ◆ Shelter Operations
- ◆ Field Operations
- ◆ Community/Public Relations.

The Animal Control Services Division is responsible for:

- ◆ Leash law enforcement
- ◆ Dog licensure
- ◆ Dog bite investigations
- ◆ Investigation and prosecution of animal cruelty cases
- ◆ Rabies clinics
- ◆ Animal shelter services
- ◆ Animal adoption program
- ◆ Spay and neuter program
- ◆ Community education and outreach
- ◆ Dead animal removal and disposal
- ◆ Euthanasia and disposal of unwanted and/or diseased animals.

The objective of this study was to analyze the policies, procedures, management and operations of Kern County's Animal Control Services Division and to make recommendations for improving the service provided by the Division to the citizens of Kern County. To accomplish this objective, we first analyzed the mission of the Division and its overall philosophy, and assessed the congruence of these critical guidelines with the orientation of the Board of Supervisors as well as the needs of the community. We then evaluated the organizational structure and management systems, organizational relationships, allocation of employees and other resources, personnel management and training, records management, communications, information systems, facilities and equipment, fiscal management, relationships with citizens, employee perspectives, and related aspects to determine if these are in alignment with the Division's mission and policies.

B. ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

Our report on the Operational Review of Kern County's Animal Control Services Division is organized in sections as follows:

Section I	Introduction to the Study
Section II	Administration
Section III	Shelter Operations
Section IV	Field Operations
Section V	Community/Public Relations
Section VI	Employee Survey Results
Section VII	Customer/Citizen Survey Results
Appendices	

This Executive Summary presents a brief overview of our findings and recommendations. It is suggested that in order to obtain a complete understanding of Citygate's analysis, this report should be read in its entirety.

C. OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS AND MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Upon its comprehensive review, Citygate determined that the Kern County Animal Control Services Division needs significant improvement 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 for five primary 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.

There are several important social and demographic factors that 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. 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.

On one hand, it would be unrealistic to think that any meaningful improvements will take place in the Kern County animal control program without a significant change in how the program is viewed and managed. Although it is difficult to quantify, it is apparent by direct observation that the animal control program has been seriously under-funded for many years. The realities of under-funding are most apparent in facilities, veterinary care, spay/neuter programming, and community education. On the Operations and Maintenance side of the animal control program, there is a need to increase funding, at a minimum, in the reoccurring amount of \$672,000 per year. On the capital side of the operations, a minimum investment of \$8,695,000 needs to be made for new facilities. Neither of the unknown costs associated with subsidizing an affordable spay/neuter program, the amount of which is totally discretionary, or hiring additional Animal Control Officers are reflected in the above estimate

On the other hand, Citygate recognizes that the County has many demands for its limited resources. Therefore, we propose a moderate and progressive improvement program that we believe can and should be implemented over a strategic five-year timeframe.

Based on Citygate Associates' performance auditing experience, it is uncommon to find such a high level of need for improvement within an organization. A significant departure from current practices and current levels of resource allocation will be required if the County wants to fully address the animal control services problem. This report includes many recommendations, some of which are big and some of which are small. The most challenging and perhaps the most important recommendations are strategic in nature, including:

- ◆ **MAKE THE ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICES PROGRAM A SEPARATE DEPARTMENT ACCOUNTABLE DIRECTLY TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS. ACCOMPLISH WITHIN 3 YEARS.**
- ◆ **CONSOLIDATE BAKERSFIELD'S ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICES INTO THE COUNTY'S PROGRAM. ACCOMPLISH WITHIN 2 YEARS.**
- ◆ **BUILD A NEW ADMINISTRATIVE AND SHELTER FACILITY TO HANDLE THE NEXT 20+ YEARS OF PROJECTED GROWTH IN KERN COUNTY. OCCUPY WITHIN 5 YEARS.**
- ◆ **OPERATE A VETERINARY CLINIC IN THE SHELTER FOR ANIMAL CARE AND SPAY/NEUTER. ACCOMPLISH WITHIN 2 YEARS.**
- ◆ **INITIATE AN AGGRESSIVE, MULTICULTURAL, 20-YEAR PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAM. INITIATE BY JANUARY, 2006.**
- ◆ **INCREASE THE ANIMAL CONTROL KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROGRAM MANAGER/DIRECTOR. INITIATE IMMEDIATELY.**

D. EVERYONE HAS A ROLE TO PLAY IN IMPROVING KERN COUNTY'S ANIMAL CONTROL PROGRAM

The Pet Owner

The primary role for responsible pet care rests with the pet owner – not the County! It is the pet owners' responsibility to feed and water pets, take them to the Veterinarian when they need medical care, guard against their running loose, vaccinate them against rabies, have them licensed, give them attention, and have them spayed and neutered.

The Elected Officials

Adopt a set of policies that make it clear that you understand there is an animal control problem in Kern County that is real. Act now so that all stakeholders, including County staff, know you are going to do everything within your power to raise the standard of responsible pet ownership in the community and lower the County's euthanasia rate over the long-term. Make a commitment to fund the animal control program at a level that will, over time, make Kern County a leader in providing animal control services in California's Central Valley counties. Fully endorse the recommendations within this report and direct your staff to work on implementation of the Action Plan.

The County Leadership Staff

Do not be discouraged by this report. You have done everything you can over the past few years to make the program run better. This is quite evident in the opinion of this team of independent performance auditors. You have been working under difficult circumstance with very limited resources within an environment of rapidly changing community expectations. Take your significant talents and bring them to bear on implementing the recommendations in this report.

The Animal Control Services Manager

Spend more time out in the community, and invest in your professional development. Take courses to increase your animal control knowledge and skills. Spend time with other animal control directors and managers in California. Join national and state animal control organizations immediately and take full advantage of the training courses specific to your needs.

The Animal Control Division Staff

Embrace and support the Action Plan included in this report and support your direct supervisors and managers as they make improvements in the program. The report may not include everything you wanted, but it includes a lot. Be patient, yet diligent. Expect and insist on working in one of the best animal control programs in California. Increase your skills and level of expertise. Earn promotion into the Level II classes of classification and compensation.

The Schools

Work with the County's Animal Control Services Community Relations Specialist, when one is hired, to develop an effective curriculum for recurring education of students with regard to responsible pet ownership and the need for spay/neuter.

The Rescue Groups

Appreciate and support the County's efforts to improve the animal control program. Keep things positive when dealing with those County staff members who are trying to do good work. Thank them often. What they do day-to-day is difficult and dangerous. They deserve your respect and their work should be appreciated. Keep in mind it is not their fault that there are over 100 animals coming into the shelter, on average, every workday. Each animal has to be tracked, cared for, examined for medical attention, cleaned up, and put in a kennel. The Animal Control Services Division needs your help. Volunteer, be positive and help the County make it one of the best animal control programs in the State.

E. FIVE-YEAR ACTION PLAN

A listing of our recommendations and a blueprint for their implementation are presented in the following Five-Year Action Plan. This Plan contains:

- ◆ The priority of each recommendation
- ◆ The order of magnitude cost estimate
- ◆ The anticipated benefits of each recommendation
- ◆ The responsible organization.

The legend at the bottom of each page of the Five-Year Action Plan defines the level of each priority indicated by the letters "A" through "D." It is important to note that priorities have been established independent of the suggested timeframe. For example, a recommendation may have the highest priority (indicated by the letter "A") but may require an estimated six months to implement. Conversely, a recommendation with the letter "C" priority, which indicates that the recommendation is not critical but will improve operations, may have a two month timeframe, since the estimated implementation effort would not require an extended period of time.

It is also important to note that an "A" priority, which indicates that the recommendation is deemed "mandatory or critical," should not be interpreted to mean that the recommendation is "mandated" by a statute or regulation – it is simply an "urgent" recommendation of the highest priority.

The timeframes indicated in the Five-Year Action Plan do not necessarily mean the anticipated completion dates for the implementation of each recommendation.

5-YEAR ACTION PLAN

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Priority A/B/C/D</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>	<i>Anticipated Benefits</i>	<i>Responsible Organization</i>
YEAR 1: COMPLETE BY JANUARY 1, 2006 OR SOONER				
<u>Recommendation II-1:</u> Effective <u>not later than</u> January 1, 2006, transfer the Division to report directly to the Resource Management Agency Director.	A	Nominal	Enhanced accountability	Resource Management Agency/ Animal Control Services Division (RMA/ ACSD)
<u>Recommendation II-4:</u> Develop a Mission Statement, Goals and Objectives for the Animals Control Services Division that define the purpose of the Division and desired accomplishments.	B	Nominal	Improved efficiency, morale and accountability	RMA/ACSD
<u>Recommendation II-5:</u> Develop Performance Management System, which measures the extent to which key objectives are being achieved.	B	Nominal	Improved efficiency, morale and accountability	RMA/ACSD
<u>Recommendation II-6:</u> Prepare both a monthly written management report and a narrative Quarterly Public Presentation to the Board of Supervisors.	B	Nominal	Improved efficiency, morale and accountability	RMA/ACSD

LEGEND

- A Recommendation mandatory or critical
- B Strongly recommended
- C Not critical, but will improve operations
- D Recommended, but additional study required

5-YEAR ACTION PLAN

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Priority A/B/C/D</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>	<i>Anticipated Benefits</i>	<i>Responsible Organization</i>
<u>Recommendation II-7:</u> Develop additional detailed written policies and procedures to aid the day-to-day operation of the Division.	B	Nominal	Improved consistency and morale	RMA/ACSD
<u>Recommendation II-13:</u> Test all staff prior to completion of probation and recurrently relative to required knowledge and skills.	B	Nominal	Improved effectiveness	ACSD
<u>Recommendation II-14:</u> Conduct a training needs assessment for each employee and provide training to all employees.	B	Nominal	Improved effectiveness and morale	RMA/ACSD
<u>Recommendation II-15:</u> 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.	A	Nominal	Improved leadership and morale	ACSD
<u>Recommendation III-1:</u> Effective January 1, 2006, establish a Capital Facility Fee to cover costs for new animal control facilities.	A	Nominal	Provide partial funding for needed facility	RMA/County Administrative Office (CAO)



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5-YEAR ACTION PLAN

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Priority A/B/C/D</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>	<i>Anticipated Benefits</i>	<i>Responsible Organization</i>
<u>Recommendation III-10:</u> Contact Maddie's Fund to explore the possibility of establishing a partially funded joint public-private spay/neuter effort. (For more information, see http://www.maddiesfund.org/)	B	Nominal	Provide partial funding for needed program	ACSD
<u>Recommendation III-12:</u> Reconfigure the fencing and green gate to provide public access to the stray/hold areas of the facility.	B	Nominal	Improve customer service and citizen trust	ACSD
<u>Recommendation IV-2:</u> Change the current shift schedule to provide coverage before 8:00 a.m., after 5:00 p.m., and on weekends.	B	Unknown	Improve customer service	ACSD
<u>Recommendation IV-4:</u> Utilize the Chameleon system to generate field performance reports. Use these reports to evaluate and motivate field staff.	B	Nominal	Improve efficiency and effectiveness	ACSD
<u>Recommendation IV-6:</u> Respond promptly to Officer requests to repair or replace equipment.	B	Nominal	Improve efficiency and effectiveness	ACSD

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<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Priority A/B/C/D</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>	<i>Anticipated Benefits</i>	<i>Responsible Organization</i>
<u>Recommendation V-1:</u> Hire a Community Relations Specialist to manage the Volunteer Program and the Education Program.	A	\$80,000	Improve community relations	ACSD
<u>Recommendation V-6:</u> Strengthen relationships with the leaders of every rescue group currently contracting with the Division.	B	Nominal	Improve efficiency and effectiveness	ACSD
YEAR 2: COMPLETE BY JANUARY 1, 2007 OR SOONER				
<u>Recommendation II-2:</u> Effective January 1, 2007, consolidate City of Bakersfield and Kern County animal control programs.	A	Unknown	Improve efficiency and effectiveness	RMA/ACSD
<u>Recommendation II-3:</u> Effective not later than January 1, 2007, establish the Animal Control Services program as a separate department reporting directly to the Board of Supervisors.	A	Unknown	Improve accountability	RMA/ACSD
<u>Recommendation II-8:</u> Institute recurrent training in safe vehicle operation.	B	Nominal	Improve safety	ACSD



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5-YEAR ACTION PLAN

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Priority A/B/C/D</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>	<i>Anticipated Benefits</i>	<i>Responsible Organization</i>
<u>Recommendation II-9:</u> Institute recurrent training on the safe use of firearms.	B	Nominal	Improve effectiveness	ACSD
<u>Recommendation II-10:</u> Institute recurrent training relative to the handling of rabies suspect animals and the protocols for rabies testing.	B	Nominal	Improve effectiveness	ACSD
<u>Recommendation II-11:</u> Institute recurrent training in proper lifting and restraint techniques should be implemented.	B	Nominal	Reduce injuries	ACSD
<u>Recommendation II-12:</u> Develop a comprehensive separate manual for clerical, kennel and field activities. Use these manuals as training guides.	B	Nominal	Improve efficiency and effectiveness	ACSD
<u>Recommendation III-2:</u> In the short term, modify the current facility. Paint all masonry block walls with epoxy based paint and seal concrete flooring.	B	\$15,000 (O&M)	Reduce disease	ACSD
<u>Recommendation III-5:</u> Consider bringing in a mobile/modular building to the Bakersfield shelter site.	B	\$20,000 (Capital)	Improve vet services	ACSD

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<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Priority A/B/C/D</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>	<i>Anticipated Benefits</i>	<i>Responsible Organization</i>
<u>Recommendation III-4:</u> Bring the program “in-house” and phase in the building and staffing of a Veterinary clinic.	A	\$190,000 (O&M) \$75,000 (Capital)	Improve vet services	ACSD
<u>Recommendation III-6:</u> Contract with either a veterinarian conversant with public animal shelter issues and/or the University of California at Davis.	A	Included in recommendation immediately above	Improve vet services	ACSD
<u>Recommendation III-7:</u> Establish policies relative to the provision of veterinary care for the most common procedures.	B	Nominal	Improve vet services	ACSD
<u>Recommendation III-8:</u> Create an efficient and aggressive County-wide spay/neuter program.	A	Discretionary	Reduce animal impound volume	ACSD
<u>Recommendation III-9:</u> Establish extensive relationships with local non-profit groups and the City of Bakersfield to partner with the County’s spay/neuter efforts.	A	Nominal	Reduce animal impound volume	ACSD



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5-YEAR ACTION PLAN

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Priority A/B/C/D</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>	<i>Anticipated Benefits</i>	<i>Responsible Organization</i>
<u>Recommendation III-11:</u> Study the practicality of including a mobile clinic as part of the counties long-term strategy to spay/neuter the maximum number of dogs and cats.	A	Unknown	Reduce animal impound volume	ACSD
<u>Recommendation IV-1:</u> Conduct a thorough study of Kern County's staffing needs taking into account the "calls for service" model. <u>(study with consolidation)</u>	A	Unknown	Improve efficiency and effectiveness	RMA/ACSD
<u>Recommendation IV-3:</u> Provide ballistic protective vests to those officers who wish to wear them.	B	Unknown	Increase officer safety	ACSD
<u>Recommendation IV-5:</u> Re-title Animal Control Officer to Animal Control Officer I.	B	\$77,000 (O&M)	Improve effectiveness	RMA/ACSD
<u>Recommendation IV-7:</u> Order the next two animal control vehicles with four-wheel drive.	C	Nominal	Improve effectiveness	ACSD
<u>Recommendation V-2:</u> Task the Community Relations Specialist to lead, coordinate and maximize volunteer resources from the community.	A	Nominal	Improve community relations	ACSD

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<u>Recommendation V-3:</u> Develop a comprehensive Education Program for the citizens of Kern County.	A	\$20,000 (O&M)	Increase responsible pet ownership	ACSD
<u>Recommendation V-4:</u> Develop a program to make effective use of the print and broadcast media.	A	\$50,000 (O&M)	Increase responsible pet ownership	ACSD
<u>Recommendation V-5:</u> Establish a written volunteer program policy specifically for the Animal Control Services Division.	B	Nominal	Improve community relations	ACSD
<u>Recommendation V-7:</u> Provide an orientation for interested community members regarding the application of and need for "SAFER" testing.	A	Nominal	Improve community relations	ACSD
<u>Recommendation III-13</u> Immediately fill the three vacant Animal Care Worker positions and hire up to six more Animal Care Workers over the next three years. (spread new hiring over two years)	A	\$120,000 (O&M)	Improve shelter cleanliness and reduce disease	ACSD/CAO



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5-YEAR ACTION PLAN

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YEAR 3: COMPLETE BY JANUARY 1, 2008 OR SOONER				
<u>Recommendation III-3:</u> In the long-term, build a new shelter and administrative facility. (program/design)	A	\$600,000	Improve efficiency and effectiveness	RMA/ACSD
<u>Recommendation IV-1:</u> Conduct a thorough study of Kern County's staffing needs taking into account the "calls for service" model. (implementation)	A	Unknown	Improve efficiency and effectiveness	RMA/ACSD
<u>Recommendation III-13</u> Immediately fill the three vacant Animal Care Worker positions and hire up to six more Animal Care Workers over the next three years. (spread new hiring over two years)	A	\$120,000 (O&M)	Improve shelter cleanliness and reduce disease	ACSD
YEAR 4: COMPLETE BY JANUARY 1, 2009 OR SOONER				
<u>Recommendation III-3:</u> In the long term, build a new shelter and administrative facility. (finance/construct)	A	\$4,000,000	Improve efficiency and effectiveness	RMA/ACSD/CAO
YEAR 5: COMPLETE BY JANUARY 1, 2010 OR SOONER				
<u>Recommendation III-3:</u> In the long term, build a new shelter and administrative facility. (occupy)	A	\$4,000,000	Improve efficiency and effectiveness	RMA/ACSD/CAO

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COST INCREASES SPREAD OVER 5-YEAR ACTION PLAN

	<u>Y1</u>	<u>Y2</u>	<u>Y3</u>	<u>Y4</u>	<u>Y5</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
O & M	\$80,000	\$472,000	\$120,000			\$672,000
CAPITAL	-0-	\$95,000	\$600,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$8,695,000
TOTAL	\$80,000	\$567,000	\$720,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$9,367,000

Note: Neither of the unknown costs associated with subsidizing an affordable spay/neuter program or hiring additional Animal Control Officers are reflected in the above estimate.



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