

**STANISLAUS COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY
2007-2008**

CASE # 08-07

**STANISLAUS COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SERVICES**

SUMMARY

The Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury received a citizen complaint prompting it to review and assess the Stanislaus County Department of Animal Services.

Through the following items:

- ❑ Memorandum of "Issues and Recommendations Regarding Animal Services Facilities," dated October, 2007
- ❑ The "Needs Assessment and Facility Program for the Stanislaus County Animal Shelter," dated February, 2007
- ❑ Various applicable statutes
- ❑ Sworn testimony by county employees
- ❑ An unannounced site visit
- ❑ Attendance at meetings of the Animal Advisory Board

The Stanislaus Civil Grand Jury has determined that the current Animal Services facilities are being updated, and that the county is clearly and positively addressing other long-standing complaints.

The "Needs Assessment and Facility Program for the Stanislaus County Animal Shelter," reads, in part:

"The existing facility was designed to accommodate 262 animals. At the present time, an average of 330 animals are held at the shelter daily, 68 more than the facility's daily average. The number of animals held at the facility on peak days may exceed 115% of daily average."

This recognizes the current pet over-crowding problem in the county Department of Animal Services facility.

The Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury, through its investigation, has determined that the County and its City partners are on track to build adequate facilities and to improve the Stanislaus County Department of Animal Services.

It is the Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury's recommendation that Stanislaus County

and its City partners continue with the process to build adequate facilities for the number of animals accepted into the Stanislaus County Animal Services Shelter and to continue to fund the Spay and Neuter [SCATE] program.

BACKGROUND

The Mission Statement of the Department of Animal Services is as follows:

öThe mission of the Department of Animal Services is to strive for community compliance of State and local laws. The Department shall provide a professional level of service along with promoting responsible pet ownership.ö

The Department of Animal Services facility was built in the 1970s for the purpose of controlling packs of wild dogs that were affecting local agriculture and the public safety. Subsequent State legislation has broadened the responsibilities of all Animal Services Departments to include other mandated functions, requiring more space for both holding animals and performing medical procedures, and delivering more services to the animals. These mandates come from the 1998 Hayden Act and the Stanislaus County Pet Overpopulation Ordinance, among others.

According to the Department of Animal Services' website, services provided by the Department include, but are not limited to, the following:

In-House:

- Pet Adoptions
- Spay and Neuter Assistance
- Cruelty Report Investigations
- Education Outreach
- Lost and Found
- Low Cost Rabies Vaccination Clinics
- Micro-Chipping
- Licensing
- Veterinary Care for Animals in the Shelter

Outside:

- Investigate and follow-up on animal-inflicted injuries
- Control rabies and report animal bites
- Leash law and other animal control ordinance enforcement
- Capture and impound stray animals
- Dispose of deceased animals in public access areas
- Enforce dog licensing laws
- Investigate animal cruelty, vicious animal, and nuisance animal complaints

The Department of Animal Services has responsibility for all unincorporated County areas and the Cities that contract with the Department. The Board of Supervisors of the

County of Stanislaus' Action Agenda Summary, dated March 20, 2007, lists the below percentages of participation by each entity:

Agency	Percentage
Stanislaus County	38.5
Modesto	41.0
Ceres	11.0
Riverbank	3.4
Patterson	2.3
Waterford	1.3
Newman	1.3
Hughson	1.2
Turlock	does not participate presently
Oakdale	does not participate presently

The Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors approved an Architectural Study in order to begin the building of a new Department of Animal Services facility, and is moving forward with plans for an adequate facility.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The Civil Grand Jury conducted its investigation using the following methods:

- ❑ Interviews with County employees who have day to day and oversight responsibilities for the Department of Animal Services.
- ❑ An unannounced site visit included inspection of all areas of the Department of Animal Services facility.
- ❑ Attendance at meetings of the Stanislaus County Animal Advisory Board
- ❑ A review of the following documents:
 - The memorandum 'Issues and Recommendations Regarding Animal Services Facilities,' dated October 5, 2007, by the former Director of the Stanislaus County Department of Animal Services, and given to the following:
 - Stanislaus County Animal Advisory Board Members
 - Board of Supervisors
 - County Executive Assistant
 - County Executive
 - Chief Operations Officer
 - Management Consultant
 - The Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors and Administration's, 'Needs Assessment and Facility Program for the Stanislaus County Animal Shelter,' dated February, 2007, by George Miers & Associates.

- Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury Final Report of 2003-2004.
- Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury Final Report of 2004-2005.
- Various ordinances and statues that apply to animal control.

FINDING 1

The Stanislaus County Department of Animal Services is operating within the constraints of an inadequate facility.

RECOMMENDATION 1

It is the Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury's recommendation that Stanislaus County and its City partners continue with the process to build adequate facilities for the number of animals accepted into the Stanislaus County Department of Animal Services Shelter and that they fund this project without delay.

FINDING 2

The Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors is moving ahead with plans to complete an adequate animal shelter.

RECOMMENDATION 2

It is the Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury's recommendation that the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors, through the Department of Animal Services, continues to support the community in its efforts to improve services to its animals and continues to fund the Spay and Neuter (SCATE) program.

RESPONSE REQUIRED

Stanislaus County Department of Animal Services
Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors

REFERENCES

McFarland, M. Memorandum of Issues and Recommendation Regarding Animal Services Facilities. (October 5, 2007) attached to this report.

Miers, G. and Associates. (February 22, 2007) *Needs Assessment and Facility Program for the Stanislaus County Animal Shelter*. Commissioned by the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors. Available for public inspection upon notification of the Stanislaus County Chief Executive Office, 209-525-6333.

Stanislaus County Department of Animal Services. Retrieved January 29, 2008 from <http://www.stancounty.com/animalservices/index.shtm>

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Stanislaus, "Action Agenda Summary," (March 20, 2007) Retrieved January 29, 2008, from <http://stancounty.com/bos/minutes/2007/min03-20-07.pdf>

Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury Final Report, 2003-2004. Retrieved January 28, 2008, from <http://www.stanct.org/court/Courts/grandjury/reports2003-2004/reports2003-2004.htm>

Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury Final Report, 2004-2005. Retrieved January 28, 2008, from <http://www.stanct.org/court/Courts/grandjury/reports2004-2005/reports2004-2005.htm>

Additional Information may be found from the following sources.

APPENDIX

California Civil Code Section 1834. Retrieved January 28, 2008, from <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=civ&group=01001-02000&file=1833-1840>

California Civil Code Section 1846. Retrieved January 28, 2008, from <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=civ&group=01001-02000&file=1844-1847>

California Food and Agriculture Code Section 17005. Retrieved January 28, 2008, from <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=fac&group=17001-18000&file=17001-17006>

California Food and Agriculture Code Section 31108. Retrieved January 28, 2008, from <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=fac&group=31001-32000&file=31101-31109>

California Food and Agriculture Code Sections 31752-31754. Retrieved January 28, 2008, from <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=fac&group=31001-32000&file=31751-31754>

California Food and Agriculture Code Sections 32001-32003. Retrieved January 28, 2008, from <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=fac&group=31001-32000&file=32000-32003>

California Penal Code Sections 597.1(1), 599d. Retrieved January 28, 2008, from <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=pen&group=00001-01000&file=594-625c>

California Senate Bill 1785, Chapter 752 (1998), Hayden Act. Retrieved January 28, 2008, from http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/97-98/bill/sen/sb_1751-1800/sb_1785_bill_19980923_chaptered.html

Stanislaus County Code Title 7, Chapter 7.54. "Breeding, Transferring, Licensing, and Spaying and Neutering of Dogs and Cats (Chapter 7.54) Ordinance." The Board of Supervisors of the County of Stanislaus, "Action Agenda Summary," (December 5, 2006) Retrieved January 29, 2008, from <http://www.co.stanislaus.ca.us/BOS/Agenda/2006/20061205/B12.pdf>