



MEMORANDUM

Date: October 23, 2013

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator 

Re: **Pima Animal Care Center Facility Update**

Pima Animal Care Center (PACC) cares, year in and year out, for between 22,000 and 25,000 animals at its sheltering facility on North Silverbell Road. We have long recognized that this is not sustainable.

Over the long term, it is very important this community find a way to reduce the flow of homeless animals into the PACC facility, which is why Pima County has been funneling approximately \$220,000 annually into efforts to increase spay/neuter opportunities throughout the region.

We have to date been unsuccessful in encouraging our neighboring jurisdictions to join us in this effort. We have hope, however, they will look at the numbers and reflect upon the fact that this is the right approach to take from a moral standpoint, as well as a cost perspective.

In Fiscal Year 2011/12, as an example, PACC handled nearly 14,800 pets for the City of Tucson at a total sheltering cost of \$1.4 million, or an average cost of about \$95 per pet. It costs an average of \$75 to spay or neuter a pet.

With just the amount the County has been able to contribute, it appears we are already seeing improvement in our intake numbers, which is particularly heartening given persistent economic trends, which often result in more people giving up their animals as they either move for work or encounter financial hardship. In Fiscal Year 2010/11, the facility cared for more than 25,000 animals. In Fiscal Year 2011/12, PACC cared for more than 23,600, with last year's total intake approximately 22,400.

Although the census is going down, overcrowding nevertheless remains an ongoing challenge. Our facility was built in 1968 for a much smaller community and with a goal that focused heavily on public protection rather than facilitating adoptions. Even though voters approved bond funding for a new wing, we have rapidly outstripped available space.

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Compounding the strain on the facility is the direction PACC has taken in the past 18 months to aggressively try to save more lives. The live release rate has grown from 49 percent just two years ago to 72 percent the first quarter of this fiscal year, but this means more animals are being placed into kennels for longer.

I am confident that, given community support demonstrated in the bond survey and the demonstrated need we have seen at the PACC facility, funding for shelter improvements will be put before voters at the next bond election. As you know, the Bond Advisory Committee has agreed, and I concur, that the election will not be held in 2014. As a result, I have directed Deputy County Administrator Jan Leshar and Facilities Management Director Reid Spaulding to evaluate short- and mid-term solutions to address the physical needs at the facility.

In terms of operational needs, PACC has been engaged all year in a community effort, with a number of animal welfare partners, to improve outcomes for animals across the region. Humane Network, a consultant funded by Best Friends, visited the facility in September and is developing an assessment designed to identify opportunities to increase lifesaving. A team of students from the Eller College of Management at The University of Arizona is also helping to identify potential areas of improvement.

Along with these ongoing efforts, we are in the process of evaluating our staffing, in comparison with similarly-situated communities, to determine whether there will be a need for a supplemental budget allocation.

I will keep you apprised as all of these activities progress.

CHH/mjk

c: Jan Leshar, Deputy County Administrator for Medical and Health Services
Dr. Francisco Garcia, Director, Health Department
Kim Janes, Manager, Pima Animal Care Center