



# Lincoln County Sheriff's Office Animal Shelter

Protecting our community's  
animals, public safety, and trust.

# Laura Ireland

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- ❑ Manager of the Lincoln County Animal Shelter, April 2010-present
- ❑ Degree in Environmental Law with a specialization in Animal Law from Lewis & Clark Law School in 2001
- ❑ Founder and Executive Director of the National Center for Animal Law, a nonprofit organization, 2001-2008
- ❑ Employed as a grant writer for the Oregon Humane Society for approximately 1 year, volunteered in various capacities over the course of many years
- ❑ Attorney and legal consultant for a number of nonprofit organizations
- ❑ Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Lincoln County, August 2009-April of 2010
- ❑ President of FOLCAS, October 2009-March 2010

## Investment in the animals:

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- ❑ A modern, progressive animal shelter requires funding that has, and can continue to be, provided by a tax levy. You cannot match the Shelter's current save rates with less funding.
- ❑ Partnerships that benefit the animals while retaining management with the Sheriff's Office can be achieved.

# A Leader for Small, Rural Shelters

- Improved care for shelter animals
  - Pharmacy of medications
  - Use of medical trust fund
  - Consistent, healthy diet
  - All adopted animals are microchipped
  - All adopted animals are spayed/neutered (currently funded by FOLCAS)
  - Behavior enrichment for all animals
    - Beds, blankets, music, toys, daily interaction and exercise, perches, cat scratchers, hiding spots
  - Improved kennels for cats
  - Expanded volunteer and foster program
- Increased marketing and outreach
- Professional contracts
  - Database
  - Cremation services
  - Credit card and online payment availability (pending decision)



# Building a Model Animal Shelter

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- ❑ No animals are euthanized simply because they are homeless.
  - Animals are only euthanized for medical conditions that are untreatable or pose an extreme risk to the existing shelter population, and for behavior that is untreatable or is unsafe for the community.
- ❑ 2010 save rates:
  - 94% for dogs (national average: 40%)
  - 78% for cats (national average: 26%)
    - ❑ More cats are euthanized because more come to us very ill and with severe injuries, with communicable diseases, and as orphaned kittens. We treat and medicate whenever possible; however, cats and kittens have difficulty thriving and recovering in a shelter environment. We are one of very few Oregon shelters (or rescues) who bring in and care for kittens. Shelter staff members actively recruit foster homes to help save more cats.

# Professional Staff and Services

- Consistent, team-oriented, dedicated, educated, and well trained



- Specializations in animal science; animal behavior modification, enrichment and training; medical care as veterinary technicians; policy, fundraising, and marketing
- Participate in continuing education through conferences, trade materials, and online courses
- According to the Humane Society of the United States, *"Shelter employees should be regarded as the skilled professionals that they are and should be paid on that basis. All job positions and descriptions should include salaries and benefits that will attract competent people with good judgment who care about treating animals humanely."*

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- **A Stable and Trained Team of Experts is Required to Maintain the Level of Service Currently Provided by the Sheriff's Office**

- Compensation levels reflecting the education, experiences, and skills required for animal sheltering will help attract and ensure a stable, educated, and trained team of employees. Employee turn-over, which will most certainly increase under the proposed FOLCAS plan, will result in decreased quality of care and poor customer service.
- Wendy Kang, executive director of Saving Grace, a nonprofit shelter who contracts with Douglas County, shares: *"Nonprofit animal shelters balance their budgets on the backs of kind-hearted people willing to do a job for minimum wage because they care about animals."* Saving Grace experiences a high turn-over of employees due to the emotional toll of shelter work coupled with minimum wage pay.

# Effect of employee turnover

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- ❑ Inconsistent service
- ❑ Increased incidence of personnel complaints and issues
- ❑ Loss of expertise
- ❑ Increased risk of injury
- ❑ Decreased quality of shelter life for animals
- ❑ Increased euthanasia rates

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■ **Volunteers are Needed and Welcome, but Professional Staff is Essential**

- Rewarding opportunities exist for volunteers to assist with the care of sheltered animals including providing socialization, exercise, and love. The foster program allows people to give kittens, puppies, and special needs animals a temporary home and hope for a better future.
- The more heart-wrenching and difficult tasks associated with shelter work, including counseling of surrendered animals, euthanasia, handling of and medical treatment for sick and injured animals, and sensitive customer service interactions are handled by trained and consistent staff members.
- According to HSUS, "Volunteers can be an invaluable asset to your shelter's programs and its animals. However, don't expect volunteers to fill most staffing needs. All volunteers must be properly trained and supervised in much the same manner as are staff."



## ❑ Under the SO Plan, Donations are Not Needed for Everyday Management, but Private Donations Help Save Lives

- Fundraising requires extensive time and resources, and is not as easy as it sounds.
- Fundraising opportunities exist for municipal shelters through grants and corporate programs. Our local community has donated \$25,226.79 to the shelter in the last ten weeks
- Our community is still confused as to who operates the shelter--many believe it is the Central Coast Humane Society, which is nonprofit. One cannot expect a significant increase in donations and volunteers just because we would not be a municipal operation.
- Ideally, a partnership that takes advantage of the best of all opportunities would be best.

# Possibilities of Collaboration

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- ❑ Increased fundraising for services above county-mandated functions
  - Access to non-profit grant opportunities
  - Thrift store proceeds used for special shelter projects and needs
- ❑ Assistance with events, marketing, and outreach
- ❑ Satellite cat shelter in North County
- ❑ Off-site adoption outreach
- ❑ Mobile spay/neuter & adoption van
- ❑ Capital campaign and support for associated increased expenses

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## ■ Plans for Enhanced Services

- After 10 years at the current property tax levy, there is projected over \$800,000 of revenue over expenditures.
- Due to conservative spending and proper fiscal management, the tax levy will allow the Sheriff's Office to launch a capital campaign to provide much-needed shelter improvements and will allow for increased shelter and community services.

# Public Trust

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- ❑ Voters intent was to “Save the Shelter.”
- ❑ Today, it is not a question of whether the shelter will operate, or whether there will need to be a tax-levy, but if savings in employee salaries and benefits, without a decrease in operational costs, are worth the risks of a change in management, loss of county support, and a decline in services for people and animals.



## ■ Seamless and Coordinated Services

- The coordinated goals and mission enable the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office Animal Shelter to provide excellent customer service for the people and animals in our community.
- As employees of the Sheriff's Office, the Animal Shelter staff and Animal Services Deputies work closely to help protect animals who are lost, injured, abused, neglected, and in need of protective custody. Civil/Records provides background checks for volunteers to ensure the safety of employees and the animals. Inmate crews assist with everyday cleaning and grounds maintenance providing significant cost savings. Jail staff also provide security. The shelter is coordinating with emergency services to help protect pets in the event of a natural or manmade disaster.
- Benefit from all county divisions, allowing us to concentrate on caring for the animals.

# Unable to operate shelter without taxpayer funding

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- ❑ FOLCAS was asked to provide a plan that would not require additional taxpayer funding
  - Their plan requires \$340,000 per year, increasing 3% per year, starting in 2015
  - Requires another tax-levy or general funds
  - County asked to contribute 64%-72% of revenue, increasing every year into perpetuity
- ❑ We have proven our community can have a progressive shelter under SO operation

# FOLCAS Budget Issues

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- ❑ Spay/Neuter expenses are not budgeted because they will be paid for by FOLCAS?
- ❑ No budget for background investigations for applicants and volunteers
- ❑ Security system is not budgeted meaning we will either lose security or the budget is inadequate
  - Currently, 24 hour security cameras provided by SO and monitored by corrections deputies from the jail
- ❑ Utility costs (which were switched to animal shelter budget last year) cannot be reduced by relying on solar grants
- ❑ Outside vendor costs cannot be capped

## Issues with Proposed Agreement and Lease

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- ❑ Requires shelter to be open to the public 140 hours per month. Currently open 124 hours (staffed 216 hours per month). Will need additional staff to be open extended hours.
- ❑ Does not address change over of phone, website, DEA license for euthanasia drugs, euthanasia certification.
- ❑ Does not provide details of proposed salaries and benefits.
- ❑ Requires background checks, but no standards for what is, or is not, acceptable.
- ❑ Written standards and benchmarks for success should be developed before a decision regarding transfer of management is made.
- ❑ Information provided through licensing should not be used for other purposes without consent.
- ❑ Requires significant county involvement: treasurer, finance, legal, BOC, SO for one or both oversight committees.
- ❑ Does not alleviate county's responsibility or liability.

# Additional Expenditures Required Under FOLCAS Management

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- ❑ Legal Counsel and Risk Management (\$5,000)
- ❑ Bookkeeping, Audits, Payroll, Tax-preparation (\$4,200-\$5,800 budgeted is inadequate)
- ❑ Postage (\$2,000-\$2,632 inadequate)
- ❑ IT support (\$1,200 budgeted is inadequate)
  - Computer, software, and technical support
  - Website development and hosting
- ❑ Additional labor (\$18,000 budgeted is inadequate)
  - Loss of inmate volunteer labor for cleaning (\$36,800 at \$8/hr)
  - Additional staff required for fundraising, event planning, outreach, board support
  - Additional staff required if expand hours

# Keep the Shelter with the Sheriff's Office:

## *The Better Plan for the People and Animals of Lincoln County*

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- ❑ Sheriff Dotson cares about the Animal Shelter.
- ❑ Not the Sheriff's "lowest priority"
  - Many SO positions went unfilled or were cut from patrol, jail, and administration.
  - Decision involved the entire management team and Commissioners.
  - Hoped the community would help, and he was part of the solution.
- ❑ Sheriff Dotson does not want, cannot, and will not siphon animal services funds into the SO budget.
  - To think otherwise is accusing the Sheriff, Commissioners, Finance, Treasurer, County Counsel, and the Animal Shelter Manager of misappropriation.
  - Many Animal Service Deputy expenses paid for out of patrol.
  - \$80,000 of shelter improvements and support by other divisions.
- ❑ Please do not sacrifice the welfare of animals based on false or misleading information about Sheriff Dotson, or because of others' personal agendas.
- ❑ If the community is happy with shelter operations, please keep the Animal Shelter with the Sheriff.