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September 6, 1974

TO: COUNCILMAN ROBERT M. WILKINSON

FROM: ROBERT I. RUSH, GENERAL MANAGER
DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL REGULATION

SUBJECT: REPORT ON DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL REGULATION ACTIVITIES IN THE TWELFTH DISTRICT FOR ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Pet owners residing in the Twelfth Councilmanic District played a major role in the care and control of animals in the fiscal year 1973-74.

Vital statistics compiled at the West Valley Animal Shelter in Chatsworth reflect the conscionable attitude of Twelfth District pet owners towards their domestic animals.

Robert I. Rush, general manager of the Los Angeles City Department of Animal Regulation, says the responsibility of animal control rests both on the pet owner and the Department.

Says Rush, "The West Valley Animal Shelter is responsible for the humane care and control of animals in the Twelfth District as well as adjoining areas. However, a personal responsibility in this area also rests with the individual pet owners."

That pet owners in the Twelfth District are cognizant of their responsibilities is manifested in the annual report compiled in the district shelter.

In the category of animal traffic at the West Valley Animal Shelter, 24,099 animals were handled last year. Of this number, 13,128 were dogs, 8,817 were cats, while the remaining animals, 2,154, included equines, livestock, fowl and wildlife.

One of the significant statistics, according to Rush, is the dog volume. Of note, 1,222 less dogs were handled at the West Valley Shelter last year than in 1972-73.

"This indicates that pet owners are exercising tighter controls on their animals," Rush says. "If an animal isn't allowed to roam, it won't end up in the shelter."

Correlated with the decrease in dog density at the West Valley Shelter is another encouraging statistic in the number of unwanted dogs destroyed. There were 1,188 less dogs destroyed in 1973-74 than the previous year.

This decline in animals handled and destroyed is indicative, in part, to the assumption that pet owners are taking advantage of the public low cost spay and neuter clinic program which controls breeding and the birth of unwanted animals. The San Fernando Valley public low cost Spay and Neuter Clinic is located at the East Valley Animal Shelter, 13131 Sherman Way, in North Hollywood. The cost for spaying female dogs and cats is $17.50; the cost for neutering male dogs and cats is $11.50. Surgical appointments can be made by calling 764-4411.

In the area of cat control in the Twelfth Councilmanic District, trends in shelter traffic again reflect a sharper sense of responsibility on the part of the individual cat owner. More than 1,000 less cats were handled at the West Valley Shelter, and some 1,200 less cats were destroyed in 1973-74, as compared with the previous fiscal year.

Many pet fanciers in Chatsworth, Northridge, Granada Hills, Encino and Canoga Park continued to look no farther than the West Valley Animal Shelter for new additions to their households. Nearly 3,000 dogs and cats were adopted in 1973-74, an increase of more than 600 pets over the previous year.

Pet owner participation at public anti-rabies clinics in the Twelfth District consistently remains at a high attendance level. In the past year, 2,053 dogs were vaccinated against rabies at four separate clinics conducted at recreation centers. A frequent visitor at the clinics is Councilman Robert M. Wilkinson. All dogs, over the age of four months, must be vaccinated every 30 months in the Los Angeles rabies endemic area. City-wide anti-rabies clinics, conducted by the City Department of Animal Regulation in conjunction with the Southern California Veterinary Medical Association, are conducted each year in February, May, August and November.

Of particular interest to wildlife conservationists is the nation's only Animal Airlift program, which originates in the Twelfth District at the West Valley Animal Shelter in Chatsworth.

On a flight schedule involving three trips each month, small wild animals, humanely trapped in the City of Los Angeles, are assembled at the West Valley Shelter and flown by helicopter to relocation areas in Angeles National Forest. For the 35-mile trip to their home, the animals, including opossum, raccoons, foxes, predatory birds and nonpoisonous snakes, are loaded in ventilated carrying cases which are strapped securely to the undercarriage of the helicopter.

Since the inception of the unique wildlife conservation program in 1969, 2150 small wild animals have been relocated. Many of the animals were trapped in the Twelfth District at the request of home owners or concerned citizens.

"Impressive statistics in all categories of humane animal control were posted last year in connection with activities at the West Valley Animal Shelter in the Twelfth District," says Rush. "In an assessment of these statistics, credit must be extended to residents of the Twelfth District who assisted in the animal control program. Without the cooperation of the District residents, our programs would be far less effective."

RIR:JMcN:lm