

***** MEDIA RELEASE *****

Animal Shelter Coalition for El Dorado County

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COMMUNITY ALLIANCE FORMS TO LAUNCH CAMPAIGN FOR PERMANENT EL DORADO COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER

Group Urges County to Complete Shelter Project

Coloma Citing the need to urge decision makers to return to the longstanding plan for housing homeless animals, a broad-based group of concerned residents, animal welfare advocates and businesses today announced the formation of a new Coalition dedicated to making the County's long promised permanent animal shelter a reality. The effort comes on the heels of a May 18 meeting of the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors, which at that time reaffirmed the need for a new shelter. While the Board rejected a proposal for an alternative location, there was overwhelming support voiced by the public for moving ahead with plans to build the shelter on property at the El Dorado "Y" — purchased by the County four years ago for this purpose.

"While we appreciate the Board's need to consider an alternative location, it is very clear that the County needs to pursue it's original plan and capitalize on it's initial investment", said Barbara Lee, coordinator of the Animal Shelter Coalition for El Dorado County. "We are at a point where the community is urging the Board to move forward to make good on it's promise. Everyone agrees on the need and the location. Clearly, the time is now."

Lisa Couper, DVM and coalition supporter noted that the property has already been purchased, appropriation of funds made, CEQA process and architectural drawings completed and that "the bidding climate is the most favorable that we've seen in years."

The Shelter Coalition is launching a petition drive and letter writing campaign, and will be formally requesting that the Board move forward in obtaining bids for building a new permanent facility at the "Y" location. This action has widespread community support and needs to move forward based on a number of other reasons, including:

1. The County is currently spending \$150,000 a year leasing inadequate shelter facilities, boarding large animals elsewhere and operating out of three temporary locations. The lease at the temporary dog and cat shelter expires in January 2011.
2. The County earmarked funds for the permanent shelter in prior years' budgets. A 2009/2010 budget report issued in September 2009 listed \$6.2 million remaining for this capital project, the majority being Tobacco Settlement Funds.
3. More than five years have been invested in planning, CEQA compliance and discussion; in addition a sizable land purchase and design investment have already been made—all focused on a new, permanent facility located at the El Dorado "Y".

The Shelter Coalition formed because the community is growing frustrated and impatient after five years worth of waiting and shifting shelter operations to temporary facilities. Concerned residents and businesses are joining the Coalition efforts every day.

For more information about the Coalition and to learn how you can help move the shelter project forward, visit the Coalition website at www.newshelternow.org.

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