

On the Positive Side: Assessment Team to be Assembled for Animal Shelter Evaluation

by Frank Bryce

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For some time, there has been the desire by animal advocates to have an independent group for evaluation of the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley (ASCMV) programs and facilities. The ASCMV Board of Directors has taken positive action in that direction with the announcement of the formation of an "Assessment Team". The team will work closely with the shelter director to inspect the facility and determine whether operations and programs are in compliance with both the Association of Shelter Veterinarians Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters and the ASCMV "Policies and Procedures Manual". When the assessment is completed, a report will be presented to the ASCMV Board by a team member with its findings and a recommended improvement action plan.

The announcement released January 9th states the assessment team will consist of a licensed veterinarian, an animal control officer (county or City), an individual with a background in building design and maintenance, and a member of the public, all of whom will work with the shelter director as an ex-officio member to provide logistical support. While no details were given about how the other team members will be selected, the ASCMV is accepting applications for the public member through January 27th.

To apply, interested persons should send a letter of interest, current resume and three letters of recommendation to Dona Ana County Public Information Director Jess Williams at 845 N. Motel Blvd., Las Cruces, New Mexico 88007. The letter of interest should state why you are interested in serving on the team and why you are qualified. The resume should support the letter of interest. Relevant criteria was identified as ability to conduct evaluations and interpret standards, experience working on teams, being open-minded and fair, general knowledge and interest of animal welfare, ability to write formal reports and knowledge of organizational operations and management. The ASCMV Board will select the assessment team members at their Feb. 2 regular meeting.

Interested persons can review the ASCMV Policies and Procedures Manual and in particular the Article VI. Annual Assessment at ASCMV.org under the resources heading, and the Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters at www.sheltervet.org/displaycommon.cfm. Other manuals of interest are Shelter Medicine for Veterinarians and Staff by Miller and Zawistowski, Infectious Disease Management in Animal Shelters by Miller and Hurley, and Maddie's Infection Control Manual for Animal Shelters by Peteresen, Dvorak, and Spickler.

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