



NEWS RELEASE

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LA ANIMAL SERVICES FEELS IMPACT FROM HOUSING FORECLOSURES

Los Angeles – Los Angeles Animal Services is reporting that in the first four months of 2008 City Animal Care Centers experienced a 16% increase in the number of pets taken in (from 12,197 year to date 2007 to 14,138 dogs and cats 2008 year to date).

As thousands of area families surrender their dreams of owning homes to foreclosure, it is suspected that some are also leaving their dogs and cats behind. City shelters are filled with animals surrendered in recent months by people forced to move to apartments or other places where pets are unwelcome. The housing meltdown seems at least partially responsible for this surge. In recent months, LA Animal Services, the Board of Animal Services Commissioners and concerned members of the humane community have discussed strategies for making more rental units "pet friendly," but a consensus on what might work best has been elusive.

As more families are forced from their homes, the fallout is painfully clear at LA Animal Care Centers. The precise numbers are unknown, because there is no nationwide standard for documenting the number of "foreclosure pets" and because many owners who surrender animals at shelters tell personnel only that they are "moving" and give no specifics. But anecdotal comments from realtors and media coverage of certain incidents suggest that the phenomenon may be more widespread than anyone wants to acknowledge.

The number of pet cats relinquished increased nearly 22% (from 1,132 to 1,378) in the first four months of 2008 while pet dog surrenders increased over 13% (from 2,633 to 2,977).

The percentage of dogs and cats surrendered for reasons involving "moving" and "landlord", the categories most likely to be linked to the foreclosure crisis, is up nearly 21% for both cats and dogs in the first four months of 2008 (from 264 to 319 for cats and from 490 to 591 dogs).

"Pets are among the voiceless victims of the current economic downturn" said Ed Boks, general manager of LA Animal Services. "I encourage families to prepare for their pets in the event of financial difficulties the same way they should prepare for a natural disaster. Take the time to plan what you will do if forced to surrender a pet. An animal shelter should only be a last resort."

For more information or assistance call LA Animal Services at
1-888-452LA-PET/1-888-452-7381
(TTY Hearing impaired: 877-875-8205) or visit the website at www.LAAnimalServices.com.

We create happiness by bringing pets and people together!