

County set to purchase pet shelter

Old SPCA center will be overhauled

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Animal Shelter 2-3-04
LIVE OAK — The kennels, barn and offices on 7th Avenue that used to be the last refuge for lost or abandoned animals will be so again.

The county Animal Services Agency is nearing completion of a deal to buy the shelter from the Santa Cruz chapter of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

The county formed its own animal-services agency after details of financial mismanagement at the SPCA surfaced in July 2002. Both sides say the shelter deal signals an improved relationship between the parties.

"We're excited because it takes us back to the property that people know as the animal shelter," said Mike McFarland, head of the county's Animal Services Agency.

"It's better located, and it's set up to be a shelter. When we are done renovating it, it will be even better than it was before."

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MIKE
McFARLAND,
COUNTY
ANIMAL
SERVICES
AGENCY

Shelter

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Right now, lost or abandoned animals are sent to the agency's leased shelter in Scotts Valley, which is actually converted high-tech office space.

Negotiations between the SPCA and the county have been continuing for more than nine months, said local SPCA President Lisa Carter. The parties recently reached an agreement, and while no formal offer has been made, both sides agree a deal has been made.

The county will buy the 2-plus acres on 7th Avenue within the next three months, Carter said, and the animal services agency will move in in two years.

The building will sell for \$2.15 million, minus \$454,377 the county and the SPCA agree the agency still owes the county. The price also will be less \$20,000 that will finance repairs to the property, such as replacing roofs and improving the kennels.

The agency must stay at its Scotts Valley location for the next two years to fulfill a three-year lease. But Animal Services Agency spokeswoman Tricia Geisreiter said she expects it to take nearly that long to fix up the property.

Meanwhile, the SPCA will permanently lease office space at the 7th Avenue site from the county, where it will offer education programs and spay/neuter services.

"We'll be a supplementary program to what the Animal Services Agency is doing," Carter said. "We're not here to compete with animal services. In a county this size, two shelters don't make sense. It's a new beginning for the agency and the county."

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