

Animal shelter growth on track

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A new shelter designed for the county's furry population is expected to break ground in mid-2007, featuring upgrades that will make it more user friendly.

The project is at 2200 and 2260 7th Ave., on the northeast corner with Rodriguez Street.

The site currently includes a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals animal shelter consisting of four buildings, two sheds and kennels.

Plans under county review call for a \$5.8 million replacement facility of similar size to the old 12,500-square-foot animal shelter.

The new single-story center will have exterior kennels, an area for visitors to interact with animals, an exercise yard, expanded parking and landscaping.

The groundbreaking is on track for spring 2007, and construction is expected to last a year.

The county Animal Services Authority and the local SPCA chapter will join forces at the site and continue to coordinate programs.

The Animal Services Authority shelter in Watsonville will continue to operate, while the Scotts Valley shelter will close and transfer its animals and staff to the Live

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LISA CARTER,
DIRECTOR OF THE SPCA

Oak center.

"We'll stay where we are, and keep doing what we're doing," said Lisa Carter, director of the SPCA, a nonprofit funded by donations. "It'll be good for the animals."

The local SPCA chapter provides basic animal services such as humane education, mobile spays and neuters and pet adoption out of the county-owned site.

The county took over animal-control services and the bulk of sheltering in 2002 after an audit revealed the SPCA had misused \$715,000 in taxpayer dollars through unauthorized purchases and staffing.

The project is expected to be presented to the Planning Commission by March 2007 for final approval. Before that, a public hearing will be scheduled at a time and date yet to be determined.

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