

Animal shelter awaits new home

Animal Shelter
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The county's new animal-services agency plans to be up and running at a temporary shelter by mid-December.

The joint government agency was formed in July after the Santa Cruz Society for the Prevention of

SANTA CRUZ

Cruelty to Animals demanded more money than local governments could afford for continued service.

County Animal Services originally planned to move into the SPCA's 7th Avenue shelter. But negotiations to lease the building stalled in August when the parties failed to agree on a price. The SPCA hasn't responded to the county's last offer, made three weeks ago, said Mike McFarland, interim general manager of Animal Services.

Kate Hotchkiss, SPCA board member, said the SPCA is still open to the county's offers. Efforts to arrange a meeting have failed because the county has not returned calls, she said.

The agency is now operating out of the basement of a county building at 1080 Emeline Ave. Stray and rescued animals are being housed at boarding homes, kennels and veterinari-

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clinics until a temporary shelter site is found.

"It's quite challenging for our staff," McFarland said. "It's a rather unique situation and one we'd like to end as soon as possible."

The county hopes to set up shop in an empty warehouse. Three sites are being considered:

- A small industrial park at 27 Janus Way in Scotts Valley.

- A new business park near Highway 1 and 17th Avenue in Live Oak.

- A business park at 41st and Soquel avenues in Soquel.

Animal Services will stay in the new shelter until a permanent shelter is built or the SPCA agrees to sell or lease its property, McFarland said.

Now operating as a private shelter, the SPCA is accepting owner-surrendered animals and overflow from shelters in surrounding counties, Hotchkiss said.

County Animal Services is posting pictures of strays it finds on the county Web site at www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us. Adoption clinics are held at Pet Pals at 3660 Soquel Drive on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

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