

Louisiana Animal Welfare Commission (LAWC) Assessment Report for Animal Shelter Facilities in Louisiana



Date **February 27, 2013**

Inspectors: **Dr. Gary A. Balsamo, State Public Health Veterinarian; Hilton Cole, Director, East Baton Rouge Parish Animal Control**

Name of Facility **City of Crowley Animal Shelter**

There are several state laws that set minimum legal requirements for animal shelters, impoundment facilities, and quarantine facilities. They include...

- Louisiana minimum legal requirements for animal shelters, impoundment facilities and quarantine facilities, Title 3, Chapter 17, Louisiana Revised Statutes 2431 et seq.
 - This statute addresses requirements for veterinary treatment of animals, limitations on fees, authority of parish governments to adopt, general shelter standards, shelter construction, shelter operating procedures, sterilization requirements, adoption standards, and branding.
- Continuing education requirements for certified animal euthanasia technicians, Louisiana Revised Statutes , Title 37, Chapter 18B, Louisiana Revised Statutes 1551 et seq.
- The control of rabies and other zoonotic diseases, Louisiana Administrative Code, Chapter 51, Part III
- American Veterinary Medical Association Guidelines on Euthanasia (http://www.avma.org/issues/animal_welfare/euthanasia.pdf)

You should familiarize yourself with these laws and any requirements that may pertain to your facility or its employees.

Many features and practices that enhance facility operations for the animals or the facility staff are not addressed in the above statutes. LAWC considers the recommendations of the American Veterinary Medical Association, the National Animal Control Association, the

Humane Society of the United States, and the Association of Shelter Veterinarians in shelter evaluations. Resources are listed below:

- National Animal Control Association Guidelines
(<http://www.nacanet.org/guidelines.html>)
- Humane Society of the United States Guidelines for the Operation of an Animal Shelter
(http://www.animalsheltering.org/resource_library/policies_and_guidelines/guidelines_for_animal_shelter_operations.html)
- Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters, Association of Shelter Veterinarians
(http://www.shelternet.org/associations/4853/files/Standards%20final%20bookmarks_with%20security.pdf)

The list of questions below should be retained and utilized for self evaluations on a routine basis. This list contains features and practices that strengthen facility operations. Some are required by law (these are labeled as “**MANDATED**”) and are reiterated in this supplement as a reinforcement of their requirement.

LAWC Comments and suggestions are added under each item in the assessment.

A. Animal Euthanasia

1. Y N Have staff who perform euthanasia successfully completed a **MANDATED** Louisiana Board of Veterinary Medicine-approved euthanasia training course within 120 days of initial employment and earned the required 6 hours of continuing education credits annually?
Yes. The director is the only staff member that is a certified animal euthanasia technician, however euthanasia is being performed by a local licensed veterinarian.
2. Y N Is a written protocol available for the euthanasia of ill or injured animals in the field or before the end of the impoundment period?
3. Y N Is a written protocol available for routine euthanasia?

Questions 4-10 are for facilities using injectable euthanasia:

4. Y N If a written protocol is available, does the protocol require two or more people to be present to perform injectable euthanasia techniques?
According to the shelter director, the local veterinarian makes the decision about euthanasia. This is, in essence, a two person process. The director decides who is transported to the veterinarian, and the veterinarian decides if the animal should be euthanized. The director is a CAET and does have the authority to decide if euthanasia must be performed immediately, as in the case of extremely ill or injured animals.

- 5. Y N Are the injectable euthanasia standards **MANDATED** in the latest report of the American Veterinary Medical Association on Euthanasia, being met?
Euthanasia is performed by a licensed veterinarian.
- 6. Y N Is there a sturdy, sanitizable table in the euthanasia room?
- 7. Y N Is the lighting sufficient to allow easy visualization of the injection site?
The veterinarian performs euthanasia at the veterinary hospital
- 8. Y N Are the controlled drugs stored in a securely locked cabinet?
- 9. Y N If controlled drugs are used in the field, are they securely locked in the animal control vehicle?
NA Controlled drugs are not used in the field.
- 10. Y N Are euthanasia drug logs used, kept current, and available for inspection?

Question 11 is for facilities using carbon monoxide euthanasia:

- 11. Y N Does the carbon monoxide chamber meet standards for safe operation and is the machine in good working order?
NA. There is NO GAS CHAMBER!

B. Management:

- 1. Y N Has the facility manager successfully completed a Louisiana Animal Control Association-approved Animal Control Officer Basic Training course?
- 2. Y N Is an office available at the facility, or elsewhere, for facility staff and/or animal control officers?
The animal control officer is also the shelter director/receptionist. Therefore the reception office doubles as the office for the animal control officer.
- 3. Y N Is the facility attended by a veterinarian or is there a relationship established with one or more local veterinarians to provide advice, assistance, or treatment to animals?
No regular on-site veterinarian exists, injured animals are transported to a local veterinary clinic. This is the same veterinarian that performs euthanasia for the facility.
- 4. Y N Does this facility employ a full-time veterinarian
NA See above!
- 5. Y N Are formal **MANDATED** semi-annual inspections conducted by an authorized parish official to ensure compliance with state statutes?
The shelter is supervised by city employees, however no evidence of a formal inspection program with recorded results was observed.
- 6. Y N Are standard operation procedures (SOP) written for the facility's operation, including housing, cleaning, animal care, and facility maintenance?
- 7. Y N Are animals separated by their behavior and age in addition to their state of health, species, sex, and size (separation by health, age (puppies and kittens separated from adults) species, sex (unneutered males separated from females) is **MANDATED** by law)?

8. Y N Does the facility have a sterilization program for its adopted animals (this is **MANDATED** for animal control facilities under La. R.S. 2472)?
All animals that are adopted are spayed and neutered prior to release to the new owner or to the rescue group.
9. Y N Have staff been immunized against rabies?
The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that animal control personnel receive pre-exposure rabies prophylaxis. The vaccine regimen is comparatively expensive and many shelters only administer vaccinations to workers who have been employed for some specified duration (usually 6 months to one year). The Crowley Animal Shelter should pursue a goal of administering pre-exposure prophylaxis to animal contact shelter employees who complete a probationary tenure of work. The Crowley area is considered endemic for skunk variant rabies, so a real danger exists. Wildlife are not routinely handled at the facility, however contact of local domestic animals with wildlife can be assumed.
10. Y N Do animal contact staff work with terrestrial wildlife or bats?
11. Y N Are staff rabies vaccinations evidenced by adequate titers (This is only recommended if bats are handled routinely. This is also recommended if terrestrial wildlife are handled routinely in skunk variant rabies endemic areas of the state)?
NA
12. Y N Does this shelter restrict or ban adoptions of pit bulls?
13. Y N Does this shelter restrict or ban adoptions of any other breed or type animal?
14. Y N Does this shelter sell or donate live animals for education or research?
15. Y N Was this shelter a plaintiff or defendant in any civil or criminal court case in the past year?
16. Y N Are shelter standards included in city or parish ordinances?
Although the Crowley Animal Shelter abides by city and parish ordinances in issues related to impoundment, shelter standards, such as those specified in the Louisiana Revised Statutes, are not included in the ordinances. Local government officials are strongly urged to work to include shelter standards in local ordinances.
17. Y N Are hours and emergency telephone prominently displayed on building exterior as **MANDATED** by La. R.S. 2463?
18. Y N Does the shelter have a receiving area for the public to bring in or adopt animals?
There is really no designated receiving area.
19. Y N Does the shelter have an area for the public to acquaint themselves with adoptable animals?
The grounds of the shelter provide an area for potential adoptors to familiarize themselves with animals prior to adoption.

C. Records:

1. Y N Are records computerized?

The shelter director indicated that a better use of the computer would be accomplished if access to the internet was available. The cost of providing the shelter with internet access is presently too high. Record keeping at the shelter had improved tremendously, however the manager was still unable to easily provide summary records that are required by LAWC annually. Also, information from LSU indicated that records are still inconsistently collected and in some intervals is non-existent. Inspectors recommended that the shelter acquire software for the computer that was capable of maintaining regularly updated databases or spreadsheets. Again, inspectors informed the shelter staff that organizations may be able to donate the necessary equipment and/or software. LAWC also learned that the records distributed to adopters were still inconsistently distributed.

2. Y N Do the animal records include accurate descriptions of the animals? Suggested information includes: impounding officer's name, date and time of capture, location of capture, tag and/or collar identification, breed, sex, age, size (height and weight), coat color and pattern, ear and tail types, description of markings and unusual findings (scars, tattoos, microchips), and the condition of the animal.

Records are not consistently taken.

3. Y N Do the animals' records document daily observation?

Although individual records do not document daily observation, all animals in each kennel are evaluated daily. This is done primarily by the manager in his or her daily duties.

4. Y N Are incoming animals scanned for microchips and/or identification tattoos?

Animals are scanned upon intake. Animals are also scanned prior to euthanasia, adoption or rescue.

D. General Structure:

1. Y N Is a secured area used to safely unload and load animals to prevent their escape?

Cats are offloaded in carriers, therefore although the area is open-air, proper precautions in offloading cats are taken to prevent escape. The gate must be secured when animals are off-loaded. Observers have noted that gates are often not secured.

2. Y N Is the facility built in such a way that it prevents access by unauthorized persons?

The facility can be secured.

3. Y N Is a secure area for storing vehicles available?

An area large enough for a vehicle to drive onto the grounds is available.

4. Y N Is a secure area for storing outdoor equipment available?

The area for outdoor storage is secure (protected by chain link fencing topped with barbed wire). There is a severe shortage of "under roof" storage space.

5. Y N Are drains covered with grates to prevent animals from stepping into them?

Several drain troughs are open and may present a safety hazard.

6. Y N Are drains covered with grates to prevent people from stepping into them?

See above!

7. Y N Are there problems apparent with drainage or moisture at this facility?
The roof appears to have several defects which likely permit moisture to enter the facility.

E. Water and Electric Power:

1. Y N Are an adequate number of water faucets available?
In a previous inspection inspectors related that faucets were adequate, however, for the numbers of animals in the census, more sinks are needed. A tub would also be an asset in keeping animals clean.
2. Y N Are the water hoses strong and in good repair?
3. Y N Are adequate hose bibs and hoses available?
4. Y N Are hoses kept off the floor when not in use?
5. Y N Is hot water available
6. Y N Is a backup generator available to provide electricity during power outages?
LAWC strongly recommends acquisition of a generator for use in emergencies. Should the shelter not have the funds to purchase a generator with adequate capacity, LAWK recommends seeking a commitment from some government or volunteer source so that the shelter can be appropriately maintained in the event of a prolonged loss of power.
7. Y N In the animal areas, are the electrical outlets mounted at least 3-4 feet above the floor?
8. Y N In the animal areas, do the electrical outlets have protective coverings?
In areas where animals are located or where water is utilized, LAWK recommends protective coverings on wall outlets. If this is not possible, inexpensive plastic inserts should be utilized in any area where animals are permitted to roam freely.
9. Y N Are the electrical outlets, in areas of water use, Ground Fault Interrupt (GFI) protected?
10. Y N Are there adequate sinks to wash food and water bowls and other equipment?
See above.
11. Y N If a bathtub or large sink is used to bathe animals or wash equipment, is there adequate toe space under it to allow staff to work comfortably?
There is no tub.
12. Y N Is there a restroom for staff use?
There is a small restroom directly adjacent to the reception area. The restroom is very clean and well maintained.

F. Waste Disposal:

1. Y N Is there a holding area for carcasses awaiting final disposal?
A large chest freezer is available.
2. Y N Is there a freezer or refrigerator to store animal carcasses until final disposal?
See above!
3. Y N Do the dog pen floors slope 1/4-1/2 inch per foot toward drains and gutters?

4. Y N Is animal waste washed into a sewer or septic system?
5. Y N Does this shelter employ special practices for handling medical or potentially infectious waste?
There is very little generation of medical waste. The only opportunity for medical waste generation is during the visit of a veterinarian. The veterinarian removes all medical waste upon the completion of the visit.

G. Storage:

1. Y N Is adequate space available for facility supplies?
Space appears available, but more enclosed storage areas would be desirable.
2. Y N Are cleaning chemicals stored in a separate area, room, or cabinet?
Some cleaning supplies are stored in the euthanasia area and some are stored in the cat ward. Separating cleaning supply storage from animal wards is recommended.
3. Y N Is adequate space available to store the current quantity of animal food?
4. Y N Is the food storage area clean and free of spilled food?
5. Y N Is there a procedure to use older food first?
6. Y N Are storage shelves and racks at least 12 inches off the floor and at least 4 inches from walls to permit adequate air circulation around food products?
No improvements have been made in food storage. Food bags rest on the floor, which is unacceptable.
7. Y N Are food storage containers adequately sealed against infestation by insects or other vermin?

H. Primary Enclosures:

1. Y N Is one dog housed per pen?
The shelter strives to maintain one dog per cage, but the shelter is small and is compelled to increase that number to three when at capacity.
2. Y N Do cat cages offer a minimum of 4 square feet per cat?
3. Y N Are the dog pen side walls solid to at least 4 –5 feet in height between animals?
4. Y N Do the pens have tops on them?
Some pens do have tops, but many do not. Dogs may be tempted to climb pens that do not include tops. Should funds become available the shelter should install tops on all cages.
5. Y N If the pens have tops, do the tops offer at least a 7-foot clearance?
When tops are present, there is a 7-foot clearance.
6. Y N Does the chain-link fencing of the dog pens appear to be at least 9-gauge wire (heavier than typical fences)?
7. Y N Is the dog-pen fencing securely attached to the frames and gates?
Not in all cases. Many of the cages should have the tops more firmly attached.

- 8. Y N Do the dog pens offer indoor and outdoor access?
In some cages indoor and outdoor access is available. In other instances, cages are in outdoor plaza areas. Green exercise space is available for dog walking.
- 9. Y N Are guillotine doors present between the indoor and outdoor runs?
Guillotine doors are missing, so the inside and outdoor runs are not separated, but are counted as a single cage.
- 10. Y N If guillotine doors are present, can these doors be operated by staff outside the pen?
NA
- 11. Y N Do the gates on the cages and pens latch securely?
- 12. Y N Is there a way to prevent the general public from entering the animal containment area without the knowledge of facility staff?
- 13. Y N Are primary enclosures constructed of materials that are easily sanitized?
Concrete floors should be sealed regularly to prevent porosity and to facilitate hygiene.
- 14. Y N Are primary enclosures well maintained and in good repair?

I. Feeding/ Watering:

- 1. Y N Is a work table that can be easily sanitized available in the food preparation area?
There really is no dedicated food preparation area and no surfaces for food preparation.
- 2. Y N Are water bowls secured in the cages to prevent tipping?
Heavy stainless steel buckets are used for water in some cages. The buckets are filled near capacity and are constantly observed for tipping.
- 3. Y N Are food and water bowls washed and sanitized daily?
- 4. Y N Are shelves or racks present to store food and water containers that are drying?
Shelves and drying racks are inadequate.

J. Pest Control:

- 1. Y N Is the premise maintained so that the potential for rodents and insect pests are kept to a minimum?
Pest control is done by qualified city employees, purchasing products available over-the-counter, however the condition of the building and the propensity for the grass not to be mowed regularly seems to foster 1) rodent harborage on the outside and 2) easy access to an abundance of food inside the structure.
- 2. Y N Does the facility have a program to remove external parasites from animals as they enter the facility?
- 3. Y N If a program exists, does the product's label include the target species?
- 4. Y N If a program exists, are personal protective equipment and training offered to staff who use parasiticides?
NA

K. Rabies Quarantine

1. Y N Does the facility quarantine animals for rabies observation? *If "no," skip the remainder of this section.*
2. Y N Is it easy to distinguish which animals are quarantined for rabies observation and which animals are housed in quarantine pens due to "overflow"?
Due to the size of the shelter, there is no area dedicated to rabies quarantine. Animals can be separated by placing them outside. This is not secure and exposure to other animals through fencing is not impossible. Rabies quarantine dogs must be quarantined in the inside structure. LAWC recommends that, since cage walls are not of sufficient height, that adjacent cages are empty during times of quarantine. The shelter should employ the use of padlocks on cages and should utilize large signs that warn that the animal is present for rabies observation and may also be an aggressive animal.
3. Y N Is public access prohibited from the quarantine area by a secure door or gate?
4. Y N If a secure door or gate is not available, is there a barrier to exclude the public from the quarantine area?
5. Y N Are there guillotine doors to confine rabies-suspect dogs in one part of the pen during cleaning or inclement weather?
6. Y N If guillotine doors are available, can these doors be operated by staff outside the pen?
7. Y N Should testing of animal brains be required, would this shelter submit the sample to the OPH laboratory for analysis?
8. Y N Does this shelter participate in the OPH rabies testing and surveillance program?

L. Disease: regarding the following diseases, please rate the severity of the problem in animals taken into the facility. Your answers should reflect the gravity of the problem in incoming animals, not persistent problems at the facility.

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major | <input type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Intestinal parasites |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Major | <input type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No problem | Scabies (mange) |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Major | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Ringworm (dermatophytes) |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Major | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Parvovirus |
| 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Major | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Canine distemper |
| 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Major | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Canine cough |
| 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Major | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Feline upper respiratory disease |
| 8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major | <input type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Feline diarrhea |
| 9. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major | <input type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Canine heartworm disease |
| 10. <input type="checkbox"/> Major | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor | <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Feline leukemia |

M. Infection Control

- 1. Y N Are all animals isolated on intake to this facility and screened in a separate area for disease and temperament before being placed in the general population?
The facilities do not permit isolation on intake to be consistently carried out.
- 2. Y N Are all animals vaccinated (Dogs: distemper, adenovirus, parainfluenza, parvovirus, leptospirosis, bordetella. Cats: rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, chlamydia, panleukopenia, feline leukemia) upon intake to the facility?
All animals are vaccinated by LSU staff, however LSU staff is not always present. The shelter director and employees should seek training and funds that would permit the shelter's staff to administer vaccines and check the animals for heartworms.
- 3. Y N Are all animals vaccinated after being determined to be adoptable?
NA
- 4. Y N Are incoming animals checked for heartworms?
A direct blood smear is done on dogs by LSU to diagnose non-occult heartworm cases, however when LSU students are not present, the dogs are NOT checked for heartworms.
- a. Y N (only adoptable are checked for heartworms)
NA
- 5. Y N Are incoming animals dewormed for intestinal parasites?
- a. Y N (only adoptable are dewormed for intestinal parasites)
NA
- 6. Y N Are rabies vaccines administered at this facility?
Only by veterinarians associated with the LSU Shelter Improvement Program.
- 7. Y N Are rabies vaccines required after pets are adopted out of the facility?
The shelter instructs adoptive persons that the animal must be vaccinated against rabies.

N. Population Control

- 1. Y N Are all animals determined to be adoptable spayed or neutered prior to adoption?
- 2. Y N Are only some animals spayed or neutered prior to adoption?
NA
- 3. Y N Are intact animals that are adopted required to be spayed or neutered after adoption?
NA

Additional comments:

Personnel are now assigned to clean the cages and feed and water animals on weekends. The time allotted by city government is 3 hours per day on Saturday

and Sundays. Ideally this contact time should be expanded if funds become more available. A well-managed volunteer program could be used to supplement paid help on weekends.

The adoption rate at the Crowley shelter has improved significantly since LAWC inspected in 2012. This is largely due to partnerships with rescue groups. The shelter also is now cooperating with several rescue groups. The shelter does have requirements in order for rescue groups to access animals at the shelter. All rescue groups must be 501 C3 designated non-profit organizations. The Crowley Animal Shelter has a very liberal policy for determining adoptability. Any animal that is not acutely or chronically ill, and is determined not to be aggressive, is placed in the adoptable pool.

Animals are held a minimum of five full days. During the five- day plus hold, the dogs and cats are observed for temperament, and shelter staff monitors health status. At the end of five full days, aggressive animals and animals whose physical condition precludes adoption are taken to a local veterinarian and are euthanized.

All animals in the shelter are subjected to an accepted "temperament" test to detect aggressive animals. Aggressive animals are not adopted out or offered for rescue. Prior to utilization of this test, covertly aggressive dogs may have been released, but temperament testing should assist in correcting any problems in the future.

All incoming animals are now vaccinated on entry. This is another improvement since the initial inspection in 2012.

All adoptable animals are spayed and neutered prior to adoption.

Several members of the public and several complainants who have leveled accusations at the Crowley Shelter suggest the Acadia Parish Animal Shelter might consider accepting animals from the City of Crowley. Acadia Parish Animal Control confirmed with inspectors that the Parish facility did not, at present, have the space or means to accept and care for animals from the city.

LAWC received reports that injured animals are not being attended to in a reasonable period of time. The shelter director has been trained in recognition of severe medical conditions and the shelter policy is to transfer the animal immediately to a local veterinary office so that the animal's problems might be addressed or the animal euthanized. The director often consults with the director at the Acadia Parish Shelter if he or she is unsure. This procedure was independently confirmed by the staff at the Acadia Parish Shelter.

LAWC received numerous reports that ventilation and heating were denied to animals at the shelter. LAWC inspectors found a functioning heater and fans with adequate capacity to ventilate the premises and adequate heating to protect animals from the cold.

The very strong odor that characterizes the shelter does not seem to be totally due to the animals and waste present at the time of the inspection, but likely relates to

past neglect. To correct the situation, remedial tasks such as sand-blasting, acid washing, and/or re-sealing concrete surfaces and other areas are likely necessary. Some caging will likely need replacement or will be required to undergo intensive cleaning procedures.

Several faucets were observed to be leaking and should be repaired.

LAWC received a report that money for new cages had been raised by a humane organization, but the cages were never installed. Shelter management asserts that the money was never received and the shelter is unaware of the existence of any such contribution.

LAWC also received a complaint that *Padding for Paws* had donated material to be used as blankets for shelter animals, but that the shelter did not have the blankets and did not employ their use. Inspectors located the blankets, which were observed to be used in several cages. The blankets were not being used in all cases because some animals shredded the items and the material blocked drainage from the cages or runs. Wholesale use was causing severe plumbing problems.

Suggestions for improvement:

Shelter record keeping is greatly improved since the inspection in 2012, however records still do not fulfill the requirements of Louisiana law. A mode of accessing summary records on a regular basis is required. Inspectors believe that animals have been permitted to leave the shelter on occasion, with the rescuers or adopters receiving little or no documentation. Although we believe these incidents to be isolated, increasing staff and/or adopting more strict requirements for release should assist in permanently correcting this problem.

Although LAWC understands the current director's desire for the shelter to be a no-kill shelter, the shelter has become, on occasion, overcrowded. Euthanasia may be necessary a bit more frequently to relieve dangerous overcrowding if all other means of reducing population have been exhausted. Much of the objections of complainants were related to the director's claims that the shelter is a "no kill" shelter. The Crowley Animal Shelter must make it abundantly clear to the public that the shelter is not a "no kill shelter." The proper designation for the shelter as it existed at the time of the inspection is an "adoption guaranteed" shelter. This means the shelter has an adoption guaranteed policy for adoptable animals only. "Un-adoptable" is defined as any animal that is suffering from a terminal illness or acute severe illness that the shelter does not have the capacity or means to treat, or any animal that is very aggressive and likely to hurt itself or a human.

The Crowley shelter is seriously understaffed. This is a small budget shelter, so the facility is limited in its capacity to undertake major improvements. The lack of staffing often results in deficiencies that would be potentially corrected by additional staff. The shelter director's salary was less than the kennel workers' at the neighboring Acadia Parish Animal Shelter. Inspectors visited the Acadia Parish shelter, and the differences in cleanliness and in odor control were striking. If the

city could possibly allocate funds to increase the compensation package for the director, at a minimum, the shelter could more easily identify and retain qualified personnel. The needs of the animals and administrative needs would be better served with a larger staff. LAWC realizes, however, that additional funding would be necessary.

The shed that is being utilized for a cat shelter could be equipped with an air conditioning unit. During the inspection, inspectors conveyed a message from LAWC that several organizations would likely be willing to donate the unit. Some type of heating unit is also recommended.

The shelter manager should attempt to isolate incoming animals to the best of his or her ability. Although no isolation area exists. The staff is encouraged to keep over-crowding to a minimum, and to utilize different areas of the shelter to separate, as well as possible, different populations of animals. Should a new facility be constructed, provision of an intake isolation area should certainly be considered.

The shelter routinely houses 3 or 4 small dogs per "run," or dog cage. Two large dogs can be also housed in these cages. The animals are separated by gender (intact males)(intact females)(neutered animals), size, temperament, and health status. Although USDA recommendations for housing are being met, the staff should strive to maintain a population where each animal is housed in its own cage. This is best for reasons of disease prevention and hygiene.

Animals are occasionally isolated and maintained in a few outdoor cages. Often the animals are kept outside because they are suspected of potentially transmitting contagious diseases to other animals. The Crowley Shelter indicates it does have a plan to provide protection against cold weather whenever the temperature is 45 degrees Fahrenheit or lower. Inspectors were shown available tarps and blankets. LAWC recommends that animals only be housed outside when absolutely necessary and that animals are moved into the shelter as soon as possible. While outside, adequate shade must be provided to protect the animals at all times. Again, enforcing protections against over-crowding will be an absolute necessity in properly managing the shelter.

LAWC was informed that an individual wanted to donate a washer and dryer for the facility. Again, management stated that no one had ever told the shelter manager or the city manager of that offer. In fact, the city manager pledged that if any donor wished to give a washer and dryer to the facility, the manager would see that the proper hook-ups were installed. LAWC recommends that donors contact the commission with donation offers and have the commission confirm the acceptance or rejection of these items.

LAWC suggests that the shelter immediately work toward creation of a page on the City of Crowley website to promote the positive changes at the shelter.

The general cleanliness of the shelter was adequate the day of the inspection, however a report issued by the LSU Shelter Improvement Program two weeks after

our visit indicated evidence of a heavy rodent infestation. LAWC recommends consultation with experts on rodent control

The auditors found substantial evidence that the staff at the shelter had been abused to some degree by former volunteers and members of various humane organizations. The abuse ranged from harassing phone calls, either directly to the shelter director or to various law enforcement agencies alleging illegal behavior on the part of shelter employees. These accusations not only included allegations about illegal activity at the shelter, but also in the employees' personal lives. The mayor of Crowley agreed that shelter employees tolerate a significant level of abuse. This harassment is interfering with the staff's ability to conduct normal operations and to implement the many necessary improvements.

The mayor assured the representatives of LAWC that the City of Crowley is committed to constructing a new, expanded shelter on the site of the present shelter. Funding possibilities are being presently explored and no precise date for construction has been established. LAWC is hopeful that this process proceeds expeditiously. The shortcomings of the physical structure have a profound influence on many of the problems associated with the Crowley shelter.

A letter to the mayor of Crowley will be attached to this report as an appendix.

RATING:

- Generally exceeds standards
- Meets standards
- Needs significant improvements to meet standard

Brian Melius, DVM : Brian Melius
Chairman, Shelter Inspection Subcommittee
LAWC

Date: 3-25-13



State of Louisiana
Animal Welfare Commission

Governor's Office of Community Programs

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March 28, 2013

The Honorable Greg Jones,
Mayor, City of Crowley
425 North Parkerson Avenue
P.O. Box 1463
Crowley, LA 70527-1463

Dear Mayor Jones,

I am attaching the inspection document from the latest visit to the City of Crowley Animal Shelter. After reviewing the document, you will see that the Louisiana Animal Welfare Commission (LAWC) is still aware of several shortcomings.

LAWC realizes that your city has been faced with several challenges in finding a shelter director that will remain through these difficult times. The difficulty of operating a busy shelter and simultaneously implementing improvements employing such a small shelter staff can be daunting in the least. LAWC remains confident that the Crowley Animal Shelter will soon satisfy all state standards. LAWC, of course, offers any assistance possible in achieving this goal.

Your shelter and its management have also borne the brunt of what appears to be a relentless, often abusive public campaign by certain individuals, many from out of the area. Certainly there is no problem with the public expressing concern with the conditions at the shelter; however LAWC inspectors received an abundance of evidence that many of these groups were misinformed and much of the "facts" put forth by complainants were based on misunderstandings, hearsay, or downright falsehoods.

It would also be grossly unfair not to point out the fact that several improvements have been made. These improvements have been noticeable. The adoption rate is very high in comparison with other public shelters. Record-keeping, although inconsistent, has improved and records are now available on nearly all transactions. The shelter has made inroads with several rescue groups and plans are in the works for a new structure.

Please take some time to review the suggestions. Many corrections can be achieved fairly easily with very little, if any, additional funding. Others, such as the construction of a new structure and suggested improvements in employee compensation, will require additional commitment from the community. LAWC feels that a new structure would be a major step in correcting many existing deficiencies.

Again, LAWC offers its support and assistance in any endeavor that will result in further improvements to the shelter. Please feel free to consult with us at any time.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary A. Balsamo".

Gary A. Balsamo, DVM, MPH&TM, Chairman
Louisiana Animal Welfare Commission

cc. Louisiana Animal Welfare Commission
LAWC Inspection Document, Crowley

...to ensure and promote the proper treatment and well-being of animals