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## News Releases

For Immediate Release - Mar 6, 2009

Contact:

### Re: County Commissioners Expedite Construction of Animal Center

The 33-year-old Table Mountain Animal Center (TMAC), located on county-owned land near the intersection of Highway 58 and Interstate 70, is too small, very inadequate, and past its useful lifespan. It is also the second largest animal care organization in the Denver metro area and one of the largest in the state.

To get construction of an urgently needed replacement for the county-wide animal center underway as soon as possible, the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners will issue Certificates of Participation (COP) for up to \$5.2 million, to be paid back from revenue from dog licensing. The commissioners previously set aside \$3 million in cash to jumpstart the project.

The Table Mountain Animal Center Foundation will raise the remaining \$1.5 million through a major capital fundraising campaign. The commissioners decided to issue the COPs for the center after recognizing the difficulty volunteers from the TMAC Foundation will have fundraising in the nation's current strained economy.

The new center will be built on the county-owned Jeffco Fairgrounds land near Sixth Avenue and Indiana, with the county providing a 50-year lease to the Animal Center.

County Commissioner Kevin McCasky told members of the Table Mountain Animal Center board of directors and the TMAC Foundation board that preliminary architectural drawings for the project will be completed and the project ready for bids in about 12 weeks. "We hope to start work around June 15. That will allow the foundation time to raise money in its capital campaign." To date, TMAC Foundation has received more than \$500,000 in pledges for the project.

- County Cash Contribution: \$3 Million
- County COP Funding up to: \$5.2 Million (Debt Service supported by Dog Licensing Revenue)
- Long-term (50 year) County Land Lease: \$1/year
- TMAC Foundation Donations: \$1.5 Million

The animal center is a shared facility between the county, the cities of Arvada, Lakewood, Wheat Ridge, Westminster and Golden. It was originally created through an intergovernmental agreement between the county and the cities to provide animal control services to residents.

The cities and county use it for animal control as a way to protect the public by keeping dangerous dogs off the street. It provides a safe haven for lost, homeless and abandoned animals brought to the center by animal control officers, residents and sometimes pet owners. Through fundraising by the not-for-profit Foundation, TMAC also provides animal care, adoption and education services. In 2008, TMAC cared for more than 10,000 animals.

On February 11, the county's Planning Commission unanimously gave site approval for the project. Existing construction at the Jeffco Fairgrounds is for a drainage project unrelated to the animal center construction. Ground breaking for the center is targeted for early to mid summer.

Jefferson County has required dogs to be licensed in unincorporated Jefferson County since 1994. In July, 2007, the cities of Arvada, Golden, Lakewood, Wheat Ridge and Westminster joined with the county in a joint dog licensing program.

The goals of mandatory licensing are to protect pet owners and their animals by tracking dangerous and aggressive dogs and habitual offenders of animal laws; ensure dogs have their rabies shots; return lost pets to their owners more quickly and increase the number of pets returned to their homes. A portion of the revenues from this program will be used to assist in funding operational expenses of the facility.

McCasky said the new facility will be very functional, meeting needs well into the future. Only part of the building will be used for animal control functions. The remainder will be used to continue and enhance the education and pet adoption functions of the animal center. The new facility is designed with many "green" components, exceeding baseline energy standards in terms of operational system efficiencies.

Commissioner Kathy Hartman said she will work with the Foundation to help secure its share of the funding. "We want the facility to be a partnership between our governments and our citizens, with private donations helping to enhance the education and pet adoption areas of the center."

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