

Grand jury alleges cruelty at Lindsay shelter

Report: Charges result of year-long investigation.

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THE PORTERVILLE RECORDER

LINDSAY — Pursuing numerous citizens' complaints, the Tulare County grand jury issued a report Friday that alleges cruelty to animals, poor staff training and mismanagement at the Lindsay Animal Shelter.

The report came at the end of a year-long investigation by two grand juries, beginning in 1997-98.

"Management level staff (at the shelter) is not providing proper and safe management of the shelter," jurors reported.

"The public has lost confidence in the shelter due to violations. There have been serious violations of rabies control regulations."



Bert Garzelli, director of Lindsay Department of Public Safety, calls report "negative."

The shelter is owned and operated by the Lindsay Department of Public Safety and is directed by Bert Garzelli. Daily operations are overseen by Lt. Ramon Figueroa and kennel master Wendy Jones.

"There are some very serious allegations," Garzelli said, "and it is the most negative report I have ever seen. I don't think they did justice to us."

Lindsay Mayor Valeriano Saucedo defended the city's operation of the kennels.

"I am confident that the kennels are in good shape," Saucedo said. "I have the utmost confi-

dence in our staff."

The facility is used by the cities of Porterville, Tulare, Lindsay, Exeter, Woodlake, Farmersville and Tulare County to kennel more than 9,000 dogs a year and many other animals.

The Lindsay Animal Control Division provides field enforcement for the county and all its cities except for Tulare.

Visalia and Dinuba provide their own field enforcement and contract with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for kenneling.

The grand juries said the shelter is only "properly cleaned

and disinfected when an outside inspection is expected."

Shelter staff was criticized by the juries for using the "painful and professionally inhumane heart shot method of euthanasia," and that record keeping at the shelter has been "substandard with many records missing, not completed, some fabricated and most not in order."

The grand juries recommended top management be changed and that the city no longer manage the shelter.

Garzelli said he planned to meet with kennel staff this week to begin addressing the report