Gunnison Valley Animal Welfare League
FAQs Shelter/Adoption Center

Why does Gunnison need an animal shelter?

There is **no valley-wide shelter in Gunnison County.** The Gunnison Valley Animal Welfare League (GVAWL) has cared for and adopted out over 2,500 homeless companion animals in the past 26 years, and the City of Gunnison impounds over 200 animals each year.

A centralized shelter will give non-profit and local government agencies a much higher degree of efficiency in housing, caring for, and re-homing homeless pets, and in reuniting lost animals with their owners.

The shelter will meet the current, immediate needs of the City and County. GVAWL will operate the shelter.

What kinds of features are required in an animal shelter?

As this building serves the public, code requirements, such as ADA provisions must be met. Industry standard for humanely housing 15 or more animals are stringent. Therefore, this building must have features that residential and commercial buildings do not, e.g.:

- enhanced ventilation system to prevent diseases
- noise abatement measures to protect animals and staff
- kennel, floor, and wall materials easily cleanable, for code requirements, disease prevention, and retention of staff and volunteers
- extensive plumbing, drainage, and waste-disposal systems
- wider fire-exit hallways located in multiple areas
- wheelchair accessibility

Along with these features, what else will the shelter/adoption center have?

The shelter will be a fully operational facility in terms of meeting the current and immediate needs. It has:

- space for 10-12 large dogs, with greater capacity for smaller dogs
- space for 18 cats
- isolation areas for both dogs and cats
- outdoor dog exercise area and indoor cat exercise area
- food-preparation and dishwashing space
- laundry space
- combination bathroom and wet room for cleaning equipment
- small office/entryway
- night drop

What type of construction is being used in the shelter?

The shelter will be a "stick-built" framed building. Much research went into the design and construction methods available. It is designed for future expansion.

Did you consider energy-efficiency?

Yes, both in the construction and in future operations – it's the most cost-effective way. We enlisted the services of an engineering firm that specializes in energy conservation. The building will be fully insulated to the current Energy Code requirements, which are driven by our area's extreme temperature differentials between day and night and between seasons. The building's heating and cooling needs are very specific for animal comfort, and the design provides for both passive and mechanical systems to work together to accommodate these needs efficiently. For example, we are taking advantage of natural daylight by using snow-friendly roof-penetration lighting tubes.

GVAWL has been attempting to build a community-wide shelter for many years. What have been the obstacles?

Two things: obtaining land, and raising the necessary funds. A lease from Gunnison County for a parcel in the Gold Basin Industrial Park was signed in June 2011. As soon as the lease was signed, we proceeded with soils testing, surveys, architectural design, and engineering. Local firms are being used in design and will be used in construction.

In 2008, the MacAllister Family Foundation contributed $100,000. GVAWL has been fundraising for many years.

During this process we continue to rescue, care for, and re-home a yearly average of over 100 of the County's homeless animals.

What are local governments contributing to the shelter?

- City of Gunnison has contributed $125,000 toward the shelter, and will contribute part-time staffing towards operations.
- Gunnison County is leasing GVAWL a parcel in Gold Basin Industrial Park waiving payment for four years.

Will this shelter need to be expanded?

Yes. While the shelter does meet **immediate**, minimal current needs, expansion has been planned for. The shelter is designed for maximal cost-effectiveness in expanding, and **many of the pre-construction needs for the Phase 2 expansion are designed and engineered in the Phase I shelter facility.** The design and engineering of Phase 2 is completed and paid for by GVAWL.

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