



LARIMER HUMANE SOCIETY

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LARIMER HUMANE SOCIETY CELEBRATES FIVE YEARS OF OPERATING IN STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITY

Five years ago, the Larimer Humane Society shelter – then located on Kyle Avenue in Fort Collins – was run down beyond repair and bursting at the seams. The animal kennels were dark and small, the ventilation system was substandard, and staff workspaces were set up in every nook, cranny, and closet that wasn't utilized for animals. Change was needed, and thanks to the support of our community, its leaders, and the tireless work of the shelter's staff, change was just around the corner. On September 5, 2017, Larimer Humane Society officially opened the doors to its forever home on 71st Street in Loveland, raising the standard for animal sheltering in Larimer County.

“We were able to bring animal sheltering into the 21st century for this community,” said Executive Director Judy Calhoun. “We have a community that cares a huge amount about animals in need, and opening the new shelter helped reflect that care in our community.”

When asked about all the upgrades in the new shelter, Calhoun responded with a laugh, “How much time do you have?” For starters, all animal kennels are strategically positioned to allow natural light, which has proven benefits for an animal's health and wellbeing. Interior animal spaces without windows are even equipped with solar tubes. Additional amenities include: a first class veterinary clinic, isolation wards and a state-of-the-art HVAC system to reduce contagion, hydronically heated flooring, noise reduction, improved housing and play areas for cats and dogs, professional workspaces for staff, a public dog park, and over a mile of dog-walking trails – just to name a few!

The Journey to County Road 30

The first step in securing a new shelter began in 2007 when Larimer Humane Society purchased 27 acres of land on County Road 30. Judy Calhoun began her tenure as CEO in June of 2008, just as the housing market collapsed and the Great Recession took hold. While this economic depression halted building plans, leadership took this time to eliminate debt and paid off the promissory note on the land recently purchased.

In 2013, the Board of Directors and Executive Team embarked on a leadership retreat to focus on creative planning for a new shelter. That's when the idea of a citizen-initiated sales tax to help fund the project was born. As a government-contracted service provider, Larimer Humane Society was eligible for this method of fundraising so long as they could collect enough signatures to get the sales tax initiative on the ballot. After a failed attempt in 2013, Larimer Humane Society returned in 2014 with stronger campaign efforts and successfully obtained the required signatures. Later that fall, they were victorious with 52% of the votes in favor of the proposition, giving the shelter one penny for every 10 dollars spent.

With the community's backing, dreams of building a new shelter became a reality. Construction began two years later in May of 2016, and doors opened to the public the day after Labor Day in September of 2017.

"Many of our staff members are new and didn't experience the old shelter," said Calhoun, "and that's okay. This is what I want our employees to think animal sheltering is and should be, and it's what I want our community to see what animal sheltering is supposed to look like." Five years later, Larimer Humane Society is no longer hindered by its physical space and resources, and most importantly, community members and pets have a robust resource to rely on in times of need.

"As we celebrate this milestone together, our message is of gratitude and partnership," said Calhoun. Larimer Humane Society is deeply thankful to its community, and equally inspired as they move into the next five years of animal sheltering in northern Colorado.