



Death threats against San Bernardino animal shelter workers

By Rob McMillan | April 10, 2014

Calif. (KABC) -- The San Bernardino city animal shelter is defending itself against criticism of how it operates. The shelter says some of the criticism has led to death threats against workers there.

Video posted on YouTube shows someone visiting the San Bernardino city animal shelter who is critical of how many animals are put down.

Rene Hersey takes pictures of animals at the shelter and puts them online, hoping more of them can be adopted. She says she's noticed many empty cages there, but doesn't question the dedication of the workers.

"I know that the shelter tries. I think that there are always improvements that could be made," said Hersey.

"There's a feeling that we have room for animals, yet we continue to euthanize, which is totally not true," said San Bernardino Police Lt. Rich Lawhead.

In a phone interview, Lawhead, who helps run the shelter, says that in 2010 they had to euthanize 74 percent of the animals coming in. That number is down to 40 percent.

Still, he says workers here have gotten death threats from critics who say they're not doing nearly enough to save these animals.

"We have had to relocate some of our employees because of addresses that were put on Facebook and other things, and that's just another expense for the taxpayers that take dollars away from the animal shelter, when we have to pay for hotel rooms and we have to relocate employees to make sure the employees are safe," said Lawhead.

A police officer said about 80-90 percent of the cages are occupied.

Those who run the shelter remind the public the city of San Bernardino is going through bankruptcy, so the shelter depends greatly on rescue organizations and volunteers.

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