

## **History of the Big Pine Animal Shelter**

At the beginning of the Twentieth Century before we had the safety net provided by Social Security, most counties had some type of poorhouse or home for the aged. Inyo County was no different. We had the County Farm on the 80 acres south of County Rd. in Big Pine. It was well established by 1920 with the Sanatorium building (later the Big Pine Care Center) plus several additional residences. There was also a hay barn which still stands today as well as the small milking barn which has served as Inyo County's Animal Shelter for the past 60 years.

The County Farm, which housed mainly elderly men, was still in use as both a Tuberculosis Sanatorium and Home for the aged in the 1940's. However the Sanatorium was eventually converted into the Big Pine Care Center which was in use until 2000. Meanwhile rabies had killed hundreds of people in Calif. in the first half of the century and there was a push by the state to implement county animal control departments in the 1950's.

The two most important aspects of Animal Control in the fifties were the vaccination of all owned dogs against rabies and the containment of stray dogs at animal shelters. Since the milk barn was no longer being used it was converted into a small animal shelter. Half the building was used by Animal Control while the other half was used by Mosquito Control to store their equipment and chemicals.

In the eighties there began to be concern for the welfare of the animals, and the county was able to obtain a \$38,000 grant that brought modest improvements to the shelter. Kennels were installed in both wings of the building and one outdoor concrete pad was added. However the second outside area was still composed of deteriorating asphalt which created an enormous hazard for the spread of parvovirus.

In the early 1990s the department employees were able to form a shelter trust fund as well as have another concrete slab added through the generous efforts of local contractors. After the formation of ICARE by Lisa and Ted Schade the improvements at the shelter increased exponentially. The outside south side was completely covered and stainless steel kennels were added throughout the shelter. Each dog received its own Kuranda bed instead of lying on the hard concrete. Numerous additional improvements were added in order to improve the lives of both the dogs and cats in the shelter.

The movement to improve the welfare of companion animals in Inyo County has culminated in the building of an all new shelter for \$834,000 which is now well under construction. This achievement has only been possible through the continued efforts of ICARE as well as the Inyo County Sheriff's Office and most of all the public who donated the majority of funding to build the new shelter.