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## NEWSLINES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

# Homeward bound



## Butte Humane Society anticipates breaking ground on new facility by early 2020

Katrina Woodcox isn't in denial about the current state of the Butte Humane Society, which she oversees as executive director. Its operations are inefficient, she recently told the CN&R—scattered across three outdated, overcrowded facilities.

That's why she's so relieved that in less than a year, BHS should be breaking ground on a new facility, the first the organization will have owned since it was established 108 years ago.

It isn't just a singular location that the BHS team is looking forward to: The new facility will increase the nonprofit's animal housing capacity by 66 percent, and include segregated spaces for smaller animals (i.e. hamsters, rabbits and guinea pigs), pregnant and sick animals, as well as those with behavioral or special needs.

Woodcox says the forthcoming facility is "as far away as possible from the stereotypical pound." It is designed to allow the nonprofit to meet best practices and standards in animal wellness and minimize the spread of disease, she added.

Since January 2018, BHS has raised about \$5.4 million for the project—this week, it accepted a \$500,000 donation from the Wayne & Gladys Valley Foundation. It also received 10 acres of donated property in north Chico worth \$3.5 million from its capital campaign co-chairs, Katie Gonser and Ken Grossman, placing BHS just under \$2 million shy of its \$11 million fundraising goal. It's the back half of a 20-acre parcel currently leased

**Join the journey:**  
Go to [buttehumane.org/thejourneyhome](http://buttehumane.org/thejourneyhome) to volunteer or donate.

by Sunset Hills Golf Course.

The planned facility will be 23,000 square feet. BHS design renderings include a layout with three community dog parks and a dog pool, kitten and puppy nurseries, a walking trail, an education center, a feral cat holding room, a bereavement site, and a retail store stocked with supplies for new pet owners, as well as dog and cat adoption centers.

At its new location, the shelter should be better equipped to tackle what it sees as an underserved segment of the community, Woodcox added: low- to moderate-income pet owners who cannot afford veterinary care for their animals. That's why it opened its low-cost non-emergency clinic in 2018, which offers vaccinations and care for minor issues like infected teeth and abscesses.

The demand exceeded BHS' expectations: "There's such a need ... we're booked out through August," Woodcox said. The organization is hiring a second full-time veterinarian to handle the workload.



Katrina Woodcox and her dog, Sadie, at BHS' future home.  
PHOTO BY ASHIAH SCHARAGA

**BHS has had a long and, at times, tenuous history with the city of Chico.** The nonprofit operated the city's sheltering services for 25 years before the city reclaimed those services, signing a new contract with BHS for adoptions and community outreach in 2012.

Gonser, a former BHS board president, got involved with the organization that same year because of her passion for animal welfare. She said she realized that, like many nonprofits, BHS "needed a lot of help in bringing it up to the 20th century."

She got to work tightening up its business model, governing body and internal operations, preparing for the day the organization would be ready to move. That's when she shifted to co-chairing its capital campaign.

The new site will provide BHS with operational freedom, Woodcox told the CN&R. Under its current agreement, the nonprofit leases city kennel space and can only accept dogs from Chico. At its own, new location, BHS will be able to operate as an "animal welfare hub for the North State," Woodcox said, taking in surrendered animals when other shelters run out of space, and hopefully reducing local and regional euthanasia rates.

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