

## **Recent Budget Cuts Affect Sheriff's Animal Control Services**

### **Local News**

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**SHELTON, Wash.** - Sheriff Casey Salisbury today (**Wednesday, April 22, 2009**) announced a cut in services performed by his department's animal control officer. Effective immediately the Mason County Sheriff's Office will no longer be responding to barking dog calls, dogs chasing cars, dogs and cats astray or nuisances involving domestic pets. According to Sheriff Salisbury "These cuts in service will not affect our response to vicious animals, biting animals, or animal cruelty cases. Deputies and /or the Animal Control Officer will also be responding to livestock astray complaints. The cuts in service were brought about by a very high volume of calls for service for Animal Control and the January 1, 2009 layoff of one of the Sheriff's Animal Control Officers. According to Sheriff Salisbury, "our Animal Control staff has been reduced by 50% while the calls for service have remained the same. We have to adjust somehow."

Mason County revenue projections for 2009 are down significantly. This fact necessitated the Sheriff lay off three civilian employees including one animal control position and one road deputy as of January 1, 2009. In April of this year the Sheriff was advised by the Board of County Commissioners that an additional \$382,111 would need to be trimmed from the Sheriff's 2009 budget. The effects of those cuts are not yet clear. The Sheriff has been advised that more budget cuts may be necessary as the year proceeds on. In 2008, two Animal Control Officers responded to 1414 calls for service. Out of those calls for service, the issue was resolved without further action in 479 cases, 12 citations were issued, one physical arrest was made, and 191 warnings were issued. These numbers represent a decrease in activity from the 2007 totals where Animal Control Officers responded to 1545 calls for service.