



**From the Office of  
Ruben Becerra, Hays County Judge  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE**

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**Commissioners' Court Approves Pet Resource Center**  
*Austin Pets Alive! Leadership Comes to Hays County*

**Hays County Courthouse, San Marcos, TX** – Today, Hays County Commissioners' Court approved a Professional Service Agreement with Austin Pets Alive! (APA!) as project coordinator for the new Pet Resource Center. APA! will aid in the overall creation and development, as well as operate and manage, the future Pet Resource Center, field services, and veterinary clinic. County Judge Becerra, the catalyst in forming the Pet Resource Center, said, "This agreement with Austin Pets Alive! takes significant steps to address the growing need for animal sheltering and chronic overcrowding at the severely limited San Marcos Regional Animal Shelter, currently the only open intake animal shelter in the county." The planning phase begins April 3, 2023, for one year, and will yield recommendations for locations, budgets, policies, and operations to Hays County.

Austin Pets Alive! will research land options and guide the county on a location for the Pet Resource Center that is accessible and centrally located to serve the most people and pets. The group will also be responsible for developing a high-level plan and budget to operate and manage the Pet Resource Center and the veterinary clinic.

County Judge Ruben Becerra has had a vision of modernizing the way we shelter animals. “This new Pet Resource Center is going to be a total paradigm shift to best practices by involving the entire community while offering social services to the humans on the same campus.” Alex Villalobos, the Judge Becerra’s Chief of Staff added, “The vision for the campus also includes a center for senior citizens, voting center, precinct office, and Center for Mental Wellness, Education, and Research. Ultimately, the desired outcome is that people will be able to retain their pets.”

Sharri Boyett, the County Judge’s Animal Advocate Advisor, has been working closely with Hays County to bring the Agreement to fruition. “This Pet Resource Center will provide services to keep pets in their homes as an alternative to owner surrender. We will lead Hays County toward reforms in the ways we care for homeless animals, emphasizing animal protection and lifesaving goals.”

In anticipation of major programs, APA! will plan Safety Net, Pet Retention Assistance, Lost Pet Reunification Assistance, and Adoption and Holding for dogs and social cats when no other alternatives can be identified. Community cats will enter the Pet Resource Center for sterilization and vaccination only through a trap/neuter/return (TNR) or shelter/neuter/return (SNR) program.

After a comprehensive capital campaign and fundraising initiative, expectations are that the completion of the Pet Resource Center will occur in a three-year timeframe. Dr. Ellen Jefferson, President and CEO of Austin Pets Alive!, founder of Human Animal Support Services, and Emancipet Spay Neuter/Neuter Services, said, “Hays County is leading the way for the entire country on a new way of serving the families in their jurisdiction. We know that pets are family to 90% of Americans and to see a government recognize that, and act upon it, is innovative and inspiring.”

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