

February 2016

# The ACO Voice

A Monthly Magazine from Animal Control Training Services  
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# Sharpening Your Axe (ACTS)

By Jeffrey Clemens, ACTS

There was once a young man whose burning passion was to be a great Animal Control Officer. He loved hard work, and had the motivation of ten men. The wearing of a uniform, the representation of a professional organization, invigorated him and made him feel fully alive.

On his very first day, he was encouraged when he managed to handle 10 calls for service. He did notice that a grizzled old ACO had managed to handle twelve, but this was just the young ACO's first day on the job. He figured that with a little more practice, he'd be handling 15 or more calls a day – no problem.

And on the second day, he did manage to add another call to his tally, completing 11 calls. That wasn't too hard! It was only his second day. At this rate, he'd be handling 15 calls a day in no time.

On the third day, despite working an extra half-hour, he only managed 11 calls again. No progress at all. But this did not discourage him. To the contrary, it only made him more determined than ever. He doubled his efforts the next day. He worked harder, longer, and without any breaks. But at the end of the day, he had only managed to complete ten calls.

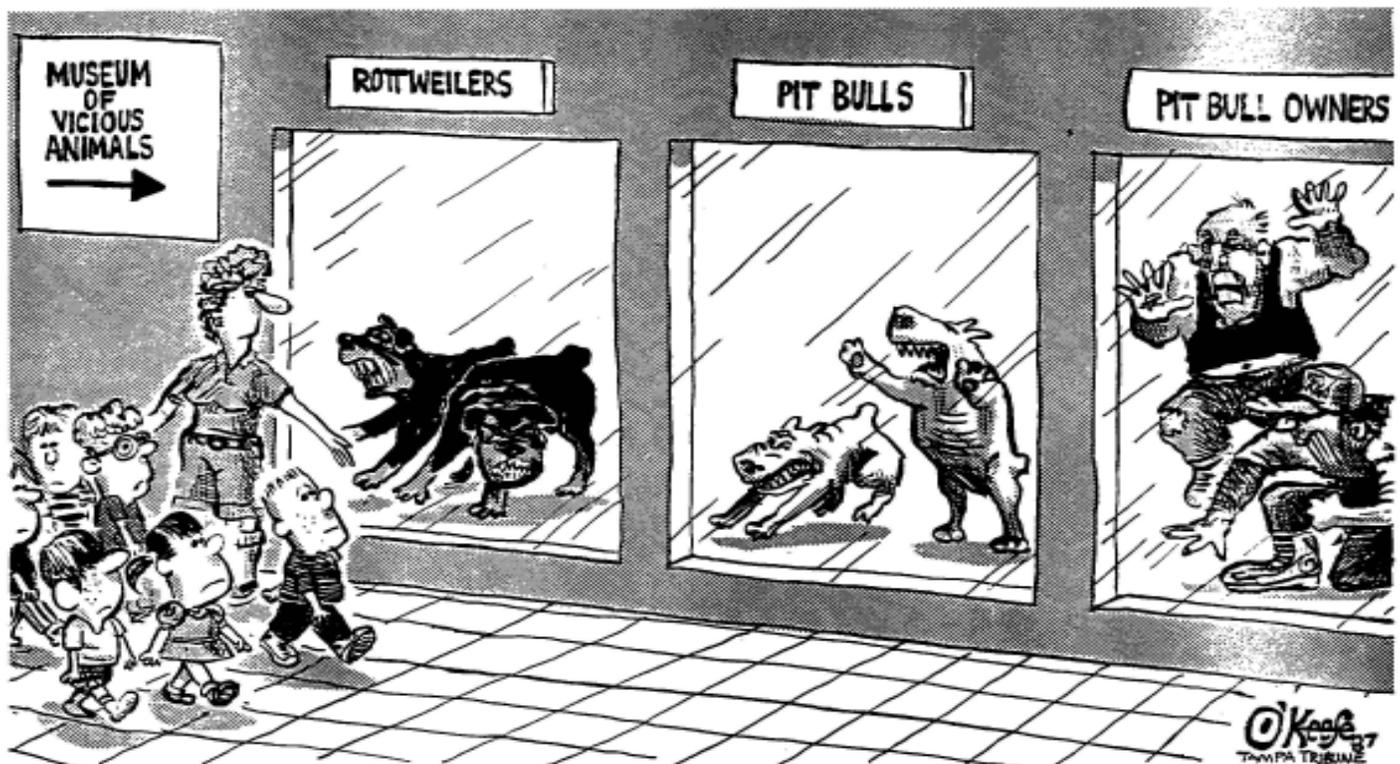
After two weeks of this, his daily total had only continued to drop. Despite his best efforts, despite working longer hours

than anyone else, he was down to 8 calls a day. Worn out, tired, and discouraged, he was tempted to give up.

It was then that the grizzled old veteran approached him. "Young fella," he said kindly, "I can see them callouses on your hands, so I know how hard and how long you're working. I don't even know how you walk through doors with shoulders like that, so I know you are plenty strong. And I've seen the focus you bring to the job, that you swing true every time."

The old man paused at this point, letting his words sink in. The young ACO was looking more miserable than ever; if all this was true, why was he such a failure? He had been bitten by two stray dogs, sprayed by a skunk, his reports were being kicked back, he received several complaints from citizens, and the job even began interfering with his home life! Confused, he confided, "Sir, I thought this was my gift and calling. But now I just don't think I'm cut out for it. Let's face it – you're safer on the job, you completed more calls than I do and you earn the trust and respect from everyone." Then, feeling sorry for him, he added, "And I noticed that you went away for a few days last week while I just worked even harder!"

"Son," the old man replied with a twinkle in his eye, "it's then that I sharpen with ACTS."





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# Let's Act Professionally!

**By Lauren Malmberg**

Although a noble calling, animal control suffers from a negative public image. As an animal control officer or administrator, we have an opportunity each day to improve that image while promoting public safety and responsible pet care. Although it seems like a thankless job on many days, in the end, animal control ensures the health and safety of our neighborhoods and protects animals by enforcing local and state ordinances. Our work deserves respect and appreciation.

Sometimes, we're part of the problem that leads to that negative image. All too easily, we can forget that everything we say and do has an impact on how people perceive animal control. If we want to be viewed as more than just a dogcatcher, then we have to behave that way. Whether you're just starting out in animal control or have been in this industry for years, you can make a difference.

1. Know what you're doing. Take the time to learn and be able to cite local and state laws pertaining to your job. That means everything from local ordinances on running at large to state laws governing humane care. Understand how laws are made and what takes precedence. For example, federal law is the broadest, state laws more restrictive, and local ordinance the most restrictive. People will respect your position if they can rely on you for correct information on what laws exist and how they apply to different situations.

2. Use proper language. Of course, no one should be swearing or using offensive language during their workday. But it's also important to use the right words when talking about elements of our job. For example, don't say straw when you mean hay. Don't say Springer Spaniel when you mean Brittany. Don't say spade or spaded – say spay or spayed. How we speak and the language we use says a lot about our level of professionalism and knowledge.

3. Dress the best. If you're uniformed, be sure it's clean, neat, not-stained, and properly fitted. If you are not in uniform, wear clean and neat clothing – no t-shirts or ball caps with logos or sayings. If you have a badge and/or insignia, wear them. Have proper identification and be sure it's visible – either a nameplate or a lanyard with your ID is appropriate.

4. Behave as if you're constantly being watched because you are. Use the equipment in the way it was intended – a control stick is merely a stiff leash – not a club or baton. Don't choke an animal down with a control stick

or leash. Use only as much restraint as necessary to protect yourself and the animal and still get the job done. Never lose your cool! At any time, someone could step up and video your actions. Be sure you can always justify and explain what you've done.

5. Make sure your written documents are legible and complete. Some of our work will be part of court files and may be seen by attorneys and judges. Don't be embarrassed by a case that gets dismissed because someone couldn't read your writing or you didn't complete every section of a ticket. Double-check all your reports and citations, and proofread! Be sure any communication you have, even texts and e-mails, contain proper spelling and punctuation. Any of these communications are subject to the Freedom of Information Act and could be obtained and published.

6. Treat people with respect. It is possible to enforce an ordinance or law in a respectful manner that allows the violator to retain their dignity. Part of our job is education along with enforcement, and if you treat people disrespectfully, you forfeit any chance of teaching them anything – other than that animal control is bad. Even in the face of scorn, ridicule, or taunting, maintain your own equilibrium and respond with tact and respect while remaining firm and fair. Don't take it personally. Handled correctly, even someone getting a ticket may thank you in the end.

In our roles in animal control, we have the power to improve the perception of the entire field as well as protect people and animals. Each day, every one of us can make a positive impact on how animal control is viewed by the public. Take pride in your work – it is important work and essential to government service – and make it your daily goal to further the professionalism in our field. Behaving professionally at all times not only improves the image of animal control, it will also help to protect your safety in the field as well as elevate your level of impact.



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**In the end, it's not the years in your life  
that count. It's the life in your years.**

**– Abraham Lincoln**

### **June Krull**

Morris, Illinois – Grundy County Animal Control Director June Krull, who served the county and its animals for nearly 20 years, died on January 29 after a long battle with cancer.

“It was difficult news to get,” County Board Chairman David Welter said. “She devoted her life to animal control and grew it to what it is today.”

Krull, 67, lived in Mazon and was born in Morris in 1948, according to her obituary, the daughter of the late William and Maxine (Peterson) Sproull. She attended primary school in Verona and graduated from MVK High School with the Class of 1966. She attended Joliet School of Cosmetology. On April 8, 1967, June married Robert Krull in Assumption Catholic Church in Coal City. She worked at Napa Auto, Bum’s Tavern and Cinder Ridge before going to Grundy County Animal Control, from where she has worked for the past 19 years.

“She enjoyed working in her yard, and will be most remembered for love of spending time with friends and family. Her grandchildren were her pride and joy,” her obituary read.

Welter said he hopes the county can continue with the vision she had for the department.

“She took it from a trailer south of the river to what it is today,” he said. “She fought for funding to provide services to the animals in the county.”

### **Patrick Snell**

Mineral Wells, Texas – Patrick Snell, a resident of Mineral Wells, died February 13 at Weatherford Regional Medical Center due to heart disease.

Snell, 48, was a U.S. Army veteran and a nearly 16-year employee of the sheriff’s office. He began working in the Parker County Jail in April 2000 and later worked in a variety of roles, including as a dispatcher, animal control officer, patrol deputy, supervisor and juvenile crimes investigator.

“He was dedicated to his duties but he always made time for his family, friends and coworkers,” Parker County Sheriff Larry Fowler said. “His loss hits us hard in our hearts. Patrick was a good deputy and a good friend to each of us. This is a tremendous loss for our community. We will truly miss him.” Snell left behind a wife, two sons and a daughter-in-law, two grandchildren, his mother and father, a sister and a brother.



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# Investing in You

By John Mays, ACTS

For most state associations, it can sometimes be difficult to increase training opportunities due to a limit of resources. Since most associations are supported by volunteer boards and committees, being able to schedule additional trainings outside of the association's annual conference can be challenging. Most associations rely on their annual conferences to increase memberships and expand the reach of the association in their state.

Jeff and I share your association's vision to offer training to folks who don't receive many training opportunities. Many of these folks are largely overlooked by their agencies, 1- or 2-person operations. For the past 3 years, ACTS has partnered with the Wisconsin Animal Control Association, Inc. to offer annual training in 3-4 cities geographically selected throughout their state. The association chooses the training topics, duration of the program, and dates and training venues, which are usually hosted by a local university or police department. Most of the trainings are 1- or 2-day events, thus allowing smaller agencies to attend. The association receives 2 complimentary registrations ("scholarships") for every 10 paid registrations, which are issued by the association.

Utilizing the association's contact resources, ACTS promotes the training to area agencies. All we require from the hosting venue is a meeting room that has an LCD projector and a screen, Internet, along with speakers for sound. The meeting room should accommodate at least 20 students. ACTS handles all of the program/instructor logistics, registrations, student manual printing, electronic certificates, etc. ACTS utilizes its own professional staff of instructors, or in-state instructors recommended by the association. All of the instructors are contracted and compensated by ACTS, and adhere to our professional standards.

The registration fees for each program are set by ACTS and the

association, with a set fee for association members and nonmembers. The nonmember fee includes the member registration fee, plus the association's annual membership fee. ACTS retains the registration fee to cover our students/instructor expenses, liability insurance, etc. ACTS also incurs the risk for any financial loss. Any membership fees collected by ACTS are sent to the association.

Several state associations have approached ACTS about providing additional training within their state. Partnering with ACTS is win-win relationship that increases the association's presence statewide and fulfills a void in those areas that have limited training opportunities. If you would like further information, please contact ACTS at 913-515-0080 or via email at [info@aco-acts.com](mailto:info@aco-acts.com).



# A Clucking Nuisance?

By Jeffrey Clemens, ACTS

You've heard it said that there's no comparison between a store-bought tomato and one that is grown from your own garden. The same thing can be said for a homegrown farm fresh egg. I agree, and so do thousands of people who have started participating in what is called "the urban chicken movement." Within the last decade, many city dwellers are finding out the truth about the quality, flavor and freshness of homegrown eggs. There is something to be said for good, old fashioned country living. As people become more concerned and aware of the food that they consume, they are not only raising their own vegetables, but raising chickens to produce farm fresh eggs within their city limits.

In an effort to accommodate this trend, many cities have adopted changes to their existing laws that previously prohibited the raising of livestock animals within their jurisdictions. In regards to chickens, residents now can possess up to 6 hens,

and in some cases, 6 hens and 1 rooster for those desiring "fertilized eggs." However, not everyone is clucking happily, it is ruffling their feathers and they are squawking!

While the idea and concept of backyard chickens does provide benefits, there is opposition. Animal control and code enforcement departments are having to address public nuisance complaints due to unforeseen and unintended consequences of this agriculture practice. Complaints are mostly centered around issues such as not being compatible with the "neighborhood feel" and complaints regarding noise, smell, accumulation of droppings, attracting predators and vermin, required lot sizes and overall general public health issues.

Whether it's fighting over water rights, property boundaries, clotheslines, barking dogs etc., one thing is certain – the battle is reminiscent of the Hatfield's and the McCoy's.

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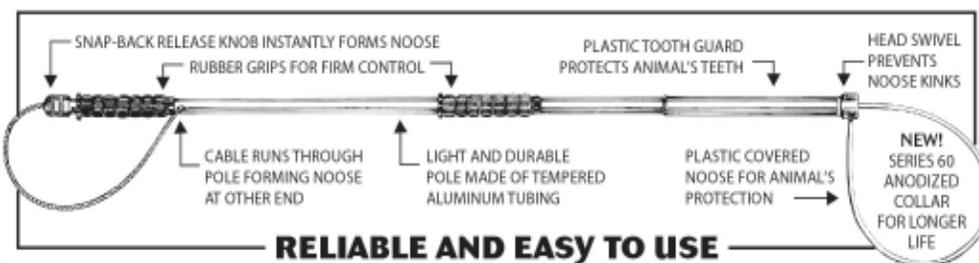
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Extended, it is used for rescuing animals from waterways, trees, storm drains, etc.  
Retracted, it is used as a longer heavy-duty restraining pole

# Another Day - Another Blessing

By Jeffrey Clemens, ACTS

On behalf of Animal Control Training Services and our Instructors, John and I would like to thank all of the hosting agencies and everyone who has attended the training courses offered by ACTS. This March marks the start of the 4th year for ACTS. Since its inception in 2013, ACTS has provided professional development training to over 1,000 animal control professionals and is quickly becoming the largest and most popular training provider for animal control departments and public safety agencies. Our focus is on the professional development of Animal Control Officers and Field Services through training, certification and consultation. The name “ACTS” is just what it implies Animal Control Training Services. However, included in the acronym is what is at the core of every program that we offer:

Goals:

- Apply uniform standards of training
- Create professionalism in the ACO
- Train in the use of personal protection equipment
- Support teamwork and agency rapport

Objectives:

- Affirm positive community relations
- Confirm a commitment to serve
- Teach ACO safety
- Showcase confidence and competency

Over the last decade, the line of delineation has become blurred as shelters and animal control agencies have merged together. The main focus has been on animal sheltering, kennel management, adoption and or live release rates due to the increased pressure from the “no kill” movement and other animal activist groups. When the focus shifts and becomes lopsided, it is unfortunate that the animal control side of life gets neglected. ACTS is dedicated to ensuring that the needs of ACO’s are met amid the chaos and confusion. We present our courses through the use of qualified instructors, relevant course topics, current training technologies and legal updates.

One of the best ways we have found to evaluate the quality of our programs is by soliciting feedback from the officers that attend. There’s no better way than to hear from the very ones that are out in the field, performing the day-to-day functions of animal control. This interaction allows us to stay updated with current events such as demographic changes, shifts in animal ownership trends and modern-day

technology. Since our programs are customized by the hosting agencies, it allows us to present the appropriate level of training and instruction to those who attend. We offer introductory courses for those who have just entered the ACO profession as well as “In-Service” and “Perishable Skills” training for the seasoned vets. Yes, it is true you can teach an old dog a new trick!

Our 2016 training calendar is filling up fast due to our ability to provide customized, in-house training programs. We are also in the process of assisting several states in developing uniformed standards of training in an effort to promote the ACO profession in the highest level of professionalism possible.

## Snakes Alive!

When it comes to handling snakes, you either hate them, love them or they are just O.K. Last week, the Kitsap Humane Society in Silverdale, Washington hosted a one-week program that included the Safe Animal Handling/ Capture and Restraint Equipment course. This instruction covers the skills and equipment that are necessary when dealing with domestic animals, wildlife, exotic animals and livestock. During the presentation that addresses the handling of snakes, we were showing the proper technique when using snake tongs and the snake hook. Although we didn’t use a real snake in the classroom, a 6-foot leash sufficed. Just the topic alone caused some to be a little squeamish! While discussing the equipment available to handle and capture snakes, I must give credit where credit is due. ACO Britney Hall from the Kitsap Humane Society suggested the invention of a vacuum-type apparatus, similar to a leaf blower, yet in reverse that would just suck the snake through a tube and into a collection bag! Although at first humorous, the idea might just work.



# ACTS Training Schedule

For a registration form, visit [www.aco-acts.com](http://www.aco-acts.com) or call 913-515-0080

**Animal Control Officer Specialized Training Course - Hosted by the Wisconsin Animal Control Association  
March 10-11, 2016 - Green Bay, Wisconsin**

Schedule of Training: Illegal Animal Fighting; Understanding the "Link" in Animal Abuse

**Field Training Officer Certification for A/C Professionals - Hosted by the Bentonville Police Department  
March 15-16, 2016 - Bentonville, Arkansas**

Schedule of Training: Field Training Officer Certification

**Animal Control Officer Specialized Training Course - Hosted by the North Kansas City Police Department  
March 28-30, 2016 - North Kansas City, Missouri**

Schedule of Training: Illegal Animal Fighting; Understanding the "Link" in Animal Abuse; Basic Animal Control Officer Investigations; Performing Animal Exhibitor Inspections; Understanding the ADA/Service Animals for ACO's/LEO's

**Animal Control Officer Specialized Training Course - Hosted by the Montgomery County ARC  
April 4-6, 2016 - Dayton, Ohio**

Schedule of Training: Illegal Animal Fighting; Understanding the "Link" in Animal Abuse; Basic Animal Control Officer Investigations; Performing Animal Exhibitor Inspections; Understanding the ADA/Service Animals for ACO's/LEO's

**Chemical Immobilization Certification - Hosted by the Macon-Bibb County Animal Welfare Department  
April 8, 2016 - Macon, Georgia**

Schedule of Training: Chemical Immobilization Certification

**Training Program for Animal Control Professionals - Hosted by the Cuyahoga County Animal Shelter  
April 18-21, 2016 or April 25-28, 2016 - Valley View, Ohio**

Schedule of Training: Interview and Investigation Techniques; Field Reports and Evidence Collection; Dangerous Dog Investigations; Report Writing; Courtroom Preparation and Testimony; Fitness and Nutrition/Stress Management; Dog Fighting Investigations; Multiculturalism in Animal Control

**Animal Control Protective Equipment Certification - Hosted by the North Kansas City Police Dept.  
May 9-12, 2016 - North Kansas City, Missouri**

Schedule of Training: Baton/Bitestick Certification; Pepper Spray Certification; Handcuffs - Arrest and Control Certification; Taser Certification; Chemical Immobilization Certification

**Training Program for Animal Control Professionals - Hosted by the City of Socorro  
May 23-27, 2016 - Socorro, New Mexico**

Schedule of Training: Tactical/Interpersonal Communication; Basic Animal Control Officer Investigations; Evidence Law and Collection; Investigative Techniques for Cruelty and Neglect Complaints; Safe Handling of Aggressive and Dangerous Dogs; Citations, Dangerous and Vicious Declarations; Stress Management for Animal Control Professionals

**Training Program for Animal Control Professionals - Hosted by Olive Branch Animal Control  
June 6-10, 2016 - Olive Branch, Mississippi**

Schedule of Training: Basic ACO Investigations; Tactical/Interpersonal Communication; Officer Safety and Self-Defense; Safe Handling of Aggressive and Dangerous Dogs; Safe Animal Handling/Capture and Restraint Equipment; Baton/Bitestick (certification); Chemical Immobilization (certification)

# ACTS Training Schedule

For a registration form, visit [www.aco-acts.com](http://www.aco-acts.com) or call 913-515-0080

**Training Program for Animal Control Professionals - Hosted by Cobb County Animal Control  
June 13-16, 2016 - Marietta, Georgia**

Schedule of Training: Safe Handling of Aggressive and Dangerous Dogs; Safe Animal Handling/Capture and Restraint Equipment; Basic Animal Control Officer Investigations; Evidence Law and Collection; Dog Fighting Investigation; Tactical/Interpersonal Communication; Officer Safety and Self-Defense

**Field Training Officer Certification - Hosted by the North Kansas City Police Department  
July 14-15, 2016 - North Kansas City, Missouri**

Schedule of Training: Field Training Officer Certification

**Field Training Officer Certifications - Hosted by the Montgomery County Animal Resource Center  
July 28-29, 2016 - Dayton, Ohio**

Schedule of Training: Field Training Officer Certification

**Training Program for Animal Control Professionals - Hosted by the City of Abbeville  
August 1-5, 2016 - Abbeville, Alabama**

Schedule of Training: Baton/Bitestick Certification; Pepper Spray Certification; ACO Firearms Training/Field Euthanasia; Evidence Law and Collection; Citations, Dangerous and Vicious Declarations; Investigative Techniques for Cruelty and Neglect Complaints; Safe Handling of Aggressive and Dangerous Dogs; Safe Animal Handling/Capture and Restraint Equipment

**Field Training Officer Certification - Hosted by the Wisconsin Animal Control Association  
September 8-9, 2016 - Green Bay, Wisconsin**

Schedule of Training: Field Training Officer Certification

**Animal Control Officer Safety Training Course - Hosted by the North Kansas City Police Department  
September 12-15, 2016 - North Kansas City, Missouri**

Schedule of Training: Tactical/Interpersonal Communication; Officer Safety and Self Defense; Pepper Spray Certification; Safe Handling of Aggressive and Dangerous Dogs; Baton/Bitestick Certification

**Training Program for Animal Control Professionals - Hosted by Cobb County Animal Control  
October 3-5, 2016 - Marietta, Georgia**

Schedule of Training: Multiculturalism in Animal Control; Investigative Techniques for Cruelty and Neglect Complaints; Illegal Animal Fighting

**Animal Control Protective Equipment Certification - Hosted by the Montgomery County ARC  
October 17-20, 2016 - Dayton, Ohio**

Schedule of Training: Baton/Bitestick Certification; Pepper Spray Certification; Handcuffs - Arrest and Control Certification; Taser Certification; Chemical Immobilization Certification

**Animal Control Officer Specialized Training Course - Hosted by the North Kansas City Police Dept.  
November 7-9, 2016 - North Kansas City, Missouri**

Schedule of Training: Multiculturalism in Animal Control; Citations, Dangerous and Vicious Declarations; Interview and Investigation Techniques; Investigative Techniques for Cruelty and Neglect Complaints

# **Animal Control Training Services Professional Review of Operations**

## **WHY A REVIEW?**

Animal Control/Care agencies are no different than other enforcement organizations as far as their susceptibility to crisis management. They often become so busy with their daily problems that they do not have the time to plan ahead. Or, if they have a plan, they don't have the time to see if they are staying on track.

A thorough review can point out what is working and what needs to be improved. New ideas can be presented for the agency's consideration. A proper review results in a win-win situation for the agency, government, and taxpayer.

## **WHAT WILL ACTS REVIEW?**

The team's report will include, but is not limited to, the following: Service Delivery Area, Administration, Communications, Shelter Operations, Field Operations, Occupational Safety Procedures, Licensing, Employee Attitude Survey, Community/Interagency Relations and the Proposed Implementation Plan.

## **ACTS BACKGROUND AND CAPABILITIES**

Animal Control Training Services is a limited liability company of the State of Kansas. The company was founded to provide for the development of Animal Control Officers and Field Services through training, certification and consultation, with an increased focus on officer safety and professional service.

Team members utilized in the evaluation process are currently engaged in the animal control profession. They have well-earned reputations for managing effective programs and understand government responsibilities and limitations. In view of the staff's practical experience in animal control, as lecturers on a nationwide level and as consultants, ACTS provides a full spectrum of services for nonprofit and government agencies. All ACTS evaluations are confidential with a written report given only to the contracting agency. Media contact, or the release of the report to additional individuals or agencies, is at the discretion of the contracting agency.

## **WHAT DOES IT COST?**

All program evaluations are assessed a minimum charge based upon the size of the agency, plus expenses. Once ACTS appraises the depth of the study, ACTS will submit a detailed, written proposal outlining all commitments required by both the contracting agency and ACTS.

## **REFERENCES**

ACTS lead evaluator has participated in reviews for city and county governments, nonprofit humane organizations, and other entities. For a full list of these references, please visit [www.aco-acts.com](http://www.aco-acts.com).

**For a no-obligation information consultation, call 913-515-0080 or  
email [info@aco-acts.com](mailto:info@aco-acts.com)**