

## New nonprofit animal clinic breaks ground in Thousand Palms

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Animal Samaritans, a nonprofit animal welfare organization, broke ground today on a veterinary clinic at 72-120 Petland Place, Thousand Palms, on the Coachella Valley Animal Campus. With the new clinic, Animal Samaritans will be able to more than double the number of low-cost spay and neuter surgeries they perform, and the number of vaccinations, said Suzanne Inhaber, the organization's business liaison.

Currently, the organization performs about 8,300 spay/neuter surgeries per year and 25,000 vaccinations, and they are "totally maxed out," she said. The new clinic will be able to perform 20,000 spay/neuter surgeries within five years.

Cost to sterilize a cat is \$60 for a cat and \$85 for a dog, with an extra charge for optional pain medications.

Construction is expected to begin within a couple months on the building, with completion eyed in about a year, she said. Cost of the facility is estimated at \$1.5 million, plus medical equipment, all funded with private money.

The 7,350-square-foot building also will be energy efficient, she said. For example, 50 "solar tubes" will be used for lights, and it will use solar energy. "We don't anticipate a large draw-down on electricity," she said.

The clinic is the first phase of a larger expansion "vision" created with the Coachella Valley Association of Governments back in 2003, she said. The second phase is planned to be a shelter and humane education center.



Board president of Animal Samaritans SPCA Bill Blue (from left), county supervisor representative Linda Gregory, Chris McGuire of the Berger Foundation, Executive Director for Animal Samaritans SPCA Fred Saunders, Animal Samaritans SPCA board member Mike Russell and Aurora Wilson, wife of Riverside County Supervisor Roy Wilson, break ground on Tuesday for what will be the new Animal Samaritans Veterinary Clinic in Thousands Palms. (Omar Ornelas The Desert Sun)