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MANAGEMENT from page 1A

Murray continued, "It doesn't matter if it's Marina (Lewis) working in the shelter, or me working in the lab; what we are is animal care welfare people. That means we care for animals."

Murray began working at OCHS on Aug. 24.

Lewis, who began work at the shelter on Aug. 17, has most recently been employed as an assistant shelter manager in Plano, Texas, but has been involved in many different aspects of the effort to help unwanted or neglected animals.

"I've spent the last few years of my professional career working in the animal welfare industry, both in no-kill shelters and in the veterinary field. I worked in an emergency veterinary hospital, where I learned so much about veterinary policies and techniques. I have spent the last half year as an assistant shelter manager in Plano," she said.

Lewis and Murray were both initially hesitant to consider working at OCHS, in part because of the tumult surrounding the shelter in the last year.

Lewis had done considerable research online to determine if she felt able to help the organi-



Staff members of Oregon Coast Humane Society stand with Board President Shauna Robbers (back row, third from left), Executive Director Bob Murray (back row, third from right) and Shelter Manager Marina Lewis (back row, second from right).

zation turn itself around. Once she read the news and posts concerning the OCHS, she started to seriously consider accepting the position.

"Overall, what I saw was that they just needed help, not that they were doing anything wrong," she said. "It seemed like it had changed hands many times, always very messily, and no one was sticking around to lead them to the changes that needed to happen. As a result, the animals and the people that care for them were suffering, and that was something I couldn't ignore."

"I met all of these wonderful, dedicated, hardworking and extremely passionate — but also exhausted — people, and I could not abandon them."

Murray was similarly hesitant about taking up the numerous challenges facing the OCHS when he considered becoming its executive director.

"At first I wasn't going to take the position. I live in Albany, so it's 95 miles from here. But I got a chance to walk through the facility and as soon as I met the staff and I saw the condition of the facility, I thought I might be able to help," he said.

Both new members of the

OCHS leadership team realize there are a number of hurdles that stand in the way of implementing a vision for OCHS, but both are eager to begin what will undoubtedly be a long-term process.

"I think part of the shelter's problem has been our complete lack of transparency, which I am trying to fix," Lewis said. "Right now, there are literally mountains of things that I need to accomplish. But I have identified a few things that need immediate attention, including the way our animals are housed, that needs to be changed immediately."

She said the cat facilities may remain as they are, but the dog quarters are in "desperate need of a complete overhaul," due mostly to when they were built decades ago.

Murray also has a list of projects that he will be working on, agreeing with Lewis that the most pressing is a much-needed upgrade to the kennels that house the shelter's canines.

"I've identified a highly practiced and well-regarded architect and construction firm from Washington that specializes in animal facilities. They give options for repair, deconstruction

and even construction in a new area, and these options will be presented to the board for their consideration," Murray said.

He added that the assessment and analysis of the main OCHS Shelter would be done free of charge, with various options highlighted for ease of transition and for cost considerations.

Looking to the future, Murray has a great deal of confidence in the staff and the board at OCHS. He said he is pleased to be working with Lewis at this critical juncture for the organization.

"A focus for the both of us is getting out on the floor with the staff, working with them and finding out where training is needed, learning from them and, most importantly, bonding as a team," Murray said.

In addition to the new employees, Robbers had more good news to share with supporters of the shelter.

"The DOJ just emailed me today, and they feel they are now able to close our case and we no longer have to report to them," she said.

For information on volunteering at the OCHS or becoming a supporting member, call 541-997-4277 or stop by the facility, 2840 Rhododendron Drive.

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