



## NEWS RELEASE

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Release Immediately  
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### ANIMAL NEGLECT/CRUELTY INVESTIGATION UPDATE

On Monday, December 17, 2012, Animal Friends of the Valleys (AFV), People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, Marin Humane Society, and other animal control agencies confirmed that approximately 600 reptiles and 18,400 rodents were confined at the building located at 530 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Lake Elsinore. After careful analysis, a team of veterinarians, reptile specialists, and animal cruelty investigations experts determined that due to the extreme neglect, cruelty and dangerously unhealthy long-term conditions, contaminated environment and the potential for further suffering, euthanasia was the safest and most humane option for the animals and the community at large.

Global Captive Breeders owner Mitch Behm surrendered custody of the animals to AFV on December 15, authorizing AFV to end the animals' suffering. Authorities are continuing their investigation and working with other agencies in determining next steps.

Animal Friends of the Valleys Executive Director Willa Bagwell said "It has been a grueling and emotional week for AFV staff and all the volunteers involved in this heartbreaking process who have had to endure witnessing how these animals suffered. I feel strongly that we have a case of animal suffering and death due to human greed. We are thankful to PETA for bringing this horrendous situation to our attention, and to PETA and Marin Humane Society for providing us with the resources needed for this operation."

City website: [www.lake-elsinore.org](http://www.lake-elsinore.org)

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Business Hours: Monday through Thursday: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Friday: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 pm.

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*The City of Lake Elsinore features Southern California's largest natural freshwater lake. The City's current population is estimated at 53,024. The City's brand and slogan, "Dream Extreme," exemplify the scenic beauty and active life style of this 124 year old boom town. Visitors and residents enjoy water sports such as skiing, power boating and fishing, world-class sky diving drop zone and thermals, a regional motocross track, professional baseball, an 18 hole golf course, outlet shops, plus dining and entertainment in Historic Downtown. The City's Web site is [www.lake-elsinore.org](http://www.lake-elsinore.org).*