MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 26, 2007

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Lew C. Bauman
County Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: County Administrative Officer’s Weekly Report for November 26, 2007

This is the weekly report by the County Administrative Officer to the Board of Supervisors. This report provides information on issues affecting the County and the progress of County activities.

Health Department

The Monterey County Health Department’s Steps to a Healthier Salinas program earned the Silver Anvil in the Overall Public Relations and Multicultural Public Relations categories from a panel of public relations judges.

The award, which recognizes excellence in public relations strategy and execution in the greater Bay Area, Sacramento and Sierra Nevada regions, was presented at the Northern California Silver and Bronze Anvil Awards Gala on November 15th in San Francisco. It was presented to Brown-Miller Communications (BMC), a Martinez based public relations firm, which has worked with Monterey County Health Department staff to create the comprehensive Steps campaign, also known as Value It... Valorelo! – Son Los Pasos Que Tomamos.

The Steps to a Healthier Salinas social marketing campaign uses a multi-level strategy to involve the community through various channels including schools, restaurants, faith-based organizations, and worksites. The media campaign, which is embedded in this social marketing campaign, has been hugely successful in reaching thousands of Salinas’ residents to encourage them to lead healthy lifestyles.
The *Steps to a Healthier Salinas* campaign is made up of radio, television, bus, and newspaper advertisements, stairway graphics at the Rodeo grounds and Health Department, and an art installation by renowned artist, John Cerney. The advertisements and murals include local government and business leaders and representatives of grassroots organizations that have contributed to the health of the community.

Judges commented that they “loved the steps graphics” and that the overall campaign was “well done”. In addition, the multicultural campaign judges commented on its “good integration, first-rate research, and measurement of results.” One of the judges said it was “superb, one of the best”. Ads can be viewed at the Steps website: [www.stepstohealthiersalinas.org](http://www.stepstohealthiersalinas.org).

Library

The Monterey County Free Libraries system recently expanded a very special program for children who would like to practice their reading skills. Kids can now read to a canine friend at both the Marina and Carmel Valley branch libraries.

Lily, a gentle white Labrador, has recently begun visiting the Carmel Valley Branch with her handler, Cindy Thatcher, and Loki, a five-year old Australian Shepherd, visits the Marina branch every Tuesday at 4 p.m., with her handler, Anna Holden-Martz. Both dogs are certified therapy dogs. Loki is the second therapy dog to regularly listen to early readers at the Marina branch.

In Monterey County 25% of adults read below the 4th grade level, and 4 in 10 children in the U.S are believed to have trouble reading. Reading ability in the early years has been linked with continued school success, which can have an important effect on future achievements.

Many studies have shown that reading out loud improves reading skills. Animals are ideal reading companions because they create a relaxed, comfortable, and safe environment. Children who are shy or struggle with reading are sometimes more willing to interact with an animal than another person. All the happy children who have been reading to the dogs at the Monterey County Free Libraries seem to agree reading to animals is less intimidating and simply more fun!

For more information or to reserve a spot, community members may call the Marina Branch at (831) 883-7507 or the Carmel Valley Branch at (831) 659-2377.

This concludes the CAO report.