

**THANK YOU FOR THAT INTRODUCTION, ALEX, AND
THANK YOU FOR THE OUTSTANDING WORK THAT
YOU AND YOUR TEAM AT ANIMAL SERVICES DO FOR
OUR COMMUNITY'S ANIMALS.**

GOOD MORNING, EVERYONE!

**TODAY IS A CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION ... A DAY
SEVERAL YEARS IN THE MAKING.**

**BUT WHILE WE HAVE MUCH TO CELEBRATE IN OUR
COUNTY TODAY, I'D LIKE TO TAKE A MOMENT TO
REMEMBER OUR FRIENDS IN ORLANDO WHO LOST
THEIR LIVES TO VIOLENCE. MY THOUGHTS AND
PRAYERS ARE WITH THEM AND THEIR FAMILIES.**

**I'D ALSO LIKE TO TAKE A MOMENT TO THANK AND
RECOGNIZE COMMISSIONER JOSE "PEPE" DIAZ AND
COMMISSIONER SALLY HEYMAN. THE
COMMISSIONERS HAVE BEEN LONG-TIME
SUPPORTERS AND ADVOCATES FOR ANIMALS IN
OUR COMMUNITY, AND I'M HAPPY THAT TODAY,
THANKS TO THEIR SUPPORT, WE'RE ABLE TO
OPEN THE LARGEST AIR-CONDITIONED SHELTER IN
THE COUNTRY HERE IN DORAL.**

AGAIN, THE LARGEST AIR-CONDITIONED SHELTER IN THE COUNTRY! AND THAT DESERVES A ROUND OF APPLAUSE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

IT'S ALSO GOOD TO HAVE DORAL MAYOR LUIGI BORIA AND COUNCILWOMAN SANDRA RUIZ WITH US THIS MORNING. THANK YOU BOTH.

I ALSO WANT TO THANK A.S.P.C.A PRESIDENT AND CEO MATTHEW BERSHADKER AND VICE PRESIDENT JULIE MORRIS, AND ALL OF THE STAFF WHO ARE WITH US TODAY FOR BEING HERE AND HELPING US MAKE THIS IMPORTANT PROJECT A REALITY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I'M PLEASED TO JOIN YOU THIS MORNING FOR THE GRAND OPENING OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S NEW PET ADOPTION AND PROTECTION CENTER!

AS I'VE STATED MANY TIMES BEFORE, THERE'S A LOT OF PASSION IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY FOR OUR ANIMALS. AND I SHARE THAT PASSION.

MY WIFE, LOURDES, AND I HAVE THREE DOGS AT HOME WHO ARE A BIG PART OF OUR FAMILY. ONE OF THOSE DOGS WAS RESCUED FROM THE STREETS OF MIAMI.

AND THAT KIND OF PASSION FOR OUR PETS IS WHY MIAMI-DADE COUNTY CONTINUES TO INVEST IN ANIMAL SERVICES.

THIS IS THE FIRST NEW SHELTER WE'VE HAD IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IN MORE THAN 40 YEARS.

THIS PROJECT WAS DELAYED FOR MORE THAN 10 YEARS PRIOR TO MY ADMINISTRATION. SOON AFTER BECOMING MAYOR, I MADE IT A PRIORITY TO DELIVER THIS NEW FACILITY FOR BOTH THE PETS AND PEOPLE OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.

AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT WE DID.

I CAN TELL YOU THAT IT WASN'T EASY BECAUSE OF THE FUNDING CHALLENGES WE FACED.

IN ORDER TO COMPLETE CONSTRUCTION ON THIS CENTER, WE HAD TO IDENTIFY MORE THAN \$7 MILLION OF COUNTY FUNDING.

BUT BECAUSE WE BELIEVED THAT OUR COMMUNITY'S ANIMALS DESERVED THE VERY BEST, MY ADMINISTRATION AND I -- ALONG WITH THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS -- IDENTIFIED AND ALLOCATED THE FUNDS TO MAKE IT HAPPEN. I'D ESPECIALLY LIKE TO THANK BUDGET DIRECTOR

JENNIFER MOON FOR HER ROLE THROUGHOUT THAT PROCESS.

AND WHILE WE'RE ON THE TOPIC OF FUNDING, I WANT TO REITERATE MY COMMITMENT TO INVESTING IN OUR ANIMALS.

I THINK THE NUMBERS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.

WHEN I FIRST BECAME MAYOR IN 2011, THE GENERAL FUND SUBSIDY FOR ANIMAL SERVICES WAS ONLY \$1.3 MILLION.

WE'VE INCREASED THAT NUMBER TO MORE THAN \$10 MILLION.

AND I'M PROUD TO SAY THAT THE TOTAL BUDGET FOR THE CARE AND PROTECTION OF OUR COMMUNITY'S ANIMALS IS NOW ALMOST \$21 MILLION!

I THINK THAT ALSO DESERVES A ROUND OF APPLAUSE.

MY ADMINISTRATION AND I ALSO SHARE THE SAME GOAL AS ANIMAL ADVOCATES OF MAKING MIAMI-DADE A NO-KILL COUNTY.

WHEN I BECAME MAYOR, THE ANIMAL “SAVE RATE” WAS AROUND 51 PERCENT FOR DOGS AND 25 PERCENT FOR CATS.

TODAY, OUR ANIMAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT HAS A “SAVE RATE” FOR BOTH CATS AND DOGS AT APPROXIMATELY 90 PERCENT!

DIRECTOR ALEX MUÑOZ AND HIS TEAM HAVE BEEN HARD AT WORK ON THIS. BUT WE WANT TO SAVE EVEN MORE ANIMALS. THAT’S WHY WE’RE OPENING THIS PET ADOPTION AND PROTECTION CENTER.

WE WOULDN’T BE OPENING THIS BEAUTIFUL, NEW CENTER TODAY IF IT WEREN’T FOR ALEX AND HIS TEAM, SO LET’S GIVE THEM A ROUND OF APPLAUSE.

I’D ALSO LIKE TO THANK AND RECOGNIZE DEPUTY MAYOR ALINA HUDAK AND HER TEAM, AND INTERNAL SERVICES DIRECTOR TARA SMITH AND HER TEAM, FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING WORK TO BRING THIS CENTER TO OUR WORLD-CLASS COMMUNITY.

AND, I’D LIKE TO THANK TONY ROSABAL, PRINCIPAL OF L.I.V.S. ARCHITECTURE FIRM, FOR SEEING THIS PROJECT THROUGH WITH US TO COMPLETION.

THIS REALLY IS A BEAUTIFUL SPACE, ISN'T IT?

AFTER MORE THAN 40 YEARS IN AN OUTDATED BUILDING THAT WAS HALF THE SIZE OF THE NEW CENTER, WE ARE HAPPY TO OPEN A NEARLY 72,000 SQUARE-FOOT FACILITY THAT WILL NOT ONLY HELP SAVE MORE ANIMALS AND INCREASE OUR HIGH-VOLUME SPAY-NEUTER CAPACITY, BUT WILL ALSO SERVE AS A VENUE FOR EDUCATION, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EXPANDED SERVICES FOR ANIMALS.

THIS IS ALSO THE FIRST PUBLIC CENTER IN THE COUNTY SPECIFICALLY DEDICATED TO THE CARE AND PROTECTION OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S CATS AND DOGS. AND WE KNOW THIS IS A SPACE THAT INCORPORATES BEST PRACTICES IN ANIMAL HOUSING BECAUSE WE WERE FORTUNATE TO HAVE THE EXPERT CONSULTATION OF DR. SANDRA NEWBURY, CHAIR OF THE SHELTER STANDARD TASK FORCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SHELTER VETERINARIANS, ON THE BUILDING DESIGN.

JUST LOOK AROUND YOU. THIS CENTER SETS A NEW STANDARD FOR SHELTERS IN THE U.S.

THIS SPACE WAS DESIGNED TO BE A PLACE WHERE THE COMMUNITY CAN PARTICIPATE IN SAVING LIVES THROUGH ADOPTION, LOW-COST SPAY/NEUTER, AND PET CARE WORKSHOPS.

THE CENTER'S SLEEK, MALL-LIKE LAYOUT HELPS CREATE AN ENHANCED PET ADOPTION EXPERIENCE.

WE'VE ALSO EMBEDDED ART INSTALLATIONS THAT CELEBRATE CATS AND DOGS IN THE CENTER'S ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN.

AND WE KNOW HOW IMPORTANT CAPACITY IS WHEN IT COMES TO SAVING OUR GROWING ANIMAL POPULATION. THAT'S WHY I'M PLEASED THAT OUR NEW PET ADOPTION AND PROTECTION CENTER PROVIDES 25 PERCENT MORE SPACE FOR HOUSING DOGS AND ALMOST DOUBLES HOUSING SPACE FOR CATS THAN WE HAD IN MEDLEY.

AS I MENTIONED EARLIER, THIS IS ALSO THE LARGEST AIR-CONDITIONED ANIMAL SHELTER IN THE COUNTRY. AND THE AIR-CONDITIONING SYSTEM IS DESIGNED TO CONTROL CROSS CONTAMINATION OF DISEASE.

THAT'S AN IMPORTANT PART OF SAVING AND PROTECTING PETS, AND A CHALLENGE THAT WE WANTED TO ADDRESS FROM THE OLD FACILITY.

PLAY AND EXERCISE ARE ALSO IMPORTANT TO OUR PETS. AND THAT'S WHY THIS CENTER FEATURES OUTDOOR, COVERED PLAY AND EXERCISE AREAS TO FACILITATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF PLAYGROUPS AND WALKING PROGRAMS FOR OUR PETS.

WE ALSO HAVE INDOOR PLAY AREAS FOR CATS THAT INCLUDE FREE-ROAMING PLAY ROOMS -- A NEW FEATURE FOR ANIMAL SERVICES.

AND NOW THAT THIS CENTER IS COMPLETE, WE CAN SAY THAT WE HAVE THE TYPE OF FACILITY THAT WILL ALLOW US TO PROVIDE THE BEST POSSIBLE CARE FOR OUR COMMUNITY'S ANIMALS.

IN FACT, THIS CENTER IS SO GREAT THAT THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA'S DIRECTOR OF VETERINARY MEDICINE SAID HE WON'T SEND HIS STUDENTS HERE BECAUSE THEN THEY WON'T WANT TO WORK ANYWHERE ELSE!

IF THAT'S NOT A THUMBS-UP FOR US, I DON'T KNOW WHAT IS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, OUR NEWEST FACILITY IN DORAL WILL HELP US CONTINUE TO MEET OUR NO-KILL GOALS.

THAT'S WHY WE'RE OPENING THIS NEW CENTER, AND WHY WE OPENED A NEW SPAY-NEUTER CLINIC IN HOMESTEAD IN MARCH. WE'VE ALSO BUILT AN INFRASTRUCTURE OF MORE THAN 30 PRIVATE VET OFFICES TO OFFER A COUNTY-FUNDED VOUCHER PROGRAM FOR SPAY-AND-NEUTER SERVICES.

ALL OF THE WORK THAT WE'RE DOING IS TO HELP SAVE AND SERVE THE 30,000 ANIMALS THAT ANIMAL SERVICES TAKES IN EVERY YEAR.

AND OUR NEWEST FACILITY MARKS YET ANOTHER MILESTONE IN THE COUNTY'S EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR OUR COMMUNITY'S ANIMALS.

I REMAIN COMMITTED TO THIS, AND I KNOW MANY OF YOU DO, TOO.

SO, LET'S CONTINUE WORKING TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY TO MAKE A BETTER MIAMI-DADE FOR OUR PETS.

**THANK YOU FOR JOINING US THIS MORNING,
EVERYONE.**

**MAY GOD BLESS YOU AND CONTINUE TO BLESS
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY!**

**AND NOW I'LL GIVE SOME BRIEF REMARKS IN
SPANISH.**

¡BUENOS DÍAS A TODOS!

**¡HOY ES UN GRAN DÍA EN EL CONDADO DE MIAMI-
DADE!**

HEMOS ESPERADO MUCHOS AÑOS PARA ESTE DÍA.

**Y AUNQUE HOY ES MOTIVO DE CELEBRACIÓN AQUÍ
EN EL CONDADO, ME GUSTARÍA TOMAR UN
MOMENTO PARA RECORDAR A NUESTROS AMIGOS
DE ORLANDO. NUESTROS PENSAMIENTOS Y
ORACIONES ESTÁN CON LAS VÍCTIMAS Y SUS
FAMILIARES.**

**ESTAMOS AQUÍ EN DORAL PARA INAUGURAR EL
CENTRO DE ADOPCIÓN Y PROTECCIÓN DE ANIMALES
CON AIRE ACONDICIONADO *MÁS GRANDE* DE
ESTADOS UNIDOS.**

**ESTE ES EL PRIMER REFUGIO COMPLETAMENTE
NUEVO QUE HEMOS ABIERTO EN MÁS DE 40 AÑOS.**

Y DEBO DECIRLES QUE EL PROCESO NO HA SIDO FÁCIL.

PERO PORQUE CREO QUE LOS ANIMALES DE NUESTRA COMUNIDAD SE MERECEEN LO MEJOR DE LO MEJOR, MI ADMINISTRACIÓN Y YO JUNTO A LA COMISIÓN, ENCONTRAMOS LOS FONDOS PARA HACER QUE ESTO SEA UNA REALIDAD HOY EN DÍA.

EL PRESUPUESTO ACTUAL DEL DEPARTAMENTO DE SERVICIOS PARA ANIMALES PARA EL CUIDADO Y LA PROTECCIÓN DE NUESTRAS MASCOTAS ES DE \$21 MILLONES.

Y CREO QUE ESO SE MERECE UN FUERTE APLAUSO.

CUANDO FUI ELECTO ALCALDE, LA TASA DE SALVACIÓN ERA DE 51 PORCIENTO PARA PERROS Y 25 PORCIENTO PARA GATOS.

ACTUALMENTE, HEMOS ALCANZADO LA META DE SALVAR LA VIDA DE LOS ANIMALES EN NUESTRO CUIDADO, QUE ES DE UN 90 PORCIENTO.

DAMAS Y CABALLEROS, ESTE NUEVO CENTRO AQUÍ EN DORAL NOS AYUDARÁ A CONTINUAR SALVANDO EL MAYOR NÚMERO DE ANIMALES PARA MANTENER ESA META.

SIGO COMPROMETIDO A ESTA CAUSA Y SÉ QUE MUCHOS DE USTEDES TAMBIÉN.

ASÍ QUE CONTINUEMOS TRABAJANDO JUNTOS COMO COMUNIDAD PARA DARLES LO MEJOR A NUESTRAS MASCOTAS.

GRACIAS POR ACOMPAÑARNOS ESTA MAÑANA.

¡DIOS LOS BENDIGA!

