
Rio Dell City Hall
675 Wildwood Avenue
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(707) 764-3532
cityofriodell.ca.gov



PRESS RELEASE

7-23-2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City of Rio Dell Launches Community Fundraising Campaign for New Police Department Animal Kennel

Rio Dell, California — The City of Rio Dell is calling on residents, businesses, and animal lovers throughout Humboldt County and nationwide to help build a permanent, humane home for the animals in the Rio Dell Police Department's care.

Right now, Rio Dell has no kennel facility of its own. When officers take in a stray, injured or abandoned pet, there is nowhere in the city to safely and humanely house it. Animals are currently transported to Fortuna PD for kenneling, a temporary measure.

The City Council has approved moving forward with a permanent solution: a secure, sanitary, climate-controlled, six-run kennel facility built specifically for municipal animal control operations. The project — recommended by a City Council ad hoc committee that spent months evaluating options — will give Rio Dell's Police Department the tools it needs to protect animal welfare and reunite lost pets with their families faster.

The estimated cost of the project is approximately \$125,000. Rio Dell is asking the community to help fund 30 percent of that total — and every dollar donated brings this project closer to reality.

"This community has a chance right now to set a new standard for how we care for animals in Rio Dell and across Humboldt County," said Rio Dell Mayor Debra Garnes. "That next chapter should be humane, it should be trusted, and it should belong to all of us. That chapter starts with Rio Dell building a home of our own. Help us build it."

Under the funding plan approved by the City Council, the City will move forward immediately with site preparation to stay on schedule, while staff actively pursues donations, sponsorships, and grants toward the community share of the cost. Once that community goal is reached, the City will complete the project — funding the balance and putting a permanent kennel into service.

Why this matters:

- No safe place today. Rio Dell has no kennel of its own — animals are currently sent out of town for housing, adding delay and cost every time an animal is taken into custody.
- Faster reunions. A local, on-site facility means lost pets can be processed and returned to their owners faster, without the extra time and paperwork of an out-of-city transfer.
- Built for the job. The facility includes six individual runs, climate control, sanitary flooring and drainage, and secure fencing — designed specifically for animal control work, not adapted from something else.
- A lasting asset of compassion and care. This is a one-time investment in permanent infrastructure that will serve Rio Dell's animals in a responsible and ethical manner.

Every gift — whether from an individual, a local business, a civic group, or a foundation — moves Rio Dell closer to breaking ground on a facility our animals and our community deserve. No contribution is too small, and every donor will be helping build something we all will be proud of. Donations to the city may be tax-deductible; consult your tax advisor.

"Winter is fast approaching and we have a narrow window to make this happen before then," concluded Rio Dell Police Chief Josh Phinney.

How to help: Residents and organizations interested in donating, sponsoring, or learning more about the Animal Kennel Project can contact Rio Dell City Hall at (707) 764-3532 or visit www.cityofriodell.ca.gov and select "Online Payments" on the home page. Choose "Donation" from the payment type menu and note "Animal Kennel Project" in the comments field. Checks can also be mailed to:

Animal Kennel Project
c/o City Hall
675 Wildwood Avenue
Rio Dell, CA 95562

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