The Marine Mammal Center

Advancing Rehabilitation,
Scientific Discovery and Education

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The Marine Mammal Center to Hold Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for New Central Coast Facility

Morro Bay Rescue and Triage Center provides additional care for ill marine mammals

(SAUSALITO, Calif. – July 26, 2005) The Marine Mammal Center will hold a ribbon cutting ceremony event to announce the opening of its brand new field triage office site in Morro Bay. The event, which will be by invite only, is scheduled for Aug. 4 at 10:30am. Members of the media are welcome to attend. The site, located on Duke Energy land, includes a brand new building which will contain offices, a food preparation area, medical room and six fenced-in pens to temporarily house patients. The Center has had a presence in San Luis Obispo area since 1993. The much-needed facilities in Morro Bay will help area volunteers quickly treat minor seal and otter injuries and ailments on site and provide temporary recuperation housing for patients.

"The opening of this field office is a dream come true and will allow us to quickly and efficiently rescue and treat even more marine mammals that strand along the central coast," said B.J. Griffin, Executive Director of The Marine Mammal Center. "Thanks to the generous in-kind donation from Duke Energy, we are able to lease the land from them at a very reasonable price. This will help keep many of our operation costs down, yet provide an optimal rescue presence on the central coast that we didn't have before."

The field office will be located on two acres of land on the southeast corner of the Duke power plant facility in Morro Bay. Duke is leasing the parcel to The Center for $1 for the next 20 years. Duke provides The Center with a similar in-kind donation for a field office at its power plant in Moss Landing.

"We're extremely happy that we can provide the land that will become the launch pad of operations for The Marine Mammal Center to continue to rescue seals and sea lions here on the central coast," said Randy Hickok, Vice President for Duke Energy. "This is an important initiative and represents a significant opportunity for us to further our 8-year relationship with The Center."

The Marine Mammal Center is sub-leasing the $1 million property to Pacific Wildlife Care, an all volunteer organization dedicated to rehabilitating orphaned and ill birds, raccoons, and other wildlife.

The new Morro Bay field office has been five years in the making. Because it's located away from a road, utilities, such as water and sewer, had to be built. In 2004, volunteers rescued approximately 150 marine mammals within the Morro Bay and San Luis Obispo regions. The new site will give volunteers the ability to treat minor injuries such as entanglements and malnutrition, on location and then release the animals back into their familiar habitats. Before the new site, rescued patients stayed overnight in specially equipped, volunteer-owned garages and were transported the next day to the main hospital in Sausalito for further treatment and rehabilitation. Seriously injured or diseased animals will still be taken to that facility for extensive medical care.

Celebrating its 30th year in 2005, The Marine Mammal Center is a nonprofit hospital dedicated to the rescue and rehabilitation of ill and injured marine mammals, and to research about their health and diseases. Volunteers and staff have treated more than 10,000 California sea lions, elephant seals, porpoises, and other marine life, along 600 miles of coastline from Mendocino County to San Luis Obispo County. In fact, The Center treats more marine mammals than any other institution of its kind in the world, uniquely combining its rehabilitation program with scientific discovery and education programs to advance the understanding of marine mammal health, ocean health and conservation.
On the Web: www.marinemammalcenter.org

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