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## **A homier Humane Society**

### **\$7 million Ozaukee facility would house animals outside of cages in a much larger building**

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The Wisconsin Humane Society is planning to build a \$7 million facility in Saukville that will feature solar panels and geothermal pumps for heating plus a water recycling system - and no cages.

The planned facility is to be the new home for the Ozaukee Humane Society and plans call for it to complement the Wisconsin Humane Society's main facility at 4500 W. Wisconsin Ave. in Milwaukee, Victoria Wellens, the society's executive director, said Thursday.

"This (Ozaukee) facility will allow us to do more intervention with at-risk animals," Wellens said.

"The new facility will have more long-term options and more behavior modification and intervention for animals. It will reflect more of the environment where the animal will be living with a family."

In addition, the new Ozaukee facility is expected to be a regional training center for the Denver-based American Humane Association, an animal welfare organization that works with shelters and veterinarians. Animals up for adoption are housed in cages at the current Ozaukee County facility, while plans for the new facility would place the animals in rooms somewhat similar to a house, "because that's the best way to make an animal understand what it's like to be in a home," Wellens said.

The Wisconsin Ave. facility in Milwaukee is considered a high-volume adoption location, Wellens said. It has about 40,000 square feet of space, while the proposed Ozaukee facility is expected to have about 30,000 square feet.

In 2004, the Wisconsin Humane Society merged operations with the Ozaukee Humane Society.

The current Ozaukee facility is in a crowded building with less than 4,000 square feet at 2073 Highway W in the Town of Grafton. The facility, which the society moved into and converted in 1988, used to be the concession stand of the former Highway 57 Outdoor Theater.

The proposed site, on Highway 33 at the entrance to the Dekora Woods Business Park, includes woodlands and wetlands, and the society plans to ask the state Department of Natural Resources to allow walking paths for dogs in the wetland area.

The Wisconsin Humane Society has received about \$3.5 million in donations for the new facility, she said, and about 90% of this money came from one donor, who asked to remain anonymous, Wellens said. The society will hold a fund-raising drive to raise the rest of the money and hopes to begin building the facility in about three years.

The Saukville Community Development Authority last week unanimously agreed to sell the Wisconsin Humane Society slightly more than 3 acres for the new facility for \$300,000, Saukville Village President Barb Dickmann said Thursday. The society has an option to buy the land and was given three years to exercise its option, Dickmann said.

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