

LAS CRUCES SUN-NEWS

ON THE POSITIVE SIDE

COMMENTARY: Come to the shelter and adopt a pet

By Mike Hainer For the Sun-News

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The number of animals arriving at our community animal shelter has increased every month and it looks like we may have an unprecedented number without a home and ultimately euthanized, perhaps more than 14,000 dogs and cats before end of year. This represents an increase, not a decrease, in unnecessary killing of homeless pets in Doña Ana County.

On the positive side, the workers at the Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley are hustling more than ever to host dog and cat adoption events throughout Las Cruces every week. "Off-site" animal adoption events are being held every Saturday at our downtown Farmers Market. Community businesses are also stepping forward to host an off-site adoption event every weekend. And there is always the cat adoption center at our local PetSmart store every day. The PetSmart adoption center is a 100 percent volunteer-managed adoption service operated by the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico using cats rescued from the ASCMV. Wow! The whole community is working together with our animal shelter to save as many animals as possible.

The only real solution to the animal overpopulation challenge in Doña Ana County is widespread spaying and neutering of pets throughout the county, along with elimination of casual breeders who are selling hundreds of unaltered pets. Adoption of animals from our community animal shelter essentially accomplishes the same as a spay or neuter because each adopted cat or dog is vaccinated, microchipped, and yes — spayed or neutered! The best thing that can happen now is for our community animal shelter to become the most convenient, customer-friendly and most affordable place to get a pet. Yes, the future number of animals going into the shelter can be greatly reduced by widespread adoption of altered pets from the shelter today. Hey, that means that all these adoption events are not only saving a life, but will also reduce the number of homeless pets that would be killed in the future.

As if this was not good news enough, pet adoptions are now at sale price through Dec. 31. Dogs are only \$50 and cats only \$25. This is sheer genius for tough economic times when the extra savings can be used for pet food, a collar, a leash, pet food bowls, pet toys and even the beginning of a veterinarian care savings jar. We need to all applaud the staff at the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley for their work to adopt out as many altered animals as possible at great prices. Better yet, you and your family or your friends can even be part of the affordable fun and lifesaving work each weekend. To participate in off-site adoption events contact Maria Chavez, volunteer coordinator for the ASCMV at (575) 382-0018, ext. 119, or by cell at (575) 202-5360.

Michael Hainer is president of the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico.