

# LAS CRUCES SUN-NEWS

Commentary: Building toward a no-kill community

By Mike Hainer For the Sun-News

Article Launched: 05/18/2008 12:00:00 AM MDT

Area residents may have heard by now about our new no-kill community goal, where healthy and treatable animals are no longer killed.

Widespread access to free or affordable spay and neuter services as well as easy and affordable adoptions from the Animal Service Center of Mesilla Valley are part of the recipe. A recognized article, "Building a No-Kill Community" written by Nathan Winograd in 2004 describes achieving that goal.

But first, a more important ingredient. A willingness for people and organizations to work together toward our goal. A wide variety of views and opinions may exist within our city and county Animal Control Services; staff at the Animal Services Center of Mesilla Valley; veterinarians; animal advocacy organizations; city and county elected officials and their staff, and interested citizens and volunteers. The best way for us to effectively save the lives of healthy and treatable animals in the shortest amount of time is to make a decision to work together.

Building bridges across our various philosophies, taking the time to develop understanding and respect for each other and our different roles, and then creating measurable goals for reducing the unnecessary killing of healthy or treatable animals is the key. This is also the pathway to community grants for use across our entire animal welfare system to achieve our no-kill community goal. In 2004, leaders from throughout the United States convened in Asilomar, Calif. for this purpose. The Asilomar Accords are the result. The tenets of mutual respect within a community coalition committed to saving healthy and treatable animals is the foundation for our work together here. The Asilomar Accords are at <http://www.asilomaraccords.org>.

Our community leaders in animal welfare advocacy, managers of our public animal welfare services and interested citizens must now do our homework on working to achieve a no-kill community. We will develop a better understanding of each other, then begin regular and organized and respectful work together. Now is the very best time to build upon the good work of the past year.

The Humane Society of Southern New Mexico invites to you to "For the HeART of Animals" on Friday, June 20, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum. Tickets are available now. Go to [www.hssnm.org](http://www.hssnm.org), or call 521-3642, or come by our Saturday morning Adoption Event at the Downtown Mall Farmers Market. Volunteers can visit our Web site or call (575) 521-3642.

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