

On the Positive Side: Despite inclement weather, spay/neuter event a success

By Frank Bryce / For the Sun-News

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The recent snow and ice storm along with the resulting bad road conditions dramatically curtailed activity in Doña Ana County and nearby El Paso. The fender benders and vehicles that slid into roadside ditches numbered in the hundreds and testified to the difficult travel conditions. Many of us were white-knuckled driving as we negotiated the slippery roads. Remarkably however, on a positive note, these hazardous conditions did not stop residents of our small neighbor community of Chaparral from getting to some particularly scheduled appointments during the snowy storm.

The Humane Society of Southern New Mexico (HSSNM) working with the Paws and Hooves Mobile Veterinary Services had taken advantage of an extra open day to schedule a spay and neuter event for participants in Chaparral. No one could know in advance that on the day of the event such a storm would occur. Everyone scheduled, with the exception of one family whose car would not start, showed up at their appointed times despite near record snow fall and treacherous conditions. The Paws and Hooves surgical staff and HSSNM volunteer help were obviously worried how the storm would affect the scheduled surgeries. It didn't!

Additionally, many of the participants that day took advantage of the pet micro-chipping opportunity provided collaboratively by HSSNM through the Animal Service Center of Mesilla Valley (ASCMV) Board of Directors. The adoption of this resolution provides micro-chips from the ASCMV at cost with a minimal administrative fee to supporting non-profit organizations. In the past month since picking up the first chips being provided to a non-profit partner, HSSNM has already provided 50 micro-chips to Chaparral pets. When fully implemented this micro-chip program will allow greater return of animals off animal control trucks. This reduces costs to all concerned, helps eliminate disease exposure to pets, minimizes stress to pets and parents, and is simply safer all way around.

The overall continuing success of the grant from PetSmart Charities to HSSNM for dog spays and neuters in the south valley is directly attributable to the participants of Chaparral. In the five events conducted at the end of 2012 and the three conducted in January already, the HSSNM grant has achieved 179 spays and neuters, given over 100 hundred rabies vaccinations and provided 50 micro-chips. While Chaparral residents have long been known to be concerned about pet overpopulation and unconfined dog issues, their determination to take advantage of the free spay and neuter event can only be described as remarkable.

Many thanks and much appreciation goes to the Paws and Hooves staff, the HSSNM volunteer help, and those who have donated funds to cover additional costs, and needed resource associated with the grant operation, but especially to Trish Anderson and Yvonne Dominguez, Chaparral residents. Their combined animal care skills, bilingual proficiency and compassion have been invaluable.

It can be hoped all our county community efforts will be as positively received.

Frank Bryce is president of the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico. Interested guest authors should contact HSSNM at 523-8020.