

ON THE POSITIVE SIDE

Volunteers, pet owners, businesses team up for microchip event

By Frank Bryce

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With the help of some dedicated and tireless volunteers, the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico microchipped 231 cats and dogs this past Saturday at Better Life Natural Pet Food store on Telshor Blvd. This may be the highest number of animals to be chipped at a single event here to date. It was said we were lucky it was rainy or we may still have been there Sunday morning doing chipping.

We had only one chipper as the few other folks trained were already committed to other engagements, live in Alamogordo, and one had car trouble.

Even with only one person doing the chipping from 9 a.m. until a bit past 5 p.m., everything went well.

The math indicates that almost one chip was done every two minutes. The volunteers had some difficult-to-handle, big and bouncy dogs, a few less-than-happy cats, and even found several unexpected previously microchipped cats and dogs to the surprise of the pet parents. Our participating volunteers were super and there is no way HSSNM could have done what was accomplished without them. The number of pet parents patiently waiting in line throughout the Better Life Natural Pet Food store and stretching far outside the store obviously did overwhelm the store and the store's regular customers. HSSNM does greatly appreciate the store owner Kat Lacey's patience with that inconvenience.

The participating HSSNM Board members want express HSSNM's thanks to Chiara Ramirez, Marie Hallock-Sweet, Amy DeFelix, Paula Lee, Cynthia Hoopes, Paula lee and Rick Hahn for their contribution to the success of the event.

HSSNM is close to developing additional trained implanters and people for the administrative paperwork, so we can increase the number of smaller regularly scheduled off-site business and residential venues for microchipping. This will decrease the wait time for participants and broaden the opportunities for every responsible pet parent to get to a site despite work schedules, weather, availability of pets (new arrivals, age, medical issues), etc. We got offers from several attendees at the event to train for microchipping and help at future events. These smaller events should prove better for the host business to allow more shopping time and less disruption to regular shoppers.

In addition to the great cooperation of Better Life Natural Pet Foods, the hard work of the volunteers, and good publicity provided far enough in advance, the price of \$6.35 per chip appears to be a tremendous incentive for pet parents. Microchipping helps bring the pets into compliance with the new ordinance revisions, reduces the intake and subsequent over-crowding at the ASCMV with the city and county animal control truck microchip scanners being employed, reduces cost of compliance to the pet parent, builds rapport between animal control and pet parents, and is a much more cost-effective program than before.

As we all know, pet parent responsibility, spaying and neutering, and microchipping are crucial to reducing intake at the shelter to save healthy and treatable animals.

Frank Bryce is president of HSSNM. Interested guest authors may contact HSSNM at 575-523-8020.