

## **On the Positive Side**

### **Spaying females key to reducing pet overpopulation**

**By Frank Bryce for the Sun-News**

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Earlier this year, the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico (HSSNM) published an article in "On the Positive Side" that challenged mainstream thinking about spaying and neutering of cats and dogs.

The pressing need for effective solutions to pet overpopulation is dramatically demonstrated by the overcrowding at the Animal Services Center of Mesilla Valley (ASCMV).

Sadly, a correspondingly high number of cats and dogs are routinely killed.

The 2010 Annual Report from the ASCMV shelter repeatedly documented that, despite efforts to prevent and reduce euthanasia, animals were killed just for existing unwanted in our community.

Animals die due to a wide range of non-serious medical and behavior issues, due to lack of staff and funds, due to a lack of available adopting homes or foster arrangements, and, heartbreakingly, even for lack of space.

With limited veterinary resources and increasing economic pressure on both public and private dollars, HSSNM believes, for the immediate and short term, in focusing on spaying only female cats and dogs.

This can achieve a significant reduction in pet overpopulation.

Spaying of four female cats out of five could reduce the number of offspring from 150 to 30 in a perfect reproductive year, regardless of the intact males present in the populations.

To this end, HSSNM has dedicated \$4,000 to initiate spay-only assistance for female dog and cat pet owners.

Current cat and dog owners who avail themselves of the low-cost spay surgery at the Animal Service Center of Mesilla Valley will be reimbursed for the \$25 spay fee for cats and the \$35 spay fee for dogs through this grant provided by HSSNM and its generous supporters. This offer is in effect until grant funds are exhausted.

Under this program, reimbursement is provided only for spaying of female cats and dogs, and can be obtained by submission of a copy of the paid spay receipt provided by the ASCMV program and proof of ownership (rabies vaccination certificate or microchip registration) to Humane Society of Southern New Mexico, P.O. Box 13826, Las Cruces, NM 88013.

The reimbursement program begins with spaces accomplished after April 15.

HSSNM still encourages continuing neutering of male cats and dogs for prevention of unwanted reproduction and possible health and behavior reasons.

Frank Bryce is president of the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico.