

## **ON THE POSITIVE SIDE**

### **State awards spay and neuter funds to Doña Ana County groups**

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**by Frank Bryce**

At the end of April, the New Mexico Animal Sheltering Board notified the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico it was allocated monies for spay and neuter initiatives in Doña Ana County.

HSSNM was one of 16 organizations in nine communities that was deemed most in need of spay and neuter monies at this time. HSSNM was awarded \$2,350 to be used exclusively on spay and neuter initiatives of companion animals within one year of the effective date of these funds.

Several other animal welfare organizations involved in providing spay and neuter services in Doa Ana County including the Coalition for Pets and People were awarded similar monies. These funds will provide a much appreciated shot in the arm to further enhance the combined efforts of these organizations. The funds are derived from spay and neuter car license tag fees.

With separate funding a renewed focus to inform pet owners throughout the county and solicit participation in the availability of low cost spay and neuter services should be seen soon. This includes spay and neuter static and digital billboards provided through a cooperative effort with Neuman Outdoor Advertising, mailings, public service announcements and personal contact by animal advocacies and animal control departments. A campaign using social media is being instituted encouraging participants to share the information with relatives and friends.

The Coalition for Pets and People is now conducting low-cost dog spay and neuter services for \$7 to residents in postal ZIP codes 88044, 88046, 88047, 88048, 88058 and 88072. Persons seeking spay and neuter services for their dogs can call 575-386-9212 or 575-382-0018 between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Monday through Friday for information and reservations.

Availability of these awarded monies will not only expand spay and neuter services but will free up some additional separate funding for microchipping of pets. Greater opportunities for microchipping are being provided throughout the entire county at a fast pace and HSSNM provides chips for \$6.35 for each pet. The next HSSNM event will be at the Zia Natural Gas Area Office, 3700 W. Picacho Ave., from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on June 17. Pet owners are reminded the chip is still the most effective method to ensure the return of lost pets. HSSNM continues to be involved in "chip return" animals to their families almost on a daily basis. Marie Hallock- Sweet, pet return transport coordinator, and HSSNM this past week met a big rig transporter at the TA truck stop on Amador Avenue when a dog stolen from El Paso and found in Baltimore was returned to its family.

The dog had been missing for about two months. You gotta love them chips!

In closing, as reported by the National Link Coalition in May, New Mexico took positive action and approved state funding for Pet Safe Havens.

The pioneering program will appropriate \$300,000 to \$50,000 per year over six years to provide temporary safe havens for animals of domestic violence survivors. The funds will become part of the budget of the Children Youth & Families Department. The funds will be disbursed for service provision to the New Mexico Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Animal protection of New Mexico's Companion Animal Rescue Effort program. The program is believed to be the first in the nation to provide state funding for pet "safe haven" programs.

*Frank Bryce is president of HSSNM. Interested guest authors can call HSSNM at 575-523-8020.*