

LAS CRUCES SUN-NEWS

On the Positive Side: Spay/neuter, microchip clinics to be held in Sunland Park

By Frank Bryce

Special to the Sun-News

June 14, 2014

The saga of pet advocacy and development of pet-assistance programs in Doña Ana County took a very positive step forward recently.

Almost a year ago, representatives of the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico visited with Sunland Park Mayor Javier Perea to initiate and establish frequent low-cost pet spay and neuter events and a stronger pet microchip program in the south valley. The continuing discussions over these past months have begun to come to fruition.

In the past few weeks, HSSNM and the Coalition for Pets and People have developed additional resources providing veterinary services, volunteers for event assistance and administration for low-cost spaying and neutering activities.

A spay/neuter and microchipping event will take place— by reservation only — in Sunland Park next Tuesday, and again June 24. These events are being offered through a grant from Doña Ana County and for county residents only.

A \$25 co-pay is required unless qualified as low income. CFPP rabies vaccinations are an additional \$9 each and microchips are \$7. You must register for an appointment by calling 575-386-9212 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. weekdays. Cats and dogs will accepted for CFPP spaying or neutering by pre-registration appointment only. Microchipping for 50 cats and dogs that are already spayed or neutered will be provided for \$7 per animal on a first-come, first-served basis. The pre-spayed or pre-neutered animal microchipping will be conducted from 8:30 a.m. to noon or until the microchip supply is exhausted. Any pet that is delayed or prevented from being spayed or neutered at the CFPP event can still be microchipped.

Sunland Park City Manager Vernon Wilson, Public Works Director Robert Coleman, and Fire Chief Andres Burciaga compassionately are hosting both of the HSSNM microchipping events at the Number 1 Fire Station on McNutt Road in Sunland Park.

Microchips are now required for all dogs and cats in unincorporated areas of Doña Ana County and help ensure the effective and safe return of lost pets to owners, regardless of residency. From February to April, microchips (or other identification) allowed the Doña Ana County animal control officers to reportedly return 508 animals to their homes and families from the animal-control trucks without taking them to the shelter in Las Cruces. This activity benefits the pets, the families, the animal control department, the ASCMV and the tax payer. What a win-win combination.

A Las Cruces Police Department Codes Enforcement Section Memorandum to all animal control officers concerning "Field Return to Owner Policy" states in part that "any animal that is impounded by an animal control officer will be scanned for a microchip upon capture (dependent on the nature of the animal or situation aggressive animals will be excluded). The animal control officer will make every attempt to return to owner any animal that is microchipped and/or has current and proper identification (rabies tag, city pet license tag or any other tag with identifiers)." Be a responsible pet guardian: microchip and spay or neuter your pets.

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