

## **ON THE POSITIVE SIDE**

### **2009 Animal Care Expo draws big crowd**

**By Frank Bryce**

**Posted: 05/03/2009 12:00:00 AM MDT**

From April 6 to 9, there was a convergence of more than 1,600 people from 34 countries attending the national Animal Care Expo in Las Vegas, Nev. At least three Las Cruces joined this multitude of shelter staff and leadership, emergency managers, rescue groups, humane law enforcement personnel, veterinarians and others with an interest in animal protection.

These folks took advantage of 48 workshops and eight daylong intensive courses covering everything from learning how to improve adoption programs to stopping puppy mills.

Wayne Pacelle, president/CEO of Humane Society of the United States, and Richard Avanzino from Maddie's Fund, kicked off the weeklong conference with a joint announcement about the upcoming multimillion dollar national shelter adoption campaign by the Ad Council.

The conference theme and opening remarks recognized our shared purpose — the protection and care of animals. After that, participants selected workshops designed to provide tools, insights and knowledge to address just about every imaginable issue that faces communities across the nation and around the globe.

See if any of the following workshops seem relevant to our area: Animal Fighting; Unchained: A 360-Degree Approach to End Chaining in Your Community; Public Administration 101 for Government Animal Services Director; Animal Cruelty and Fighting Investigations; Live Release Rates and Beyond: Shelter Statistics in 3-D; Lessons from a Nationwide Survey of Animal Shelters Regarding Veterinary Services; Stop Yelling for Help: Get the Right Volunteers for Your Organization; Bark-itecture: How to Build an Animal Shelter; and the list goes on.

If that amount of information was not overwhelming, then we had the opportunity to visit 173 vendors and organization booths in the exhibit hall with a mind boggling array of products, assistance, and ideas! These included veterinary equipment and spay-and-neuter vans, grant writing, humane organizations, fundraising, shelter outreach and support, safety, staff training, publications, education, foods and nutrition, and disaster services.

While this conference had a national, even worldwide, view, there was a pervasive and positive element that focused on the community and area needs of the participants.

This was the positive side that shined through and melded with the local efforts to address the issues in Doña Ana County. The protection and care of animals in our community according to best practices and industry standards goes hand-in-glove with fiscal responsibility and accountability.

Conferences of this nature offer excellent resources available to anyone interested in animal services. Please visit our Web site to learn more about national conferences by visiting [www.hssnm.org](http://www.hssnm.org) and clicking on the resource tab.

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