

# LAS CRUCES SUN-NEWS

## On the Positive Side

Commentary: Much work left to solve animal crisis

By Mike Hainer/For the Sun-News

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Las Cruces Mayor Ken Myagishima hosted the first weekly "Pet of the Week" at last Monday's City Council meeting — another positive step toward increased awareness of our pet overpopulation and companion animal adoptions at our community shelter.

The Humane Society of Southern New Mexico is expanding off-site adoptions events to the Las Cruces Boys and Girls Club this Saturday and regular events on the last Saturday morning of each month at our new office located at the southeast corner of Melendres and Amador. The PetSmart Cat Adoption Center continues to be a bonanza for cat lovers. Adoptions at the shelter are on the increase. All positive actions.

However, we are far, far away from achieving our no-kill shelter goal. Surrendered animals are increasing, Animal Control continues to confiscate hoarded animals, rather than treating them "in place" whenever possible. Holding a larger number of animals at the shelter has saved many lives and more animals are available for adoption, but new challenges in humane treatment arise with the larger number of animals.

This is all evidence that a no-kill shelter depends upon a culture change to "saving lives" from more than just the shelter for us to become a no-kill community.

We need help re-thinking policy and in practices within our animal control system, within our Animal Shelter Board recently formed by the city and county, as well as within the Animal Services Center of Mesilla Valley (shelter) to continue progress toward a no-kill community. The choice belongs to our leaders, our community, our residents and to all of us who speak up and vote.

The No-Kill Advocacy Center — [www.nokilladvocacycenter.org](http://www.nokilladvocacycenter.org) — is available to help with community assessment, technical assistance and proven strategies that reduce the numbers and the costs of killing healthy and treatable companion animals. Our shelter director and community leaders must invite them. Are we serious about achieving our stated no-kill community goal? Do we really want help?

Be a part of the team of volunteers at the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley helping with pet exercise, telephone reception, adoption counseling and other valuable roles on-site and off-site. Training is available by contacting ASCMV at 382-0018. Volunteers are also needed for the HSSNM PetSmart cat adoption center. Go to [www.hssnm.org](http://www.hssnm.org) or call (575) 521-3642.

The HSSNM annual members meeting is at 6:30 p.m. Aug. 21 at our new offices, 403 S. Melendres in Las Cruces. The public is invited to attend and participate.

Mike Hainer is president of the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico.