

On the Positive Side: Growing spay and neuter events shaping up

By Frank Bryce / For the Sun-News

Posted: 10/19/2012 02:19:20 AM MDT

Many readers of this column learn about the “positive side” of animal welfare taking place in our communities and you are aware the authors are passionate and eager to relate heart-warming and uplifting stories. I am particularly happy to do that in this piece. No, it isn’t about one dog or one cat getting a loving home or rescued from serious injury or imminent death. This is about the collective developments of a much broader collaboration of many folks. Developments that in the coming months and, in fact, years will save the lives of literally thousands of current and potential beloved pets. These efforts will contribute greatly to the quality of our communities and the lives of essentially all of us who call this our home.

Starting at 8 a.m. this past Monday, the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico (HSSNM), as a result of initiating a free spay and neuter grant effort for residents of Chaparral, had by 1 p.m. received almost 300 calls to register dogs for spay and neuter surgeries beginning Oct. 29 and continuing for the next several months. This response to the lengthy and dedicated effort of volunteers in Chaparral and HSSNM, along with the availability of the resources of the Paws and Hooves Mobile Spay and Neuter program from El Paso was overwhelming. In a matter of hours the residents of Chaparral had almost exceeded the number of available spay and neuter surgeries for this grant. Impressive, yes?

But there is more. The Coalition for Pets and People, a collective of animal welfare organizations and individuals along with city, county and shelter officials, is developing a similar spay and neuter effort for the East Mesa area of Las Cruces. This initial effort should begin about mid-November. Notification to targeted participants residing in the 88012 zip code should be forthcoming soon and offer similar spay and neuter services and vaccinations. The Coalition for Pets and People program is modeled after the Chaparral program and hopefully will have the same enthusiastic response. Both the Chaparral and East Mesa projects enhance and expand already existing spay and neuter programs that support the coalition goal of “0 in Seven” — no more killing of healthy and treatable animals in seven years or less.

On the same Monday, the coalition delivered nine laptop computers to the Las Cruces Animal Control Department. This equipment along with microchip scanners and air cards will allow city and county animal control officers to expand their efforts to return wayfaring and roaming pets with tags and/chips safely to their homes before taking them to the shelter. This reduces stress, disease exposure and possible loss of the family pet along with reducing costs to city, county, shelter and owner.

You will be hearing more about these efforts in the coming months. You can get involved by devoting some time to the efforts and donating materials and funds to cooperating organizations. It will do your heart good and mine, too, to see these efforts blossom.

Frank Bryce is President of the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico. Interested guest authors are encouraged to call 523-8020.