

**On the Positive Side: Final Event for Free Rabies Vaccination Grant
by Frank Bryce, President, Humane Society of Southern New Mexico
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The positively final event for distribution of this year's grant of free cat and dog rabies vaccinations will be held this Sunday, November 20, at Horse N Hound Feed N Supply, 991 W. Amador in Las Cruces. The event begins at 11 AM and lasts until supplies run out. Cats and dogs must be at least three months old and in good health for the rabies vaccination and these are free. These vaccinations will be administered by Dr. Laura Henckel, a local licensed veterinarian, as required by law. Other services available at this event will be free de-worming for cats and dogs, \$10 DAPP Dog Combo vaccination, \$10 FVRCP Cat Combo vaccination, and 6 month heart worm preventive for \$10.00. All services must be paid in cash.

Rabies vaccination is required for all cats and dogs three months of age or those older without a documented history of vaccination. At the end of the first year anniversary of the initial documented vaccination, the cat or dog begins an every three year rabies vaccination requirement. These vaccinations are for public safety as rabies is a deadly disease if contracted by a bite from a rabid animal or some other serious type of exposure. While the distemper combination vaccination is not required by law, it is for the protection of the cat or dog and is now strongly recommended by shelter professionals as a disease preventative in the event your cat or dog is taken to a shelter where disease exposure is much more likely.

A positive effort to provide dog and cat rabies vaccinations has been conducted for the past year in cooperation and collaboration between the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico (HSSNM), Action Program for Animals (APA) and the Spay Neuter Action Program (SNAP). These three groups collectively received almost 1500 doses of the rabies vaccine through a grant from the World Rabies Day organization last fall and have conducted vaccination events throughout the year.

Two very large events were conducted in cooperation with the Dona Ana County government support for the World Rabies Day events in September 2010 and 2011. Just last week over 70 cats and dogs received an assortment of rabies and distemper combination vaccinations along with heartworm preventative and de-worming in Hatch at an event. Two months earlier, 120 rabies vaccinations were given at the same location. A number of NMSU pre-vet students assisted at last week's event gaining important animal handling technique training and veterinary profession exposure.

There have been a large number of folks involved in this year-long effort and all cannot be thanked individually in this article but the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico wants to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to all who have given their time and hard work to make this grant program as effective as it has been. This includes the World Rabies Day organization, county government officials, participating veterinarians, animal welfare organizations, supporting corporations and the myriad volunteers who assisted at these events.

Frank Bryce is President of the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico. Interested authors for "On The Positive Side" can contact HSSNM at (575) 523-8020.