

On the Positive Side

**Be sure to plan ahead before traveling - Make the holidays safer for your pet
December 11, 2105**

With many folks likely traveling with their pets during the holiday season, the American Humane Association has some useful suggestions. The association states, "When it comes to holiday travel, it's hard enough to make sure you've remembered the presents, your phone charger and everything else you need. But when you add the family dog or cat, planning can be even more stressful!"

The group provides a useful list of tips that you can print from its website at americanhumane.org that can make travel with your pets more convenient and add to their safety. The following is a quick summary.

First is identification to ensure your pet can be properly identified with your address and destination. Vaccination tags are required and address tags can be very quick and beneficial for return of stray or lost pets, but the absolute best is the implantation of a micro-chip. Simply keeping your address and contact information current with the microchip issuer ensures the most likely success of a safe return of your pet. The PetWatch24 company touts a better than 80 percent success return rate with microchipped pets.

Then, of course, close supervision follows and requires you never leave your pet unattended in a vehicle or public area. Training your pet for kennel travel makes the trip less upsetting to your pet and to you. Plan well in advance so all regulations for traveling are met in advance. Plan for kenneling at destination or while you are traveling since kennels fill well in advance for the holidays and "no place at the inn" as they say can present serious problems.

Although a standard requirements, be sure vaccinations are current and health certificates appropriate. And while it is obvious, the size of travel kennels must be proper size for your pet to stand, move around in comfortably and properly labeled. And where possible the traveling pet should be kept on a regular potty schedule. The American Humane Association also reminds pet owners that sick pets, young animals and animals that are in heat or pregnant should not travel by air and pug-nosed dogs are not suited for travel in the cargo area of a plane. Air travel with pets if possible should be direct, non-stop flights.

It is hoped these tips make your holidays safer and happier for your family and pets.

On another note

A low cost spay and neuter event in Sunland Park is scheduled Dec. 28 at Sunland Fire Station One. Reservations can be made by calling Humane Society of Southern New Mexico at 575-523-8020 and providing your contact information. Low cost micro-chipping events are scheduled every other Thursday at Pet-Smart on Lohman and Walnut from 6 to 8 p.m.

Frank Bryce is president of Humane Society of Southern New Mexico. Interested guest authors are invited to contact HSSNM at 575-523-8020.