



Paw Prints

AUGUST 2014

Issue 1

The Delaware Office of Animal Welfare Newsletter

Topics of Interest

The Spay and Neuter Performance Review Committee will hold regular meetings which will be posted on the public calendar. Visit: <http://egov.delaware.gov/pmc/#agency157>

The First State Paw Draw License Plate Contest Entries are due by Aug 30!

A Quote to Consider:

"Often in my work, I see how important animals are to people," said DHSS Cabinet Secretary Rita Landgraf. *"From pet therapy dogs and cats in nursing homes and hospitals, to guide dogs for people with disabilities, to the everyday family pets looking for homes, across the spectrum, animals truly deserve our respect and protection."*

The Delaware Office of Animal Welfare

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A Moment's Paws...

A Note from the Office of Animal Welfare's Executive Director, Hetti Brown

What's the best part of my job? Pet photos. It seems that everywhere I go, Delawareans want to show me pictures of their pets; photos capturing the sweet, and sometimes quirky, relationship they have with their furry companions. Through these photos I have been invited into homes, special family moments, times of sadness and joy, and fun adventures. While these photos always put a smile on my face, it is not the pictures themselves that make me feel so lucky to be part of the Office of Animal Welfare. These mementos represent the reason the Office was created in the first place: to celebrate and enable the relationship shared between animals and people.



This relationship not only connects people and their pets, but connects our entire community. It is a common language that is shared by even the most different of people, regardless of pet ownership. Delawareans from all backgrounds, beliefs, and interests can share compassion for animals and the desire to protect them. We share broad community values concerning animals that result in expectations for public policy and programs. Animals should be protected from abuse or neglect and the public should be protected from dangerous animals; homeless animals should receive rescue, safe shelter, and a chance for adoption; and programs that reduce pet homelessness and prevent animal cruelty are valuable investments.

It is in recognition of these community values that the OAW was established. Our mission is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of companion animals and promote the human-animal bond in the state of Delaware. In this first newsletter you will learn about our efforts to accomplish this goal and ensure that programs and policies meet community expectations for pets and the people that care for them. Thank you for your support and compassion.

Delaware's Spay & Neuter Program

NOW MANAGED BY THE OFFICE OF ANIMAL WELFARE

On July 1, the Delaware Spay & Neuter Program transitioned to the Delaware Division of Public Health's new OAW within Delaware Health and Social Services (DHSS). Previously managed by the Delaware Department of Agriculture, this critical program offers low-cost services to citizens on public assistance programs.

Spaying or neutering your pet is an important decision for pet owners. The benefits can include:

- Elimination of unwanted litters
- Reduction of fighting and roaming
- Reduction of pet homelessness
- Elimination of marking
- Reduction of the risk of certain animal cancers

For program details and a list of qualifications, visit our web site www.de.gov/fixmypet or contact Spay & Neuter Program Coordinator, Sauna McVey, at 302-255-4632 or email



Community Safety *through* **ANIMAL WELFARE**



The connection between community safety and animal welfare is an important conversation. When conflicts between animals and people arise, local government agencies are called upon to respond through intervention and the development of prevention programs and policies that promote community safety. The OAW urges responsible policies that prevent dog bites using two cornerstones to dog bite prevention:

1. **Address factors common to dog attacks by promoting responsible pet ownership and community education; and**
2. **Strong enforcement of dog control laws and increased penalties for dog mismanagement**

Did you know that **more than 80 percent of dogs involved in fatal attacks on humans are not spayed or neutered?** Or that almost **half of these attacks involve children younger than age of five?** By understanding the factors that are common among dog attacks, we can create programs that eliminate the very situations that are dangerous. The OAW is exploring dog bite prevention strategies that include expanded access to low-cost and free spay and neuter services and outreach on the benefits of pet sterilization. We will accomplish this through enhanced fund-raising for state-run spay/neuter programs and targeted outreach to communities with a low rate of spayed or neutered pets per household. The OAW will also seek opportunities to educate children and parents about proper dog handling and socialization, dog behavior, and other factors that can increase the likelihood of an attack.

When dog attacks do occur, it is important for these cases to be properly investigated. If a dog is deemed potentially dangerous, based on the investigation, owners have a right to request a county Dog Control Panel. The Panel consists of experts in dog behavior, veterinary medicine, and law enforcement and hears cases of potentially dangerous dogs to make final determinations as to whether the dog poses a future public safety risk.

Finally, we need to ensure our broad animal control infrastructure is sound to effectively prevent dog bites and intervene when they occur. The OAW recently analyzed cost and capacity issues associated with dog control and submitted **Delaware Animal Control Recommendations**—which urged the consolidation of animal control services in Delaware—to the Office of the General Controller and Office of Management and Budget. This document is available online at <http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/oaw/files/dacrec.pdf>. Additionally, the OAW is working closely with Delaware Animal Care and Control to evaluate the penalty structure for dog mismanagement and repeat offenses of the dog control laws in Delaware to see where improvements can be made.

Here is what you can do to prevent dog bites:

- **Spay or neuter your dog.** This improves your pet's overall and long-term health, and spayed or neutered animals are less likely to bite. This will also decrease your dog's desire to roam free or fight with other animals.
- **Ensure your pet is healthy.** Have your pet vaccinated against rabies and other preventable diseases. Dogs that are hurt or injured can be more aggressive because they don't feel well or are in pain. Have regular check-ups with your veterinarian. Always see a veterinarian if your pet's activity or behavior changes.
- **Socialize your dog.** Dogs that are isolated, such as dogs that live the majority of their life chained or in a kennel, can become territorial and aggressive. Socializing your pet, especially at a young age, can help him to feel at ease around people and other animals.
- **Teach children how to appropriately approach and handle dogs.** Many dog-on-human attacks occur with small children. Don't ever leave a child unattended with a dog, no matter how familiar the dog is with the child. By teaching children not to approach a dog they do not know and how to properly pet or handle an animal, you can reduce the probability of a bite.
- **Always keep your dog under your control.** Not only is it illegal in Delaware to let your dog free-roam, it is dangerous for them and for others. Free-roaming dogs can get into altercations with other animals or unfamiliar people. Obey leash laws. If you have a fenced-in yard, ensure all gates are properly locked.



Hot Cars: No Place for Fido!

Many pets love car rides, and if you are like us in the OAW, you like to take your companion with you on fun adventures. However, a car in the summer is a very dangerous place for a pet. As temperatures soar, pets can easily overheat in a car... even with the windows down. In fact, even mild outside temperatures can heat a car to dangerous levels in minutes.

What can you do? Leave Fido at home. If you are not able to stay in the car with your pet at all times or take your pet with you when leaving the car, it is best to leave your companion at home. Even a quick errand can turn deadly in a hot car. Remind your friends and family about this issue, as well, to ensure they know the dangers.

If you see a dog in a hot car showing signs of distress, such as excessive panting or drooling, vomiting, trouble breathing, disorientation or stumbling, contact the police or an animal cruelty agency right away. Many shopping centers and recreational parks have their own on-site security that may be able to help. Get the make, model and license plate number of the car, and ask nearby stores to make an announcement to locate the dog's owner.

Animal Cruelty Agencies in Delaware:

- Delaware SPCA: New Castle County: 302-998-2281; Sussex County: 302-856-6361.
- First State Animal Center-SPCA: 302-943-6032.
- Calls after business hours or on weekends should be directed to the police.

Stay Tuned on this Issue:

The Office of Animal Welfare is working closely with interested legislators on a plan to prohibit animals from being left to suffer in a car that is too hot or too cold for their safety and well-being.



The *First State Paw Draw* is an animal welfare license plate art contest, sponsored by the OAW, which seeks artwork to redesign and update the Delaware Division of Motor Vehicle vanity license plate for animal lovers. Entries will be accepted from Delaware residents through August 30, 2014.

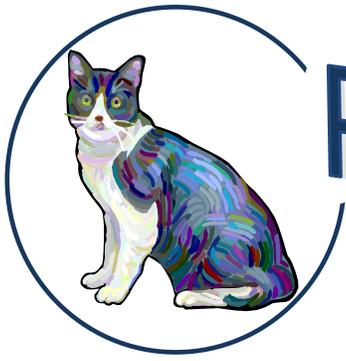
The Animal Welfare License Plate and an associated fund for spay and neuter services were created in 1995 with legislation sponsored by Senator David McBride. The Animal Welfare License Plate Fund provides low-cost or free services to pets not served through other low-cost programs, such as the state Spay & Neuter Program. Of each \$50 license plate purchase, \$35 can be used to provide spay and neuter surgeries for community cat colonies, to host "spay days" for neighborhoods or specific breeds, or to supplement spay and neuter funds for Delaware shelters or other special programs determined by the Animal Welfare License Plate Fund Committee.

"Spaying and neutering cats and dogs is critical to reducing companion animal over-population and euthanasia," DHSS Secretary Rita Landgraf said. "Getting our pets 'fixed' reduces pet homelessness and improves their quality of life."

Contest entrants must be Delaware residents with valid Delaware addresses. For contest details and entry form, visit the OAW website at <http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/oaw/oawhome.html> or call OAW at 302-255-4620. The new animal welfare license plate will be available for purchase this fall through the Delaware DMV.



L to R: DHSS Secretary Rita Landgraf, OAW Executive Director Hetti Brown, and DPH Deputy Director Crystal Webb announce the First State Paw Draw contest, with help from two furry friends, at an event at Legislative Hall in June.



Purr-fectly At Home:

The Office of Animal Welfare coordinates first **Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate, Return (TNVR)** program on its home campus.

One morning last spring, the OAW received a common phone call: there were a handful of cats living near a dumpster, including some kittens and a pregnant female. The cats were being fed by a caring individual but some people were concerned that the cat food was attracting wildlife and that the kittens would not fare well living outdoors. While this call was similar to ones we receive all the time, there was a twist to this particular story. These cats were on the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) Herman Holloway campus – the same campus where the OAW is located.

There is an overabundance of free-roaming cats in Delaware. Many of these cats, while not socialized to humans and not suitable for adoption, live long healthy lives outdoors. Like the cats on our campus, many colonies are fed and looked after by citizens that have taken it upon themselves to help these cats. However, since a female cat can produce multiple litters in a year, population control is a problem when colonies are not managed. The Office of Animal Welfare recommends Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return (TNVR) for these cats, a program that humanely reduces cat populations over time and prevents diseases like rabies.



Supported by DHSS Cabinet Secretary Rita Landgraf, the Office of Animal Welfare contacted Faithful Friends Animal Society, a local non-profit organization that provides low-cost TNVR services (For safety reasons, the services of experienced professionals in TNVR is recommended). Faithful Friends worked closely with Shauna McVey, Office of Animal Welfare Program Coordinator, to humanely trap the cats, vaccinate and sterilize them, and return them to their original location so they could continue to be fed and looked after by their caretaker on campus. The DHSS assisted in building feeding stations and taught caretakers how to feed so wild critters were not being attracted by leftover food. Office employees even donated an outdoor cat house so the cats would be warm and cozy in the winter.

Looking for TNVR services for free-roaming cats in your area?

The Humane Society of the United States hosts a list of local organizations who may be able to help:

http://www.humanesociety.org/assets/maps/feral-cat-groups/feral_cats_list.html?state=DE#.U0Whf IdV9k





NEW LAWS SUPPORTING ANIMAL PROTECTION

Animal welfare advocates, legislators and shelter animals gathered at the Delaware Humane Association on July 31 as Governor Jack Markell signed four animal protection bills.

“These new policies further protect animals and people who are vulnerable in our community,” Governor Markell said. “It is a tremendous step forward for Delaware, thanks to collaboration among the Delaware General Assembly, pet owners, shelter officials, animal welfare advocates, enforcement personnel, and government officials.”

Governor Markell recognized state legislators, the Animal Welfare Task Force, a variety of animal protection organizations, and other advocates for their hard work and commitment to increasing animal protections in Delaware. A summary of the bills signed into law:

- **Senate Bill 201, sponsored by Senators Patricia Blevins (D-Elsmere) and Karen Peterson (D-Stanton), and Representatives Earl Jaques (D-Glasgow) and Kim Williams (D-Newport):** This law clarifies the roles and authority of the Delaware Division of Public Health Office of Animal Welfare. This bill not only authorizes the Department of Health and Social Services to enforce existing shelter standards, the animal population control program and spay/neuter fund, and companion animal welfare license plate funds, it also establishes an enforcement mechanism to do so. The bill also prohibits the use of inhumane gas chambers as a means of euthanasia.
- **House Bill 311, sponsored by Representatives Earl Jaques (D-Glasgow) and Kim Williams (D-Newport), and Senators Patricia Blevins (D-Elsmere), Karen Peterson (D-Stanton), and David McBride (D-Hawk’s Nest):** This law gives the Delaware Division of Public Health Office of Animal Welfare the ability to develop and implement a statewide training and certification program for Animal Control Officers and Animal Cruelty Agents.
- **SB 245, sponsored by Senator Karen Peterson (D-Stanton) and Representative Early Jaques (D-Glasgow):** This law protects animals seized in criminal activity, cruelty, and animal fighting from automatic euthanasia, instead allowing for evaluation of animals for adoptability by trained personnel. The bill also ensures that individuals involved in the criminal activity are prohibited from adopting the animals after their seizure or forfeiture.
- **HB 297, sponsored by Representative Dennis Williams (D-Talleyville) and Senator Karen Peterson (D-Stanton):** This law clarifies the Dangerous Dog Law to allow for easier enforcement by animal control agents.
- **SB 253, sponsored by Senator David McBride (D-Hawk’s Nest) and Representative Michael Barbieri (D-Newark):** This legislation authorizes the conveyance of the Airport Road Division of Motor Vehicles facility to the Colonial School District and conveys a portion of the parcel to be transferred to Faithful Friends Animal Society for the development of a new animal adoption center and community center.

PAW-gress for Animals!



Photo by Donna Sharp, DPH

A happy crowd joins Governor Jack Markell at an animal protection bill signing on July 31.

Meet the Pack

Introducing the Office of Animal Welfare Team



Shauna McVey, Program Coordinator. In her role, Shauna manages the state Spay & Neuter program, identifies new opportunities and resources to curb pet overpopulation, and promotes the value of spay/neuter to the public. Shauna will also be instrumental in establishing programs for free-roaming cats and has already gotten her feet wet, leading the Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return program for community cats living on the Department of Health and Social Services campus. Before joining the team, Shauna worked as a legislative assistant for the Delaware House of Representatives, and as a writer, then as the managing editor for *The Middletown Transcript* newspaper.

Michael McCants, Administrative Specialist. If you call the Office of Animal Welfare, the pleasant, helpful voice on the other end is Michael. Michael manages constituent relations for the Office, logistics for the Dog Control Panel, and will begin a project later this year to develop a state lost-and-found pet online database. Before taking this role, Michael worked as an Administrative Specialist in the Division of Management Services within the Department of Health and Social Services.



Christina Motoyoshi, Deputy Director. Christina is the previous acting director of the Delaware SPCA and former executive director of Tri-State Bird Rescue & Research. With many years of experience in animal welfare and the nonprofit sector, Christina truly understands the challenges faced by organizations and advocates working to make a difference in Delaware. As the new Deputy Director, she develops the oversight infrastructure for animal sheltering facilities and working to standardize common practices relating to animal care. She will also work to improve animal cruelty prevention and enforcement, as well as services for cats.

Mark Tobin, Animal Welfare Enforcement Officer. Mark joined our office from the New Castle County Police Department, where he spent 23 years, many of which as a K-9 officer, handler, and supervisor. Mark has also served as an adjunct teacher at Delaware Technical Community College in criminal law and has developed K-9 officer training and certification programs for Delaware and other states across the country. In this new role, he will use that experience to develop training and certification programs for animal control officers and cruelty agents, conducting animal shelter inspections, and enforcing state laws concerning services provided to companion animals.



The Delaware Office of Animal Welfare Scorecard

The Office of Animal Welfare (OAW) was established less than a year ago to consolidate and coordinate several animal welfare functions that were previously handled by a variety of agencies. The OAW will review and address the treatment of animals in Delaware to determine what can be improved and what emerging issues need attention to protect both animals and members of the public. Here is a snapshot of our work:

Office established and fully staffed.	✓
State Animal Control recommendations submitted to state agencies with oversight.	✓
Successfully advocated for the passage of five laws and one resolution concerning animal protection in Delaware, and helped to secure state funding to support animal cruelty enforcement.	✓
Assisted New Castle, Kent, and Sussex Counties to re-establish the State Dog Control Panel. The Panel is now hearing cases.	✓
Assumed management of the State Spay & Neuter Program.	✓
Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return program implemented on Department of Health and Social Services property.	✓
Launched the First State Paw Draw contest to re-design animal welfare license plate and raise more money for spay and neuter programs.	✓
Secured \$5000 reward from The Humane Society of the United States to aid the investigation of an animal cruelty case in Wilmington.	✓
Assisting in the development of a statewide resource team for hoarding prevention and intervention.	✓

The Spay & Neuter Program welcomes NEW PROVIDERS



The Office of Animal Welfare welcomes three new surgery providers to the State Spay & Neuter Program:

- Millsboro Animal Hospital
- VCA Glasgow Animal Hospital
- VCA Dover Animal Hospital

Thank you, participating providers, for all you do on behalf of cats and dogs.

Veterinarians wishing to join the list of providers for the Spay & Neuter Program may contact the OAW at 302-255-4620.