



Animal Protective Association of Socorro

Barks and Mews

April 2018 Newsletter

Generous Donors Help Shelter Animals

During the 6 months between September 2017 and March 2018, Socorro Animal Shelter and Adoption Center took in 554 dogs and cats. Finding homes for that many homeless pets is a tremendous challenge and more so if those dogs and cats are seen as too old or too big, if they have been neglected or injured, or if they are poorly behaved. To help find permanent homes for our shelter animals, the City of Socorro began a donation program through its Public Utility Department. Beginning in September 2011 Socorroans were able to donate to the shelter through their monthly utility bills.

Month	Stray Dogs	Stray Cats	OS* Dogs	OS* Cats	Total
Sept. 2017	26	49	10	8	93
Oct. 2017	32	42	8	2	84
Nov 2017	26	57	11	12	106
Dec. 2017	25	12	39	5	81
Jan. 2018	43	26	31	1	101
Feb. 2018	35	25	28	1	89
Total	187	211	127	29	554

*OS = owner surrendered

The utility bill donations go into shelter accounts for emergency medical treatment and other special needs for adoptable animals. For example, from these accounts, puppies that are less than 6 months old when they arrive at the shelter are given the DA2PP vaccine (canine distemper, adenovirus type 2, parainfluenza, and parvovirus). These donations also help with the veterinary costs for animals that come to the shelter injured and for the grooming costs for neglected animals with severely matted fur. Donations are used to purchase replacement milk for puppies and kittens not yet weaned. Providing dogs and cats with the treatment and care they need may take additional time and resources, but these

animals can be loyal companions and deserve loving homes. When our shelter is full, these donations help pay the costs of transporting dogs to other regional shelters and rescues. Before leaving Socorro, dogs receive the DA2PP and, if the rescue requires it, *Bordetella* vaccinations, and all dog transports must have health certificates.



In September 2011, Socorroans donated \$855 to help shelter dogs and cats feel and look their best while awaiting new homes. In the 6+ years since, our shelter has received more than \$35,000 in donations, and many hundreds of animals have received life-saving care. Utility customers paying by mail or in person at City Hall can write in the amount of their donation directly on their bill. Although online payment does not include the donation option, ratepayers can contribute by calling City Hall and making a donation using a credit card. Donations made directly at the shelter also go into the utility bill accounts.

—Jane Love

Update on Spay/Neuter Program Fee in 2018 Legislature

Last year in this newsletter we reported on a bill introduced in the New Mexico House of Representatives that would help low-income New Mexico residents spay or neuter their pets. The money would come from fees levied on commercial dog and cat food sold in the state. The proposed bill received broad support, but it “died in committee”, meaning it did not advance far enough to be heard by the full legislature.

The bill was introduced again this year. It was introduced in the House as HB64, sponsored by Joanne Ferrary (D, Dona Ana), Debbie Rodella (D, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe & Taos), Patricio Ruiloba (D, Bernalillo) and Carl Trujillo (D, Santa Fe). Guy Kernan (R, Chaves, Eddy & Lea) introduced a companion bill, SB51, in the Senate. Once again, both bills were strongly supported by media throughout the state. This year there was also strong public lobbying by animal support organizations and also by many individuals who took the time to travel to Santa Fe to express their support for the bill and their concern for the animals.

Both bills did well in the legislature. After some reconciliation on details with SB51, HB64 was carried

forward in both houses. It passed the House (48 to 19) and the Senate (30 to 4). It called for annual fees to be collected on each pet food brand or product distributed in New Mexico, starting at \$50 per product in 2019, and increasing to \$100 per product in 2021 and after. Animal Protection Voters of New Mexico estimated the average pet-owning household would pay only an extra \$1.50 per year if these fees were added to the pet food price. Prescription diet pet foods obtained from a veterinarian, and specialty pet foods from small manufacturers, would be exempt. Nearly all of the money collected would go to support pet sterilization for low-income residents. The program would be administered by the state’s Animal Sheltering Board, who would receive 4% of the money collected to manage the program. Unfortunately, despite the strong public and bipartisan support, the bill died on the governor’s desk. Governor Martinez argued this bill was in effect a tax increase and would be “bad for business” (*Santa Fe New Mexican*, March 1, 2018), so she vetoed the bill. If the bill is introduced again in 2019, perhaps the third time will be the charm.

—Jean Eilek

A New Animal Control Ordinance for Socorro?

Is it time to strengthen and upgrade Socorro’s Domestic Animal Control Ordinance? Some people think that’s the case. A small group, including the previous shelter manager, the Shelter Advisory Board, and members of APAS, drafted a new ordinance addressing care and control of domestic animals, and asked the city to consider it.

In response, Mayor Bhasker appointed a committee to study the draft ordinance and recommend its adoption (or not) by the city. The committee included Donald Monette (City Administrator), Ken Greenwood (Socorro Police Department), Patrick Gonzales (Animal Shelter Manager), and Jean Eilek (APAS Vice-President). They were helped by the very important non-voting members, Jane Love, Kathe MacLaren, and Bobbi Gonzales.

The review committee met frequently over the past several months, working through the full document. While they made some changes, they endorsed most of the proposed draft. The next step is for the revised draft ordinance to undergo legal review, after which it will be made available to the general public for at least two weeks and then submitted to the City Council for its consideration.

The review committee feels the draft ordinance extends and strengthens the existing city code in several important ways, including stronger restrictions on dangerous animals, cruelty to and mistreatment of animals, animal fighting, responsible care of animals, keeping guard dogs or wild and exotic animals, and commercial sale of animals in the city.

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RedRover—Bringing Animals from Crisis to Care

For 30 years the nonprofit RedRover (redrover.org) has promoted its mission through three principal programs: animal shelterings and disaster relief services, financial assistance for urgent veterinary care, and humane education.

RedRover Responders. Thirty years ago disaster planning did not necessarily include the plight of animals, and most evacuation centers could not accommodate animals. This omission was never clearer than in 2005 when Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast with devastating consequences. Approximately 250,000 dogs and cats were abandoned, left behind, or died, and many people refused to evacuate without their pets. RedRover and other organizations and governmental agencies coordinated their response to calls for help. This work evolved into the National Animal Rescue Sheltering Coalition (NARSC), the largest team of professionals and volunteers responding to hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires, floods, and other natural disasters as well as manmade disasters like puppy mills and hoarding situations. Since 1987 more than 9,000 RedRover trained volunteers have helped thousands of animal victims of disasters and cruelty and neglect.

RedRover Relief grants. Gifts to RedRover also fund grant programs. **Urgent Care** grants respond to animals in a health crisis, helping with the cost of urgently needed, lifesaving veterinary treatment. Application guidelines are available at their website,



redrover.org; however, the overwhelming number of applications makes it impossible to help everyone. The **Domestic Violence Safe Escape and Safe Housing** grants offer survivors of domestic violence the support to get their pets to safety. To date RedRover has borne the cost of 18,981 nights of boarding for such pets. One of RedRover's current goals is to have a pet friendly domestic violence shelter in every state. As of June 2017 they had only nine more states to go. In Ruidoso Downs, New Mexico, HEAL, Inc. (Help End Abuse for Life) and their domestic violence shelter, The Nest, were awarded a small grant in 2017.

RedRover Readers. Beginning in 2007 RedRover Readers was established to provide elementary teachers with a children's literature-based curriculum to teach empathy and compassion for animals. Seventeen books are used in the program (two available in Spanish as well as English), and the list of recommended books has grown to 80. Just recently RedRover took over publication of the well-established kids' magazine *Kind News*. Currently 69,092 children participate in RedRover Readers.

—Jane Love

Animal Control Ordinance cont.

If the draft ordinance is accepted by the City Council, it will replace Chapter 108, Article II, "Domestic Animals", of Socorro's current Code of Ordinances. Once the proposed ordinance has been made publicly available, APAS encourages anyone interested

in local animal law to review the proposed ordinance and offer their thoughts to the City Council.

—Jean Eilek



Animal Protective Association of Socorro

PO Box 451, Socorro, NM 87801

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