

**Galveston County Health District
Animal Services Summit
May 25, 2005**

In Attendance:

- Galveston County Commissioners Court: Judge James Yarbrough; Commissioner Stephen Holmes, Precinct 3; Commissioner Patrick Doyle, Precinct 1; and Commissioner Eddie Janek, Precinct 2
- Galveston County Health District: Dr. Harlan “Mark” Guidry, MD, MPH, Chief Executive Officer & Health Authority; Jay Holland, Chief Operating Officer; Brian Rutherford, Public Health Planner/Facilitator; Ronnie Schultz, Director of Environmental Health Programs; Pisa Lewis, Executive Assistant; Kathrine Hall, Human Resources Director; Kurt Koopmann, Public Information Officer; Michele Reynolds, Animal Services Manager, Gina Doolittle, Assistant to the Director of Environmental Health Programs; Pam Jahnke, Strategic Health Plan Evaluator; Linnard Crouch, Animal Control Officer; Michael Phillips, Animal Control Officer; Delana Weller, Animal Control Officer; and Leslie Hoobler, Epidemiology Intern
- Eddie Janek, Jr.
- Donald Cleary, DVM
- Galveston County Daily News: Anthony Jones
- City of Dickinson: Ivan Langford, City Administrator
- City of Hitchcock: Lee Sander, Mayor
- City of Kemah: Erika Yates, Kemah Police Department
- City of La Marque: James Osteen, City Councilman
- City of Santa Fe: Joe Dickson, City Manager; Pam Wood
- City of Texas City: Mike Land, Mayor Pro-tem
- Village of Tiki Island: Besty Tobey, Alderman
- Galveston Animal Shelter and Adoption Center: Lori Alexander, Cathy Conlon-Townsend
- Bay Area SPCA: Travis Demarest
- League City Animal Control: Marie Havican, Sara Sowter
- Habitat for Horses: Lark Tedesco, Jerry Finch
- Animal Alliance of Galveston County: Laurine Murtagh
- Whiskerville: Wydell Dixon
- PAWS: Chris Kryslar, Jeania Embrey
- Second Chance Pets: Sarah Enticknap
- Cocker Spaniel Rescue: Karen Temple
- Friends of the Galveston County Animal Shelter: Michelle Cote, Kelli Griffith
- Kelly Hayward

Greetings and Opening Remarks:

Dr. Harlan “Mark” Guidry, MD, MPH welcomed everyone to the second annual Galveston County Health District Animal Services Summit and explained the purpose of the forum. He introduced Galveston County Precinct 3 Commissioner Stephen Holmes, who then provided opening remarks.

Presentations:

Ronnie Schultz, Director of Environmental Health Programs presented a slide show outlining accomplishments and improvements made to Animal Services since the last Animal Services Summit held March 30, 2004. Michele Reynolds, Animal Services Manager followed by outlining future plans and projects.

Forum:

Brian Rutherford, Public Health Planner and Facilitator outlined ground rules and facilitation guidelines for the Summit. The floor was then opened to receive input from participants to identify suggestions for further improvements to Galveston County Animal Services.

Along with many acknowledgements to Michele, the Animal Services staff, and the Friends of the Galveston County Animal Shelter, the following categories and suggestions were noted:

Animal Care:

- Require spaying/neutering at adoption; not releasing an adopted animal without having been spayed/neutered
- Administer vaccines for both cats and dogs
- Screen for Feline Leukemia as animals are brought into the shelter
- Research Idexx Test Method; may be available at a discount for large-quantity purchases
- Provide heartworm testing

Operations:

- Extend hours of services at least one night per week (to perhaps 7:00 pm) to be open to public for redemptions and adoptions
- Review possibility of having shelter open extended hours on Saturday and on Sundays
- Stagger hours animal control officers and shelter staff work to allow for extended services hours
- Set a schedule for Adoptathons (perhaps once a month or once a quarter)
- Utilize more volunteers in the Shelter
- Ask local veterinarians to periodically provide services at the shelter (Dr. Zamora may be interested in doing this)
- Review possible upgrades to the filtration system at the shelter for better control of disease transmission

Procedural:

- Track individuals who repeatedly bring in litters of puppies and kittens; get with legislators to review the possibility of forcing those repeat offenders to spay the mothers
- Review the possibility of requiring owners of aggressive dogs to have a microchip on that dog for tracking purposes
- Call individuals who list contact info on kennel cards and are interested in adopting when the animal becomes available (rather than relying on them to contact us regarding the animal)
- Offer cheap alternatives for spaying/neutering and animal care to persons repeatedly bringing animals into the shelter
- Provide documentation to adopters of any procedures, tests, and vaccines administered by shelter staff
- Use a database or other software package to track spaying/neutering of adopted animals
- Create screening process of potential adopters to ensure an animal is not adopted to a repeat offender

Communications:

- Inform the Cities on field service procedures on nights and weekends (such as picking up confined animals for local police departments on the weekends)
- Fax or send an information sheet to all the cities and local law enforcement agencies that includes services, night and weekend procedures, and contact information
- Post any information regarding local reduced cost spaying/neutering and other animal care programs on our webpage
- Publicize events and educational information with increased newspaper coverage
- Let other local animal shelters and animal welfare groups know of any changes made to operating hours

Public Outreach/Education:

- Remind adopters that they have an option of having limited adoption insurance through Pet Finder, but they must apply within 10 days of adopting
- Educate children at the local schools about responsible pet ownership and spaying/neutering
- Contact churches and church groups to collaborate educational programs with their organizations

- Friends of the Galveston County Animal Shelter should establish an Education and Outreach Committee
- Educate public about animal abuse
- Educate offenders about proper/responsible pet ownership

Funding:

- Review the fee schedule and raise fees to cover costs of spaying/neutering
- Identify if any funds are available to donate to Animal Alliance to help them complete their low-cost spay/neuter facility
- Utilize more volunteers to complete necessary tasks at the shelter
- Hold fundraisers to get funds for vaccinations, microchips, etc...
- Research grant funds available
- Assess higher fees to repeat offenders
- Charge higher fees for services to animals not spayed/neutered (redemptions, tags, turn-in fees, etc...)

In addition, many of the animal welfare groups represented at the summit offered assistance to Galveston County Animal Services:

- Whiskerville transports animals to Houston on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays for low cost spaying and neutering and is willing to transport animals from the Galveston County Animal Shelter as well
- Animal Alliance of Galveston County is working toward constructing a low-cost spay/neuter facility in Galveston County
- Habitat for Horses has three certified large animal rescue technicians available to assist
- Commissioner Janek also offered assistance in any way possible

Questions for review:

- When is the next Adoptathon?
- What is the time limit for foster care in Galveston County? Concerns were identified that foster groups may be in violation of Galveston County's Animal Control Ordinance when they house more than four animals