

**Galveston County Health District  
Animal Services Summit  
July 21, 2006**

**The Summit**

On July 21, 2006, the Galveston County Health District hosted the third annual animal summit in an effort to improve relations with our public health partners and relevant stakeholders as outlined in the District's Strategic Health Plan. The purpose of the summit was to outline the Health District's plans to continue to improve existing services within available resources and to receive input on targeted topics from the general public.

The Honorable Patrick Doyle, Galveston County Commissioner opened the summit with a county perspective on animal services and words of encouragement on a job well done by Animal Services staff. Jay Holland, Chief Operating Officer at the Galveston County Health District emceed the summit and announced the additional funding of \$45,000 dollars allocated by Commissioner's Court for needed repairs at the shelter. In addition, he announced the county's approval of adding an additional animal control officer to the staff.

Ronnie Schultz and Kim Schoolcraft with the District presented information on the accomplishments of the past twelve months and a presentation on the future of animal services. Following these presentations, Brian Rutherford, District Public Health Planner moderated a lively discussion with the 47 attendees at the summit covering the following topics: animal fostering, public education and marketing, grant opportunities, and animal care during disasters. The forum was then opened up to any topics.

**Animal Fostering**

- Review the current limits set in county ordinance
- Provide for home visits prior to approving a foster volunteer
- Illness fund available to treat minor and major illnesses
- Coordinate activities with rescue group foster programs
- Create fund to help pay for rabies vaccinations

**Public Education and Marketing**

- Educate children at the local schools about responsible pet ownership and spaying/neutering
- Contact Public schools to develop educational programs with their organizations guidelines

- Retirement homes and nursing home facilities for visitation to the elderly
- 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
- Create a speakers bureau
- Conduct offsite adoptions and provide informational documents
- Advertise at the local movie theaters, utilize the municipal cable channels, and use marquees in the cities to promote our message(s)
- Resurrect the Adopt-a-thons (start with one/quarter)

### **Grant Opportunities**

- Lots of grants on the Internet. Individuals volunteered to assist in locating possible grant opportunities.
- Purina Corporation provides grant dollars to purchase food for senior dogs.
- Apply for grant that incorporates animals and children (i.e. dog walking program for obese children).
- Accept donations of slightly expired vaccinations from local veterinarians.
- Research what corporations will donate monies if an employee or a spouse of an employee volunteers for an animal organization.

### **Animal Care During Disasters:**

- Foster a relationship with Noah's Wish Organization for animal care following a disaster
- Special needs citizens should contact 211 to register for transportation and request assistance for any animal
- The Galveston County shelter needs to identify and complete MOUs with other shelters for the housing of shelter pets.
- Galveston County Animal Services should plan for worst-case scenario where we have no shelter. Animal Services working with Gulf Greyhound Park for alternate location.
- Develop a brochure to assist the public in preparing to evacuate with an animal
- Shelter will close to the public in accordance with standard operating procedures.

### **Open Forum**

- Ask local veterinarians to periodically provide services at the shelter (Dr. Zamora may be interested in doing this)
- 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 their breeding animals
- Review the possibility of requiring owners of aggressive dogs to have a microchip on that dog for tracking purposes

- Decrease the response time for field staff responding to citizen calls (Additional proposed ACO may help)
- Create a subcommittee to address the issue of backyard breeders. Assess a fee for these breeders.
- Staffing Issues – hire temporary workers, resolve liability issues that limits the utilization of youth workers, volunteers are needed every day.
- Increase the number of field sweeps in the communities served.
- Review possible upgrades to the filtration system at the shelter for better control of disease transmission
- Administer antibiotics for both cats and dogs
- Screen for Feline Leukemia as animals are brought into the shelter
- Growth of the county will continue to stress our animal services resources.
- Charge higher fees for services to animals not spayed/neutered (redemptions, tags, turn-in fees, etc...)
- Call individuals who list contact info on kennel cards and are interested in a adopting when the animal becomes available (rather than relying on them to contact us regarding the animal)
- Offer subsidies for spaying/neutering of animals to persons repeatedly bringing litters into the shelter
- Use a database to track spaying/neutering of adopted animals
- Create screening process of potential adopters to ensure an animal is not adopted to a repeat offender
- 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. Providing additional temporary cages for animals captured by local law enforcement agencies.
- Post any information regarding local reduced cost spaying/neutering and other animal care programs on our web page

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

- Animal Alliance of Galveston County is open and provides low-cost spay/neuter in Galveston County
- Habitat for Horses has three certified large animal rescue technicians available to assist the public.

**Questions for the Parking Lot:**

- When is the next Adopt-a-Thon?
- Will there be limit changes 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

