

## Navajo Nation pets overcrowd local shelter

Written by By Deswood Tome Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 15 December 2017 11:23

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### Commissioners discuss strategies to handle the influx

The Gallup-McKinley Humane Society has one troubling constant: they are always over capacity, with domestic animals – mostly dogs and cats – that are dropped off at the shelter from residents who live on the neighboring Navajo Nation.

Clyde C.B. Strain, city planning director, addressed the McKinley County Board of Commissioners Dec. 12, speaking about the influx of animals.

“There are a lot of strays being dropped off,” he said. “There’s no fee to drop them off.”

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Strain explained that the Gallup-McKinley Humane Society makes patrons aware of a suggested \$15 donation for animals to “save their life.”

The high rate of drop off has left animal control with 34 percent of its budget remaining for the next six months. The city and county share a 60/40 budget responsibility for nearly \$620,000 a year. Strain told the commission that only \$211,000 remains.

More than 1,700 animals have been dropped off at the humane society since January from residents who live on the Navajo Nation, 67 percent of the total number brought into Gallup.

A Gallup city memorandum from Strain’s office reports: “Several Navajo Nation clients have stated they were instructed by the Navajo Nation to bring their animals to the Gallup shelter.”

The memorandum also reports that Gallup animal control does not have the budget to house and care for animals outside their jurisdiction.

Commissioner Bill Lee asked Strain about efforts to contact the Navajo Nation Animal Control program.

“You tried to contact Glenda Davis with Navajo Nation animal control—anything going on in that arena?” Lee asked. “At one point we had a pretty good dialogue going on.”

But Strain said that, so far, contact has been unsuccessful. Calls to Glenda Davis, animal control manager, and Gloria Tom, director for Fish and Wildlife, have not been returned. The Navajo Nation Animal Control program is organizationally under Fish and Wildlife.

Despite difficulties getting in touch, the goal, said Strain, is to try and work together.

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“They don’t have a facility on the reservation,” Strain said.

The Navajo Nation shows animal control facilities in the five agencies in Arizona and New Mexico.

Strain suggested that the Navajo Nation pose legislation, and provide a low-cost spay and neuter program as potential solutions to the problem.

“We can’t take care of all Navajo Nation animals,” he said.

Animals dropped off are held for five days for owners to reclaim them before they are put up for adoption with the humane society.

Cosy Balok, who serves as the city animal control coordinator, discussed the humane society’s policy on euthanizing the dogs and cats left there.

“We don’t kill animals that are adoptable,” she said.

The report to the commissioners stated that since January, 355 of the animals euthanized were unwanted pets and could not be adopted. An additional 69 pets were euthanized at owner requests.

Since January, 4,250 animals have been dropped off at the animal shelter. Slightly more than 3,000 of them were transported to 15 other facilities in Colorado, Utah, and Arizona. Shelters in Denver and Boulder have received animals from Gallup animal control.

A spay-neuter policy is in place for animals up for adoption.

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Efforts to control the animal population in Gallup also affect those looking to breed a pet.

“Anyone who owns an animal in Gallup and breeds them must have a breeding permit,” Balok said.

To that same point, inspections are made by the Gallup animal control of residential homes or places where animals are bred to determine if qualifications are met.

Civil citations are issued for breeding without permits.

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