

Humane Society of Elmore County News - 14 Apr '14

Rea Cord

Executive Director

This week (13-19 Apr '14) is National Animal Control Officer (ACO) Appreciation Week and while we realize most people likely won't interact with any of our ACO's this week – please thank them for their hard work whenever you do cross paths. Our county & each town has ACO's to assist citizens and animals alike and these men and women go far beyond the old days of the 'dog catcher' as they work to enforce state and local laws, help animals in need, protect the health and safety of people, and resolve issues involving animals.

Animal Control Officers often go far beyond just capturing wayward animals as they deal with dog and cat bite/attack cases, mediate disputes between neighbors over animal issues, round up loose livestock that have gotten out of pastures, investigate animal cruelty and neglect cases, work with their fellow law enforcement on other cases where animals are often innocent victims, investigate and often seize abandoned pets, etc. Our county recently adopted the state confinement law for dogs and each municipality has their own leash laws for dogs while Wetumpka & Tallassee add to that with a leash law for cats. City noise ordinances and barking dogs are often at crossed paths and some towns do have limits on the number of pets on a property in city zoning ordinances. And some, but not all of our cities restrict livestock within city limits.

For livestock owners the state actually has some very prescriptive fencing laws and while gates may accidentally get left open, or fences can break, repeated escapes by livestock because of run down or ill-constructed fences can result in charges for the owner as loose livestock can present a deadly hazard on roadways. And while there are fence laws so that livestock stays safely contained from public areas, owners of livestock also have laws that allow them to use deadly force to protect their animals from attacking dogs. Home owners are also allowed to protect themselves, their families or pets from attacking/threatening dogs, but homeowners need to also know that they cannot use deadly force against a dog just because it is crossing their yard or getting into the trash.

Our Animal Control Officers are dedicated professionals who deserve respect from the public they serve – many are Alabama Peace Officer Standards and Training (APOST) certified officers and some have attended specialized animal control training at the state and national level to learn about things like safe capture techniques, animal identification, disease issues, legal issues, investigative techniques, court proceedings, rabies control, public education, wildlife and exotics, and so much more. Animal issues often put them in harm's way from both animals and people and their call volume often means they have to triage cases to deal with the most serious, or potentially serious, the quickest.

So we just want to say thank you to each and every Animal Control Officer for all they do to help animals and people throughout Elmore County – your hard work is greatly appreciated.

We often have school groups come to the shelter and want to thank the great students from Prattville Christian Academy who helped us at our Thrift Store and in the shelter this past Saturday. Our pets were very happy with all of the attention they received and we thoroughly enjoyed having such great group of young people with us for a while.

This Saturday, 19 April, is Craterfest in Goldstar Park in Wetumpka! Craterfest is a 'don't miss' event so join in the fun and stop by to visit our table with shelter information, adoptable pet pics, auction information, new magnets for sale and more!