

It was a bright and sunny day for the Elmore Antique Tractor Show and Pull and many thanks to our booth volunteers who took some time from their weekend to help tell visitors about our shelter and our wonderful pets.

Since the upcoming Memorial Day weekend is generally a time for trips to the lake or beach, cookouts with friends and Memorial Day activities, we will not be at the PETsMART in Montgomery this Saturday and the shelter will be closed on Monday, 28 May.

If you are heading out of town this weekend and cannot take your pet, then don't forget to make adequate plans for their care and safety. We highly recommend taking your pet(s) to a reputable boarding facility if you are going to be away from home for more than a day. While this will cost you a small amount for each day of boarding, you are paying for your pet to be kept in a protected and safe environment. This is not only good for your pet, but good for your peace of mind while you are away. Just like finding a babysitter for your children, you should find a boarding facility well ahead of time that you are comfortable with and that has the capability of caring for your pet's needs.

A good idea for your pet and for you is to get with the facility ahead of time and do a trial run with your pet. That way your pet has some familiarity with the surroundings and any issues can be resolved before you go heading off on a multi-day or week trip. And just like hotels many boarding places book up fast, especially for major holidays, so make your reservations well ahead of time. Be aware – most boarding facilities will require proof of current vaccinations, so make sure your pet is up-to-date. They will also want emergency contact information and feel free to bring your pet's special bedding, toys and even treats to make your pet as comfortable as possible.

And while many a family member, friend and neighbor has done a super job at caring for someone else's pet, at the shelter we hear far too many sad stories of gates left open, animals who weren't cared for, and other reasons for pets disappearing while someone else was supposed to be caring for them. If you simply do not want to or cannot take your pet to a boarding facility, check into a licensed and bonded Pet Sitter who can come to your home two-three times each day to check on your pet. Their business success depends on keeping your pet healthy, safe and happy meaning your pet will be tail-wagging or purring when you return.

And don't forget that having a collar with the required Rabies Tag and perhaps an ID tag or your phone number written on the collar can go a long way to getting your pet reunited with you (or your pet sitter) if your pet becomes lost. When heading out for a well-deserved vacation, you want to feel confident that your pet-sitter feels as strongly about your pet's health and well-being as you do. Our pets ask for so little from us – the least we can do is make sure they are well cared for in our absence. Let's all have a fun and safe Memorial Day weekend!

Pet Fun Fact: Dogs can smell about 1,000 times better than humans. While humans have 5 million smell-detecting cells, dogs have more than 220 million. The part of the brain that interprets smell is also four times larger in dogs than in humans.