

Humane Society of Elmore County News – 1 Jun '15
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Executive Director

The new Shelter Challenge begins TODAY, 1 June, for our chance to win big (unsure still if we can win \$1000, vaccinations or beds for our pets)! The best way for us to win is to leap out in first place today and stay there. Go to www.shelterchallenge.com where you will be able to vote every day from work, home, school, smart phone, etc. Once there the easiest way to find us is to type in our zip of 36092 or Wetumpka, AL. Some web browsers do not work with this site, so if you have problems, please first try a different browser to access the site. Thanks everyone for taking literally just a minute of your time every day to help us win big for our animals!

Outside of our shelter front door area we have one dog kennel area and two cages for cats that are there for those times a person rescues a stray pet after our normal operating hours but cannot take it home overnight – this kind of pen is not required, just something we have provided in good faith for many years. During the Memorial Day weekend our shelter, like many businesses, was closed Sunday and Monday (staff of course came to clean and feed our pets). And on the two days that we were CLOSED, our shelter took in 18 animals that were left in those cages! This is simply unacceptable as we know that some of those animals had owners and were not after hours stray rescues. And this is not just about Memorial Day weekend – our intake source statistics show that this outside pen is being seriously abused lately. There is more to us taking in animals than some people seem to realize and this is to explain a bit why we have chosen to lock that outside pen for the time being until some members of the public get the message that dumping their own pets with no information is NOT ‘turning them in to the shelter’ but criminal abandonment.

Shelters exist first and foremost as a safety net for their communities from stray and unwanted pets. There was never any intent in Alabama Law for shelters to be convenient dumping grounds for owners who decide they no longer want their pet. But those of us who operate private, non-profit humane shelters have chosen to take in unwanted pets as strays and from owners surrendering them. We then work diligently to find new homes for as many of our pets as possible. When a pet is dumped on us with no information that is not only cowardly of the owner but it does a tremendous disservice to the pet(s) and our ability to find appropriate homes for them. Without an owner we have to make our best guesses as to breed mixes, actual age, and know nothing of critical behavior important to adopters like how the pet interacts with children and other pets, if it is housetrained, does it stay in fences, or have any medical concerns. We certainly do our best to ascertain as much as we can from our own observations but there are simply some things we cannot fully evaluate in a concrete kennel environment.

There are also some important laws that come into play – no dog or cat can be surrendered to our shelter if it has bitten a human in the preceding ten days because we do not have a veterinarian on our staff so are not a quarantining facility. Leaving a dog or cat with us that has bitten someone can result in the arrest of the owner for violations of Alabama Law! And how would we know? Look folks, we do this for a living! We KNOW quite a bit not only about animal behavior but all the situations that often surround animals that end up with us. And we are an integral organization in our county so we talk to officials – law enforcement, public health, veterinarians, other shelters...and people also talk to US. Yes, we may find out!

One other misinformation is that we charge for intake – that is FALSE! We do NOT charge to take in pets from residents of Elmore County. We do charge a \$25 fee, IF we take in a pet from a person from another county as we do not receive funding from other counties and that is simply not fair to the taxpayers of Elmore County. Besides – if you find a pet in some other county then it needs to go to that county’s shelter so an owner can actually find their lost pet. If that county does not have a shelter then the citizens of that county need to demand that their officials get into compliance with Alabama Law just like Elmore County did over 25 years ago. We are open for intake Mon-Fri 8-5 & Sat 8-3, plenty of time for any owner to surrender a pet.

So, when will we unlock our ‘drop’ pen? In due time – perhaps.