



Paw Prints

Issue 6

The Delaware Office of Animal Welfare Newsletter

Spring 2016

WHAT'S INSIDE

Dog licenses now available online for all counties

Page 2

State celebrates World Spay Day

Page 3

Where have all the lost pets gone?

Page 4

What you should know about the rabies virus

Page 6

New animal shelter opens in New Castle

Page 8

QUOTE OF NOTE

“The love for all living creatures is the most noble attribute of man.”

- Charles Darwin

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A Moment's Paws ...

By Hetti Brown

Executive Director

When recommendations from the state Animal Welfare Task Force were published in April 2013, it marked a great milestone in the effort to update how animal welfare programs were delivered in the First State. The recommendations provided direction to address animal control and resources, increase oversight for critical programs, and service fragmentation and insufficiency.



When we first started the Office of Animal Welfare, we made a bold commitment to achieve all recommendations published by the Task Force within the first two years of operation.

After recently ending our second year of operation, the Office of Animal Welfare has kept our commitment. We delivered on all recommendations and addressed most of the concerns outlined by the Task Force. Accomplishments include:

- Consolidated all animal and rabies control, and cruelty enforcement services, with mandatory training requirements for officers, a centralized case dispatch function, and clear oversight of operations.
- Created a statewide Lost and Found Pet registry and licensing database to aid in reuniting owners with lost pets, and tracking rabies vaccination and dog licensing records.

• Reformed the emergency response and sheltering program for animals affected during disasters and developed a State Animal Response Team of more than 100 volunteers.

• Designed and implemented several critical updates to the State Spay & Neuter Program to increase the number of pets served through the program. We launched a campaign and new website to promote the program, online applications (www.FixedandFab.com) and easy payment options, and reformed the grant program offered to non-profit shelter and rescue groups.

• Published regulations and developed an oversight function for the Shelter Standards Law. Included are provisions to ensure all shelters receive annual inspections and persons conducting euthanasia in shelters are certified.

• Implemented programs to expand the sterilization and vaccination of free-roaming cats to reduce the population humanely while decreasing the risk of rabies in our community.

While we are very proud of our work, we are certainly not done. We continue to investigate best practices for animal sheltering and animal behavioral assessment, oversight programs for non-shelter animal care facilities and rescues, and minimizing the free-roaming cat population humanely and effectively. We are committed to build on our record of success to create a humane community. Thank you for your continued support; we could not have accomplished what we have without you.



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
Division of Public Health
Office of Animal Welfare

Dog licenses now available online for all counties

The Office of Animal Welfare (OAW) recently assumed dog licensing administration from New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties, and the City of Wilmington, and instituted a statewide license for 2016. The State will honor expiration dates of existing County and City licenses. For convenience, the OAW made the purchase of these licenses available online statewide. Previously, dog licenses could only be purchased online for New Castle County residents.

State law dictates Delaware residents must license dogs who are 6 months of age or older by March 1 each year. Those who fail to license such dogs may face a \$50 annual fine.

WHY DOG LICENSES?

- Having your dog licensed drastically improves the chance your dog will be returned to you if her or she goes missing.

- Licensing lets people know that your dog has been vaccinated against rabies.
- The cost of a dog license is less than the penalty for being caught without one.
- License fees support the efforts of Delaware Animal Services, which works to reunite lost animals with their owners, ensures care and placement of stray animals, and enhances public safety.

HOW TO PURCHASE

Dog licenses may be purchased online via credit card at www.Petdata.com/Delaware. To purchase a dog license through the mail, call 1-877-730-6347 to request an application, or download one at www.Petdata.com/Delaware.

Dog licenses may also be purchased in person by New Castle County residents at the following locations: Brandywine Valley SPCA, 600 South St., New Castle; Delaware Humane Association, 701

DOG LICENSE FEES

Licenses are issued for the calendar year, Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, and can be purchased for one-, two-, or three-year periods.

Altered (spayed/neutered) dogs:

- One year: \$10
- Two year: \$20
- Three year: \$30

Unaltered dogs:

- One year: \$15
- Two year: \$30
- Three year: \$45

Fees are waived for seeing eye, guide or lead dogs, or dogs who have former U.S. military service.

A St., Wilmington; New London Veterinary Center, 437 New London Road, Newark; and the New Castle County Government Center, 87 Reads Way, New Castle. Surcharge fees may apply for in-person and online purchases.

Opportunities available for pet therapy visits, volunteers

PAWS for People, a non-profit organization, has openings for volunteers and any person who thinks they would benefit from interaction with a well-trained, loving pet.

PAWS for People provides therapeutic visits to people in the community who wish to benefit from one-on-one interaction with a well-trained, loving pet. PAWS visits libraries, nursing homes, hospitals, and a variety of other places. Visiting teams are made up of dogs, cats, and even rabbits. All volunteer teams are certified by PAWS for People staff.

For more information about PAWS visits or volunteering, visit www.PAWSforPeople.org or call 302-351-5622. Pet ownership is not required to volunteer.



Pictured here are two dogs enjoying their one-on-one visits with people as part of the PAWS for People pet therapy program. Cats and rabbits can also volunteer with their owners to provide therapeutic visits for those who can benefit from interaction with an animal. Photos courtesy of PAWS for People

State celebrates World Spay Day with free spay/neuter

More than 100 large-breed dogs and free-roaming cats received free spay or neuter surgeries Feb. 23, compliments of the Division of Public Health's Office of Animal Welfare (OAW). The mass spay/neuter event was held in conjunction with World Spay Day.

Delaware's Spay Day activ-



Girl, who was spayed at the Spay Neuter Clinic in Dover during World Spay Day, hangs out with Veterinary Technician Aleshia Geer. Shannon Wright photo

ities took place in all three counties. The event was aimed at assisting owners of large-breed dogs and those who care for free-roaming cats. These are two groups of animals that experience high rates of homelessness in Delaware, according to OAW Executive Director Hetti Brown.

While low-cost spay and neuter services are available in Delaware, the procedure can still be cost-prohibitive for some families. So Delaware's Spay Day activities were funded by the Animal Welfare License Plate Fund. The Fund is used for pet populations not served through the state Spay & Neuter Program, which provides low-cost spay and neuter surgeries for Delawareans on qualifying public assistance. Animals sterilized during the World Spay Day event also received a rabies vaccination, if needed. Appointments were scheduled on a first-



Maverick, a community cat cared for by Asia Flamer, arrives for surgery at the Delaware Humane Association during the Feb. 23 World Spay Day event sponsored by the Office of Animal Welfare's Animal Welfare License Plate Fund. Shauna McVey photo

come, first-served basis.

Elizabeth Slippey, who brought two community cats to the Delaware Humane Association for World Spay Day, said the free surgeries are a relief from the other expenses she pays toward animal care. In addition to her own rescue dogs and cats, she helps transport rescue dogs and cares for community cats near her home.

"It's one less animal I have to

worry about," she said.

Revenue for the Animal Welfare License Plate Fund is generated through sales of the Animal Welfare License Plate. Of every \$50 license plate purchase, \$35 goes toward services for animals in Delaware. To purchase the license plate, go to de.gov/pawplate or visit any Delaware DMV location. For more information about World Spay Day, go to www.worldspayday.org.

Delaware Animal Rescue Summit set for May 19

The Office of Animal Welfare will host an Animal Rescue Summit on Thursday, May 19, 2016, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Maple Dale Country Club in Dover. The summit will be offered for free to local animal rescue organizations and volunteers, and anyone interested in learning more about animal rescue.

The summit will feature regional experts in boosting adoptions, building volunteer and foster networks, fundraising, strategies for difficult-to-place animals, medicine for rescues, and targeted trap-neuter-return.

To attend, register by April 15, 2016, via email at shauna.mcvey@state.de.us or phone at 302-255-4623. Attendees must provide their name, mailing address, phone number, and email address to register.

An advertisement for the Delaware Animal Welfare License Plate. It features a close-up of a dog's face, specifically a German Shepherd, holding a yellow license plate. The plate has the word "DELAWARE" at the top, a paw print, and "ANIMAL FRIENDLY" at the bottom. A small box on the right says "PLACE STICKER HERE". A black speech bubble with yellow text says "Get your paws on the license plate that helps animals!". Below the speech bubble, it says "Available at any Delaware DMV location or online at de.gov/pawplate".

Where have all the lost pets gone?

By Kathy “Kat” Albrecht
Pet Detective

This is the first article in a three-part series about missing pets written by Kathy Albrecht, a former police bloodhound handler, crime scene investigator, search-and-rescue manager, police-officer-turned-investigative pet detective, and national leader in the missing pets field.

According to the American Humane Association, at least 10 million cats and dogs become lost every year. In addition, each year millions of “stray” dogs and cats are found and transported to local animal shelters. You’d think having millions of lost pets and millions of found strays each year that reuniting lost dogs and cats with their families would be easy. However, the national Return To Owner (RTO) rates for animals that are reclaimed by their owners in animal shelters is shockingly low— just 16 percent for dogs and a dismal 2 percent for cats.

In this series, I will explain human and animal behaviors that contribute to the lack of reunifications of companion animals at local animal shelters. These behaviors contribute to shelter euthanasia rates, the homeless pet crisis, feral cat populations, and the disconnect that exists between lost pets that are not found by their families and found strays that are rehomed instead of being returned to their original family.

Back in 1997, when I first launched my career as a “pet detective,” I began to research the pet industry to see what lost pet services were available to pet owners. I was dismayed at what I found—nothing, virtually nothing was in place to assist pet owners who’d lost a pet! Since the pet medical (veterinary) industry is patterned after the human medical industry, I looked to see

whether or not investigative techniques used by law enforcement to solve missing person investigations were being used to solve missing pet investigations. Sadly, they were not. Although there were plenty of people rescuing pets from shelters (and rescuing strays off of the streets), there were very few services that directly helped families with the initial search effort when their dog or cat became lost. Also sadly, the primary method used by most pet owners back then to “search” for a lost dog or cat was the same method used to advertise a yard sale!

As a search-and-rescue manager, I helped coordinate and oversee a search-and-rescue operation for missing persons. I was trained in how and where to search for lost people and had an understanding of “lost person behaviors.” For example, a backpacker, a berry picker, and a deer hunter can all be lost in the same area of the woods, but the search tactics, the recovery techniques, and the resources used to search for these different types of people are very different. They are all people, but they are all out in the woods for different reasons, they all behave differently, and they all travel different (but predictable) distances when lost.

With lost person behavior, search managers focus on only one behavior – the behavior of the individual missing person. But within what I call the “Lost Pet Triad,” I discovered that there are actually three interrelated behaviors present in every lost pet incident. These three behaviors directly influence whether or not a lost dog or cat will be found. The three behaviors are: the behavior of the owner/guardian, the behavior of the missing pet, and the behavior of the rescuer (the person who finds the animal).



Kat Albrecht, a former police officer and bloodhound handler, is the founder of Missing Pet Partnership, a U.S.-based nonprofit organization dedicated to reuniting lost companion animals with their families. Photo courtesy of Kat Albrecht

One example of owner/guardian behavior is the level of love they have for their pet. This is also known as the “Human Animal Bond” or “HAB.” Owner/guardians who have an extremely strong HAB for their dog or cat will go to extreme measures to search for their pet. They might start a social media campaign, pay for lost pet services, or even hire a helicopter to search for the animal that is lost. On the other hand, owner/guardians who have an extremely weak HAB for their dog or cat might not lift a finger to search for that animal. The level of HAB (strong vs. weak) that the owner/guardian has for their lost pet will dictate the level and the length of their search. Sadly, the moment that an owner/guardian stops all search efforts, the chances that the missing pet will be recovered plummet.

Another behavior within the Lost Pet Triad is the behavior of the pet. Dogs and cats with skittish, shy temperaments are more difficult to recover. Indoor cats that have skittish temperaments that escape outdoors tend to hide in silence and only sneak out from

Continued on p. 5

their hiding place at night for food. Thus, the owner of a skittish cat who asks their neighbors to “call me if you see my cat” will likely never receive a phone call. They soon stop searching, but their cat ultimately ends up in an animal shelter, often months after it escaped. Most owner/guardians are not aware that they have an excellent chance of recovering their missing cat if they simply used a digital wildlife camera and a humane cat trap.

Dogs that have skittish temperaments tend to run from strangers, sometimes even from their own family members. These dogs travel farther when lost because they are frightened of the many well-meaning rescuers who call them and attempt to capture them. Ultimately, when these dogs are captured, rescuers who find them often assume that they’ve been “abused” because of their fearful temperament. This assumption of abuse based on a dog’s behavior ties into the third and final behavior in the Lost Pet Triad – the behavior of the rescuer.

Rescuers often make wrong assumptions about a dog or a cat based upon the behavior or the condition of the animal. What a rescuer of a found dog (or cat) thinks and believes about that animal will influence whether or not they will make any effort to find the family who lost it. In many cases, instead of looking for that lost pet’s original home, rescuers only focus on finding a new “forever home.”

When I discovered that no one had

MORE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Since 1997, Kat Albrecht has worked to develop community-based lost pet recovery services using innovative recovery techniques. In 2005, Kat launched the first-ever pet detective academy, where she has trained professional pet detectives, volunteer rescuers, and shelter staff in the analysis of lost pet behaviors that contribute to the homeless pet crisis. Kat is the author of two books: “Pet Tracker: The Amazing Story of Rachel the K-9 Pet Detective” and “Dog Detectives: Train Your Dog to Find Lost Pets.” For information on Kat’s training program, go to www.katalbrecht.com.

ever developed investigative lost pet services, beyond checking the animal shelters or distributing lost pet flyers, I took it upon myself to dabble in pioneering boots-on-the-ground “pet detective” services using the law enforcement-based techniques I used in police work and in search-and-rescue.

During my early years of pet detective work, I became discouraged by the lack of interest in the topic of lost pets. Animal shelter staff and animal welfare volunteers seemed oblivious about the topic of lost pet recovery. Thankfully, after 19 years, I’ve seen remarkable improvement in programs, services, and even paradigm shifts related to lost pets.

Several companies now offer fee-based services of distributing lost pet information through text messages, email mes-

sages, postcards, or recorded telephone messages. Facial recognition programs, GPS collars, professional pet detectives with search dogs, and smart tags have been created to help recover lost pets. In recent years, many lost-and-found websites and Facebook pages have turned the tide on the lost pet problem. Thousands of missing dogs and cats are found due to caring volunteers who use social media to jump into action and help reunite missing pets with their desperate families.

As much as we are doing right, more education is needed. Many well-meaning rescuers still use inappropriate techniques like spreading dirty cat litter to attract a cat, calling a lost dog’s name, and posting large volumes of lost pet flyers that no one can even read.

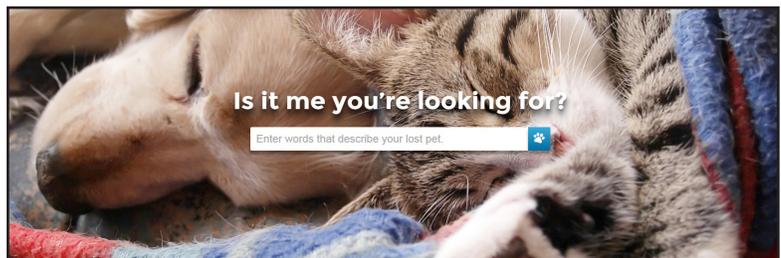
In this series of articles, I will examine the different methods that should be used to search for dogs that become lost, how to capture hard-to-catch dogs, how and where to search for outdoor cats that vanish, and how to recover indoor-only cats that escape outdoors.

We need to take an honest look at one of the most misunderstood and often ignored problems facing the animal industry – the issue of lost pets and why they are not found. If we can set aside what we’ve believed in the past about “strays” and “homeless pets” and begin to view the issue of lost and found companion animals through a new lens, I believe that many animal lives will be saved and many families restored.

THERE’S A NEW WAY TO GET LOST AND FOUND ANIMALS BACK HOME

Animals rescued by Delaware animal welfare officers are now posted to the new Lost & Found Pet Registry. Anyone can visit the registry to look for a lost pet or post a lost or found pet notification.

**Find Delaware’s
Lost & Found Pet Registry
online at
animalservices.delaware.gov**



What you should know about the rabies virus

Rabies is a highly-preventable, serious virus that can affect humans and companion animals. The Office of Animal Welfare asked Paula Eggers, who has worked as a Division of Public Health (DPH) infectious disease epidemiologist for nearly 15 years, to help the public better understand the virus.

How prevalent is rabies in Delaware?

We know it's endemic. We know that we have rabies here in Delaware. Thankfully, we have not had any documented human cases.

Why is rabies prevention important and what can citizens do to prevent the virus?

It's important because rabies is fatal. Vaccinate your pets, be a responsible pet owner, and let wildlife be wildlife.

About how many potential human exposures are reported to your office each year?

On average, over the past five years, there have been greater than 2,200 bite reports reported to our office.

How is rabies contracted by humans and animals?

Transmission of rabies virus usually begins when infected saliva of a host is passed to an uninfected animal. The most common mode of rabies virus transmission is through the bite of an infected host. Scratches can also transmit rabies.

What does the Epidemiology Office do with regard to rabies?

The infectious disease epidemiologist conducts surveillance for potential human exposure to rabies. All human bites from mammals are required to be reported to [Division of Public Health Epidemiology](#). Bite cases are reported to us so we can work with appropriate animal control agencies so they can verify and encourage vaccination status.

Epidemiology works closely with the Office of Animal Welfare [Division of

Contrary to Popular Belief ...

- Seeing raccoons, foxes, skunks, or bats out during the day does not mean they have rabies. It's not uncommon to see these animals out during the day any time of the year, but especially during fall when they are preparing for winter or when food is scarce; or during the spring when they come out from winter and are hungry or preparing for babies.
- It's impossible to tell if an animal is rabid simply by looking at it. Always avoid wildlife. Signs of rabies are often not easily recognized.
- A person may be at risk for rabies any time they are bitten by a mammal, even a stray or free-roaming cat. If quarantine of the animal was not possible, there is no way of knowing the health status of the animal. Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), the vaccination series to prevent rabies, would begin regardless of the severity of the exposure.
- Rabies cannot be transmitted through blood, urine, or feces. Only saliva or neural tissue (brain tissue) from a rabid animal can transmit rabies.
- Even friendly cats or dogs can have rabies. During the early incubation period there are often no symptoms. You cannot tell if an animal is rabid just by looking at it.
- Those who have potentially been exposed to rabies should not wait for symptoms to develop to see if PEP is needed. Once symptoms develop, rabies is considered fatal.

Animal Services] to assure prompt follow-up on all bite cases.

Epidemiology provides education and recommendation for post-exposure prophylaxis (post-bite treatment) when indicated to prevent human rabies infection. Epidemiology also authorizes all requests for animal testing to assure prudent use of fiscal resources.

What is the protocol or treatment for potential exposure?

- Wash all wounds thoroughly with

soap and water and seek medical attention immediately, even if the wound seems minor.

- Healthy dogs, cats, and ferrets that have bitten or potentially exposed a human must be quarantined and observed for 10 days following the exposure. If the animal remains healthy during this period, it did not transmit rabies at the time of the bite.

- If an animal cannot be observed or tested for rabies, as is common with many types of wildlife, treatment may be necessary for the people exposed. DPH Epidemiology will assist the victim and their physician to make that determination.

- If a pet that is vaccinated against rabies is exposed to an animal that may have rabies, it gets a 45-day quarantine. If it's not vaccinated, it's a six-month quarantine.

Is there a difference in treatment if there is a confirmed exposure?

A confirmed rabies test in an animal warrants the individual receive rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) in a timely manner to prevent them from developing rabies. Confirmed exposure [in animals] follows the protocol for quarantine.

How is PEP administered?

It's a series of four injections spread out over two weeks. They also get the human rabies immune globulin, which serves to halt the virus in the body.

When does an animal need a home vs. kennel quarantine?

According to Delaware Code, if the owner of the animal can provide proof of valid rabies vaccination, the animal can be quarantined on the premises of the owner or custodian.

If the owner cannot provide proof of valid rabies vaccination, the animal cannot remain in the home and must be quarantined at an approved facility.

Delaware Animal Response ready in wake of winter storm

OAW's [Delaware Animal Response](#) (DAR) program established its first animal emergency shelter on Jan. 22, as winter storm Jonas made its way toward the East Coast and created significant flooding in Sussex County. The Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) activated DAR to prepare for animals who would need to be sheltered along with their owners in the case of an evacuation.

"I was very pleased and proud that, within one-and-a-half hours of activation, we had a fully functional animal emergency shelter," said DAR Coordinator Jane Walmsley. "This was a successful, collaborative effort, and I greatly appreciate the invaluable support to Delaware Animal Response provided by Office of Animal Welfare staff, DEMA, our State Animal Response Team volunteers, and Delaware Animal Services."

Recently developed OAW emergency standard operating procedures facilitated initial and ongoing communication between Walmsley and OAW leadership and allowed for a timely, coordinated response once DAR was called upon.

To support the animal emergency shelter response, DAR immediately activated the State Animal Response Team (SART). SART volunteers responded rapidly to the DAR notification, and several deployed to provide essential shelter management and staffing. SART volunteers Lou Montgomery, Karen Clark, and Kristi Idnurm took on full responsibility for the animal shelter operations, including the set-up, operations,

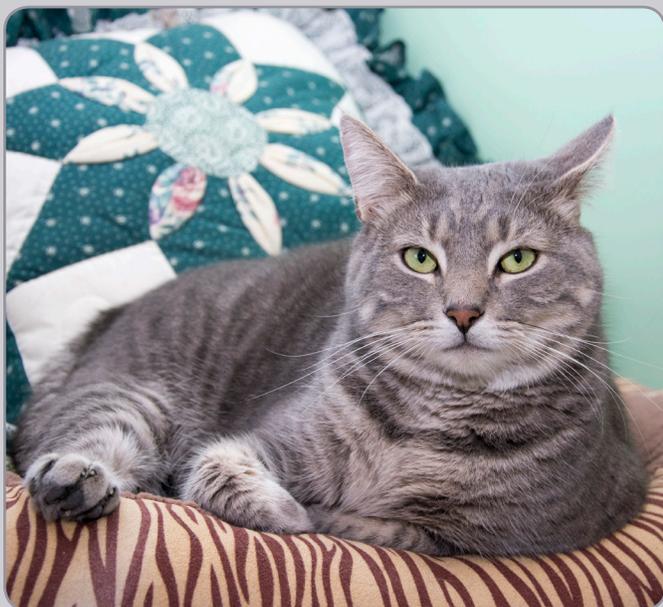


The Delaware Animal Response Animal Emergency Shelter setup in preparation for Winter Storm Jonas included crates for animals along with water bowls in the Sussex Central High School. Submitted photo

and breakdown of the animal emergency shelter.

Key support of the DAR response was also provided by the OAW's Delaware Animal Services (DAS) unit, led by Chief Mark Tobin with Capts. Reed Jones and Jeff Phillips, and Officers Ervin Smith and Jonathan Kaiser.

This was the first activation of Delaware Animal Response since OAW became responsible for the program. While no animals were received, DAR was fully ready and prepared to take in animals if needed.



Adoptable Pet Spotlight

Name: Benje

Shelter: Delaware Humane Association

Benje came to the Delaware Humane Association quite some time ago after his owner passed away. Since then, he has opened up tremendously. He is often the first one to greet DHA visitors in their free-roaming room, but his skittish tendencies cause him to be overlooked. When he's feeling outgoing, he adores wand toys, cuddling up with his favorite people, and rolling around on his back.

He has a whole lot of love to give for whoever is lucky enough to take him home. Benje is 4 years old, neutered, up-to-date on his vaccines, and microchipped. Think this guy sounds like the one? Contact DHA at info@dehumane.org or call 302-571-0111 for information on how to adopt Benje.

Brandywine Valley SPCA cuts ribbon at New Castle shelter

The Brandywine Valley SPCA (BVSPCA) held a grand opening celebration Saturday, Feb. 20 at its new shelter located at 600 South St., in New Castle. The grand opening included a ribbon cutting ceremony and tours of BVSPCA's new Delaware shelter. Attendees were able to meet adoptable pets and learn about free cat spay/neuter services. BVSPCA, formerly Chester County SPCA, is

a non-profit animal welfare organization that shelters stray, homeless or abused animals that are picked up or rescued by the Office of Animal Welfare Delaware Animal Services unit. BVSPCA also contracts with kennels in Kent and Sussex counties to house animals retrieved from those areas.

For more information about BVSPCA, go to <http://bvspca.org>.



The Brandywine Valley SPCA (BVSPCA) recently opened its new Delaware shelter at 600 South St., New Castle, DE. BVSPCA, formerly Chester County SPCA, is the Office of Animal Welfare's shelter partner. Photos by BVSPCA Marketing and Public Relations Manager Eli Martinez and BVSPCA Volunteer Photographer Barb Hess.



Adam Lamb, executive director of the Brandywine Valley SPCA, cuts the ribbon Feb. 20 at the non-profit's new New Castle Shelter. Pictured, from left to right, are Sens. Nicole Poore and Patti Blevins, Office of Animal Welfare Executive Director Hetti Brown, BVSPCA Board Member Dave Magrogan, BVSPCA Board Treasurer Jessica Straghan, and BVSPCA Board Secretary Bud Haly.

Athena was part of the Brandywine Valley SPCA's Good Samaritan Campaign. She was found in a park injured, hungry, and cold. BVSPCA is rehabilitating her and hopes she will find a home to make up for all her previous pains.



This kitty, Squirrel, lounges at the new BVSPCA New Castle Shelter while waiting to be adopted.



Delaware Animal Services (DAS) Officers Devon Streett, Andrew Price, and Matthew Barba, and Supervisor Chief Mark Tobin helped celebrate the opening of the new BVSPCA New Castle shelter. DAS works closely with BVSPCA to transfer stray or abused dogs for sheltering and adoption.



Lily is one of the dogs looking for her forever home at the BVSPCA New Castle shelter.

For information on how to adopt any of the animals pictured here, visit <http://bvspca.org>, call 302-516-1000, or stop by the BVSPCA New Castle shelter during their business hours.