



Paw Prints

Issue 9

The Delaware Office of Animal Welfare Newsletter

Spring 2017

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QUOTE OF NOTE

"Animals are such agreeable friends. They ask no questions. They pass no criticisms."

- George Eliot

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A Moment's Paws ...

As the founding OAW executive director, Hetti Brown built this office from the ground up. She leaves behind a talented staff of men and women who work hard each day to protect the health, safety, and welfare of our companion animals in Delaware. I am joining more than 30 fellow animal advocates who have dedicated their days to promoting the human-animal bond in the state, and it is a pleasure to work in a field among so many others who make animals a priority in their lives.



Patti Blevins with her dog, Maddie

In its first three years, the OAW implemented Delaware Animal Services (DAS), the first state-run, statewide animal control and cruelty enforcement unit in Delaware and all the training and protocols necessary to make this law enforcement

section operate efficiently and correctly. The Spay & Neuter Program was restructured and expanded to provide low-cost surgeries to more animals. The Animal Welfare License Plate was redesigned and re-launched, creating an influx in funds to help animals in need. Delaware Animal Response was reinvigorated with emergency response trainings and a host of new volunteers.

In this newsletter, you'll read about some of the great work accomplished in 2016. Most notably of these is our animal welfare dispatchers and officers' response to assist more than 15,000 calls in DAS' first full year.

As we move forward, we will continue the momentum of improving animal welfare in Delaware, both collaboratively with other animal organizations throughout the state and internally as a state agency. I hope you will join with us to help the OAW continue its success for both the people of Delaware and for the animals that enrich all of our lives.

TOP 3

Reasons to License Your Dog

- 1 Easy identification is a lost dog's ticket home.
- 2 Prevents the spread of rabies.
- 3 It's state law! (fines are \$50 and higher)

To apply for a license, call 877-730-6347 or visit www.petdata.com/Delaware

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




DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Division of Public Health

Office of Animal Welfare

DAS dispatch, officers respond to 15,000 calls in first year

More than 1,200 stray dogs returned to owners

One year ago, the OAW launched [Delaware Animal Services \(DAS\)](#), the first state-run, statewide animal control and cruelty enforcement unit in Delaware. In 2016, animal welfare dispatchers and officers handled nearly 15,000 calls for service, of which more than 10,000 required officers to be dispatched. In those cases, officers executed more than 700 warrants, citations or criminal summons. Together with the DAS shelter partner Brandywine Valley SPCA (BVSPCA), DAS returned more than 51 percent of stray dogs, or 1,266, to their owners.

When not investigating cases in the field, DAS officers promoted OAW services at more than 50 events. Officers weren't the only ones busy. Of the 15,000 calls received by the DAS 24-hour hotline, a third were calls for referrals, education, lost animal assistance, and other guidance.

Chief Mark Tobin, DAS supervisor, leads the team of more than 25 animal welfare officers and dispatchers that are assigned to multiple field offices in the state.

"Every day our team does an outstanding job enforcing laws when they have to and go out of their way to educate



Officer Matt Barba pets a stray dog he rescued and took to the BVSPCA New Castle shelter in March 2016. Shauna McVey photo.

DAS 2016 Statistics

Officer-dispatched calls: 10,070
(see breakdown below)

Teleservice* calls: 4,762

Total service calls: 14,832

- 519 Endangered animal
- 253 Police and fire assistance
 - 1,789 Animal cruelty
 - 2,086 Rabies control
 - 70 Livestock at-large
 - 5,353 Dog and dangerous dog control

*Teleservice provides referrals, education, or other resources

Stray dogs returned to owners

- 611 by animal welfare officers
- 655 from shelter partner BVSPCA

and provide support to those in need," Tobin said. "They ensure stray and abused animals are rescued, action is taken against those who commit animal cruelty, and the community has a trusted ally in animal care and control."

DAS launched in three phases, beginning in September 2015 with rabies control and cruelty enforcement. On Jan. 1, 2016, DAS began enforcing animal control laws in all three counties and became the provider in the City of Wilmington in July 2016.

Community First

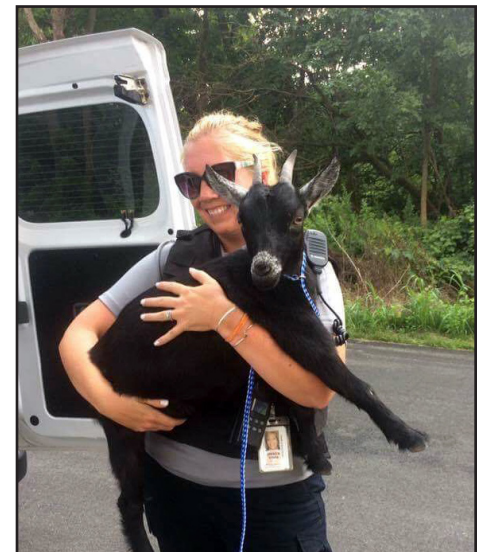
A community-first approach has been the hallmark of DAS. Officers provide pet care supplies, such as housing, straw, flea control, food, and toys. In 2016, 143 Delawareans were assisted in this way. Supplies are donated from the public. Education and training are provided by officers in daily interactions with the public.

"As officers, it's our goal to ensure people know about services that are available to them," said DAS Lt. Jessica Vitela. "It's rewarding to see the impact we're making in communities."

DAS officers build relationships with the communities they serve, assess each situation to take actions appropriate to the unique situation, and seek opportunities to use education and resources in place of enforcement. This approach improves the livelihood of animals while helping keep pets with their families, reduces the number of animals in shelters, and builds trust between officers and the community.

In 2016, DAS officers helped 1,863 stray and homeless dogs through animal control and rescued 288 animals from cruelty. Officers scan all stray or injured animals for microchips immediately and canvass neighborhoods to try to find the owner. DAS officers rescued 377 seriously injured and endangered cats, as well.

The State [Lost and Found Pet Registry](#), which was launched at the end of 2015, also helps. All animals picked up by officers are posted to the website without delay to help owners find lost pets. Those that could not be returned are placed into adoption programs by the BVSPCA, who uses industry best practices and innovative techniques to ensure every animal has a chance.



Lt. Jessica Vitela rescued Dani, a stray goat, in Wilmington. After fostering her for several months, Vitela found Dani a place on a farm with animal friends she can play with. Submitted photo.

DAS reunites dog with owners after long, cold night

Delaware Animal Services dispatchers often receive calls about stray animals that are in distress or injured, and officers go to great lengths to bring those animals to safety.

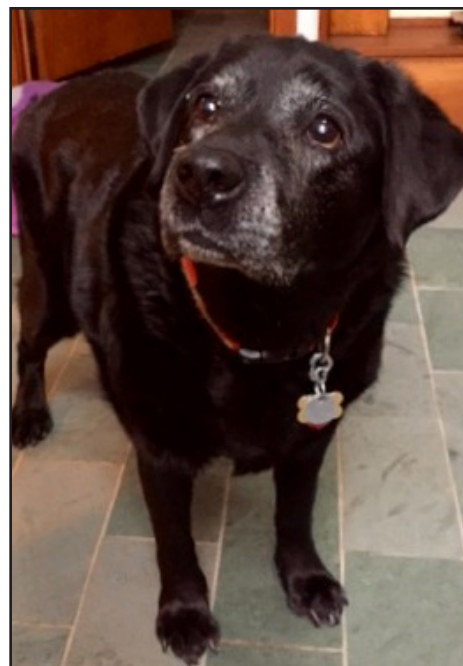
Addy, a 13-year-old Black Labrador Retriever with a heart condition, was one of the 1,226 stray dogs returned safely to their owners in 2016 thanks to calls made to DAS dispatch.

DAS dispatch received a call from a property owner who noticed a dog lying at the bottom of a riverbank. She was not moving.

Officer May responded and began to walk down the bank when he was approached by Addy's owner Juliet Bercaw, who asked if he was there for a Black Labrador Retriever.

Bercaw said they had been searching for Addy nonstop since 2:30 a.m., when she quickly wandered off during a middle-of-the-night bathroom break.

"She was lying in thick mud with her chin in the water, injured, disoriented, and frightened. We were devastated to see her in this condition," Bercaw recalled. "I'm still not sure how he managed it, but [Officer May] picked Addy up – she's 75 pounds – and carried her over a piece of concrete that straddled the water and was barely wide enough to walk over, up a hill, and to our car. While Officer May was performing this strenuous task, he was also consoling Addy, me, and my daughter. We are very grateful for Officer May's service, dedication and kindness."



Addy

Office of Animal Welfare expands services in 2016

In 2016, OAW administrative staff continued work to improve the lives of animals and the people who care for them.

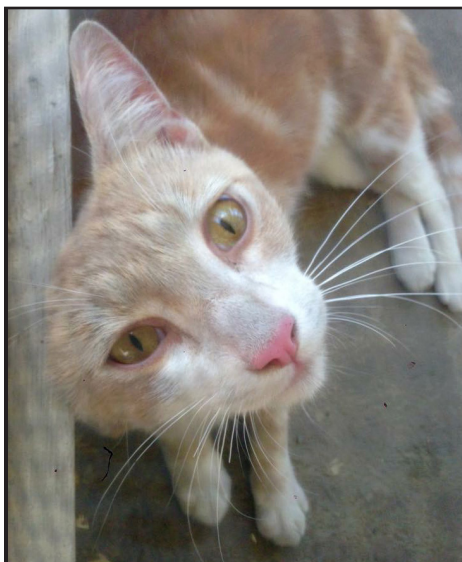
Delaware Animal Response

Delaware Animal Response (DAR), the emergency preparedness section of the OAW, recruited and trained more than 100 volunteers for the State Animal Response Team and Veterinary Medical Reserve Corps.

DAR also hosted an emergency animal sheltering training for volunteers, and received high marks at a statewide emergency sheltering exercise hosted by the Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) in August.

Animal cruelty

Three critical laws were passed to create new authority in the enforcement of animal cruelty laws, protect outdoor animals during dangerous weather, and add animal fighting to Delaware racketeering laws.



Herman, a stray cat found by OAW staff, was one of many cats who received free veterinary services thanks to a community cat grant acquired by the Brandywine Valley SPCA. Shauna McVey photo.

Free-roaming cat overpopulation

The OAW Continued to take action to humanely address the overpopulation of free-roaming cats in Delaware. See the article "Free sterilization available

for cats in Seaford, Georgetown" on page 6.

Animal Rescue Summit

The OAW hosted the first-ever Animal Rescue Summit in May with more than 100 animal rescuers – many of whom operate individually – who were able to network and learn best practices from regional and national thought leaders. Workshops included: fund-raising; volunteer recruitment; life-saving through collaboration; placing difficult-to-adopt animals; medical best practices; adoption policies and procedures; and veterinary medicine for rescues.

The summit was provided for free to attendees due to sponsorships from the Humane Society of the United States and the Delaware Veterinary Medical Association.

For more information about the services provided by the Office of Animal Welfare, visit <http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/oaw/oawhome.html>.

DOC, BVSPCA partnership helps animals and offenders

By Shauna McVey
Program Coordinator

When the dogs at Brandywine Valley SPCA's New Castle shelter return from walks to freshly cleaned kennels, Tamika Gary makes sure their blankets are dryer-warmed for an added comfort.

Gary isn't on the shelter staff and she isn't a volunteer. She's part of a crew of convicted offenders from Department of Corrections Hazel D. Plant Women's Treatment Facility who visit the shelter three times a week to clean kennels, bedding, bowls, and more.

"Working here and seeing the conditions of some of these dogs, it makes you care about animals more," Gary said. "For them to give us an opportunity where we're incarcerated, but can still be a part of society, we look forward to it."

Warden Carole Evans has seen those who work at the BVSPCA shelter become more empathetic.

"You see a bit of a transformation," she said. "I think it teaches them to value what they have, that sometimes life looks really bad, but you see someone who doesn't have it as well, your



Tamika Gary and Shannon Carter work together to ensure animals at Brandywine Valley SPCA's New Castle shelter have clean and comfortable bedding.



Offenders from Hazel D. Plant Women's Treatment Facility pause from cleaning at Brandywine Valley SPCA for a photo with adoptable dog Titan. Pictured, from left to right, are Warden Carole Evans, Adneris Camacho-Torres, Shannon Carter, Marissa Diangelo, Tamika Gary, Taylor Shivock, Doris Baird and Correctional Officer Tonia Priestley. Shauna McVey photos.

perspective changes."

When approached by BVSPCA leadership about a partnership, Evans jumped at the unique chance. Level Four, or work release, offenders are those at the end of their sentence or who have violated probation and are allowed to work outside their facilities, typically for community organizations.

Correctional Officer Tonia Priestley, who escorts the women to BVSPCA, said the cleaning work is not for everyone, but the offenders are happy to do it and take pride in their work.

"This a very challenging job," she said. "To me, not just anybody could come out here and do this. You have to be a special kind of person."

The offenders know that as convicted felons, their employment options are limited once they are released. Their work at the shelter allows them to build skills and experience that can help them secure jobs in the animal welfare field.

"That's the good thing about these

programs," said BVSPCA Director of Development Eli Martinez. "It's rehabilitation for everyone."

One by one, the dogs are taken for walks while the women use spray cleaners, hoses, and squeegees to clean each kennel.

Taylor Shirock always took time to pet and talk to dogs in their kennels. She worked at BVSPCA through her last week of a 10-month sentence and now wants to go to school to become a veterinary technician and possibly a veterinarian.

"It's beneficial to see how much you impact the animals," she said. "If I can make a difference with animals, this I something I would do for the rest of my life."

Marissa DiAngelo also wants to continue working with animals when she is released in less than two months.

"Walking with them is an awesome feeling when they start coming around and aren't so scared," she said. "It feels like I really accomplished something."

Continued on Page 5

BVSPCA dog visits corrections center, finds new home

He was only supposed to visit incarcerated offenders as an example of the dogs they would eventually help care for through a shelter partnership. But Plummer, a grey and white terrier mix, charmed his way into a forever home instead.

Warden Carole Evans said correctional officers took a then very skinny dog from the Brandywine Valley SPCA New Castle shelter for a visit to Hazel

D. Plant Women's Treatment Facility in New Castle and then to the Plummer Community Corrections Center for men in Wilmington. It was the men who didn't let him go.

"The offenders took him in like he's their family and asked if he could spend the night," Evans said. "Then an officer brought a cage in. We talked to the bureau chief and said 'We have a dog.'"

They named him Plummer after the facility where he now lives. He stays in a house with about 10 offenders, and is never at a loss for affection.

"They walk him. They give him his medicine," Evans said. "He walks around the facility, and it's had a good impact on everybody."



Plummer

She said the BVSPCA partnership where female offenders help clean was originally planned to include male offenders from the Plummer Center, and still might in the future. But for now, all offenders at Plummer Center get to benefit from the love of a dog around the clock.

"If somebody's having a bad day, they go walk him around," Evans said. "It relieves people's stress."

Correctional Officer Tonia Priestley said Plummer might be free from shelter life now, but he still acts like an inmate when offenders have to go to their rooms for routine counts by guards.

"When they call count time, he goes in his cage," she said. "He's changed the whole demeanor around everybody."

Evans said officers have started to introduce Plummer to other dogs in hopes that he can help with a program in the future that would allow male offenders to help ready BVSPCA shelter dogs for adoption.

"The plan is in the long range to do a socialization program so we have dogs that come for roughly three months and work with one or two offenders to get socialized," she said. "When they get adopted, people can say [the dog] completed a 12-week training program."

Evans thinks the male offenders will take to the program as they have with Plummer.

"The guys have been so receptive and so responsive to his needs. They're just on it," she said.

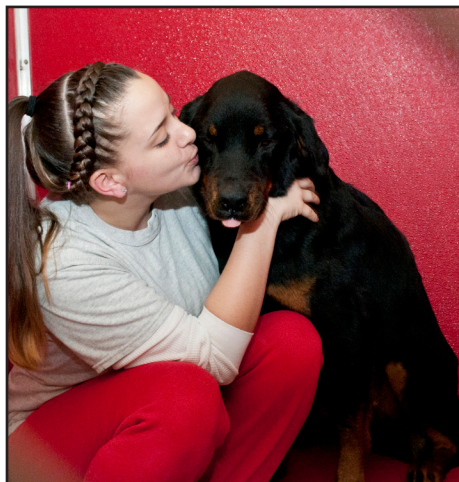
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Adneris Camacho-Torres said she was getting in a lot of trouble at the treatment facility, but that stopped when she had BVSPCA to look forward to.

"This is a transition for me to give back to society," she said. "It feels good going back to Hazel D. Plant knowing I did a good deed."

Shannon Carter said seeing the difference they make for the animals helps build self-esteem, which can help keep offenders away from crime when they are released.

"Some people [who commit crime] have never been put in a position where they can feel good about themselves," she said. "When you get out, you can do the right thing."



Taylor Shivock comforts Ruby, a new resident at Brandywine Valley SPCA's New Castle shelter.

Doris Baird washes and sanitizes food and water bowls, stacks them neatly, and cleans out cat litter boxes.

"It helps us feel better to help the animals and staff," she said. "Being here has made me want to work with animals. Whether I do, I know I would still come here to volunteer."

Walt Fenstermacher, BVSPCA director of operations, said the women even clean everything from the break room to the bathroom, voluntarily. And the impact they have is far greater than maintaining a high standard of cleanliness. Having multiple women at the shelter provides more socialization for the dogs.

"It introduces them to more people," he said. "The program benefits us, but it's also a reward for [offenders] to come out of their facility and be engaged and active in their community."

OAW hosts animal cruelty in-service with JP judges

The OAW had a unique opportunity to speak to more than 50 Delaware Justice of the Peace Court judges and staff members at an annual conference held November 17, 2016, in Rehoboth Beach. The session focused on the link between crimes against animals and other crimes, laws concerning animal cruelty and seizure, and options for judges when hearing cases and issuing sentencing concerning crimes against animals.

“Sessions like this are important for our judges,” said Alan Davis, Justice of the Peace Court Chief Magistrate. “The session provided clarification on how animal welfare laws are enforced and beneficial information about the connection between animal cruelty and other crimes.”

Chief Mark Tobin, DAS supervisor, reviewed the services Delaware Animal Services provides as the state animal control and cruelty enforcement unit, and gave insight to how officers approach cases of animal neglect and cruelty.



“Judges review warrants associated with animal cruelty or neglect, hear cases, and impose sentences and conditions that an animal abuser must abide by,” Tobin said. “Due to their important role in our fight against animal cruelty, it is critical for them to have an understanding of the impact of these crimes on our overall society.”

Hetti Brown, former OAW executive director, discussed the types of crimes against animals commonly identified in Delaware and the strong link between

violence toward animals and violence toward humans, drug and property offenses, and other serious crimes.

The OAW applauds the Justice of the Peace Court for taking animal cruelty seriously and dedicating time to learning more about the topic.

Animal abusers are five times more likely to commit violent crimes against people, four times more likely to commit property crimes, and three times more likely to have drug or disorderly conduct offenses.

In 2015, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) added animal cruelty crimes to the National Incident-Based Reporting System as a Group A offense – a category that includes crimes of a serious nature, including arson, burglary, kidnapping, and homicide.

The national reporting system recognizes that animal cruelty cases may serve as an early warning to alert the criminal justice system to individuals who pose a future danger to the community.

Free sterilization available for cats in Seaford, Georgetown

In November 2016, BVSPCA and OAW launched a program to spay or neuter all unaltered cats in Seaford and Georgetown at no cost to the public. As of January 31, 2017, 443 cats were sterilized through the project. The program is funded with a \$100,000 grant secured by the OAW from a foundation that wishes to remain anonymous.

As part of the project, data will be collected in the towns and a control area – an area similar in geography and population demographics where services are not currently offered. Data will help to show how populations of free-roaming cats change over time after sterilization services are provided for free to the public. The data will then be used to secure future funding for service expansion.

Another portion of the grant is being used to fund a statewide market research project on pet ownership or caretaking, sources of pets, and access to services by pet owners. The market research project, which also launched in November, will continue throughout the winter months.

Several groups have assisted with the project, including the Delaware Friends of Animals volunteer network, Sussex TNR, Compassionate Cats, Friends of Animals DE and Cats Around Town Society. The Delaware Humane Association offered the use of its mobile spay/neuter clinic so surgeries can be completed in Sussex County.

Trapping, sterilizing and vaccinating, and releasing healthy cats back in their

original location is called [Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return \(TNVR\)](#).

By sterilizing a substantial percentage of community cats in a targeted area, TNVR prevents the birth of more unwanted cats and cat populations gradually decline. TNVR results in fewer nuisance issues, protection for people and pets against rabies, and reduced animal homelessness and suffering.

Several Delaware municipalities have successfully implemented TNVR in place of the old “catch and kill” methods that were costly and ineffective.

Seaford and Georgetown residents may schedule an appointment for spay/neuter services by calling 302-312-4290.

OAW welcomes new Delaware Animal Response coordinator

The Office of Animal Welfare recently added Karen Clark as its new [Delaware Animal Response \(DAR\)](#) coordinator.

Before joining the OAW officially, Clark served as a volunteer member of the DAR program, which works to prepare the community for emergencies and disasters where domestic animals and their caretakers may be affected. She most recently served as a member of the State Animal Response Team (SART), for which she recruited volunteers, conducted community outreach events, and acted as the shelter manager at a statewide animal sheltering exercise in August 2016. DAR received high marks for excellence in emergency animal sheltering at the 2016 exercise in large part thanks to Clark's leadership.

"Animal welfare is my passion. That's what drove me to get involved in DAR," Clark said.

Clark will lead emergency and disaster planning and response efforts for pets and people. Some of her duties include: developing disaster response operational plans; acting as a liaison to the Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA), Red Cross, and national disaster preparedness organizations; recruiting and training emergency response volunteers; and educating the community on emergency preparedness for pets.

She wants DAR to engage the community with the help of volunteers so more people know emergency animal shelters are available in the event of evacuations.

"I don't think the community realizes when there is an emergency evacuation, we want them to bring their pet," Clark said. "It makes it safer not only for the people and the animals, but also for the first responders."

Clark has a long history of serving animals and people in Delaware. She has been involved with several OAW initiatives and services, and is a Sussex County leader for the Delaware Friends of Animals volunteer network that works closely with the OAW to provide resources for pets in need. Clark also volunteers with numerous rescue groups to foster puppies and dogs with special needs, and previously worked as the volunteer coordinator for the Delaware SPCA's Georgetown shelter. In addition to Clark's animal



The Office of Animal Welfare's new Delaware Animal Response Coordinator Karen Clark and her rescue dog, Minnie. Submitted photo.

welfare work, her professional background in risk management and safety for a major retailer.

Clark is working to restructure DAR to offer different volunteer levels, from community outreach to emergency shelter operation, to enable more volunteers to take part in the program.

"You can volunteer in whichever level you would like to participate in," she said.

DAR's mission is to develop and implement preparedness, response and recovery plans necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of domestic animals, and the people who own or have responsibility for animals during emergencies and disasters.

Upcoming Volunteer Orientation Training

A volunteer orientation training will be held later this spring. Those looking to be part of the State Animal Response Team and the Veterinary Medical Reserve Corps are welcome to attend.

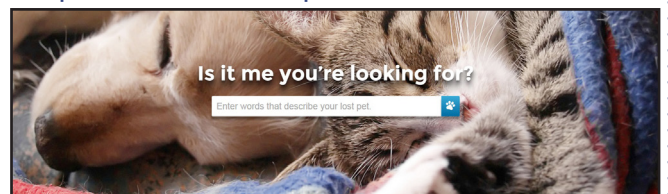
To sign up for DAR and receive information about the training, contact Clark at karen.clark@state.de.us and 302-242-3594.

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

Animals rescued by Delaware animal welfare officers are featured on the 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.

For assistance, call the DAS hotline at 302-255-4646



Dog licenses now include senior discounts, rolling renewals

The OAW recently announced several changes to dog licensing for 2017 that will benefit Delaware residents.

Senior citizens (65 and older) who own dogs will now be offered a reduced rate to license dogs if they have been spayed or neutered. The new rate is \$7 annually, a 30 percent reduction on the regular price of \$10 for spayed or neutered dogs. Licenses for unaltered dogs remain \$15 per year for all applicants.

License terms have also changed for the better. Licenses are now valid for one year from date of purchase, and are no longer based on calendar year. This means no matter when the license is purchased, it will be valid for 12 months. Two- and three-year licenses are also available.

“We are working hard to implement improvements that will make it easier for dog owners to license their pets,” said OAW Deputy Director Christina Motoyoshi.

In August 2016, the OAW added three new locations to its list of retail licensing partners statewide where licenses can be purchased in person.



Residents may also purchase dog licenses online at www.petdata.com/delaware or through the mail by calling 1-877-730-6347 for an application.

The OAW reminds dog owners that dog licenses are required by state law for all dogs 6 months of age or older. Proof of current rabies vaccination is required to obtain a license. Rabies vaccinations are mandatory for dogs, cats, and ferrets 6 months of age and older. Those who fail to license their dogs face fines of \$50 or more.

DOG LICENSE RETAILERS

Brandywine Valley SPCA

600 South St., New Castle
302-516-1000

Delaware Humane Association

701 A St., Wilmington
302-571-0111

Fenwick Pet Stop

1200 Coastal Highway,
Fenwick Island
302-581-0046

Furbaby Boutique

204 N.E. Front St., Milford
302-725-5078

Millville Pet Stop

607 Atlantic Ave., Millville
302-539-9382

NCC Government Center

87 Reads Way, New Castle
302-395-5555

New London Veterinary Hospital

437 New London Road, Newark
302-738-5000

Yarn and Bone Pet Supply Store

129 N. Main St., Suite 1, Camden
302-423-8889

Adoptable Pet Spotlights

Available at Brandywine Valley SPCA, New Castle

Lion-O

Lion-O is a handsome, laid-back 6-year-old who likes other dogs. He would love a home with a nice bed to sleep in and a television to watch.

Lion-O is neutered, microchipped, and up to date on vaccinations.



Fluffy

Fluffy is a 5-year-old cat that came into the shelter as a stray. He might take some time to get comfortable in a new home, but he's a curious kitty who will warm up quickly once acclimated.

Fluffy is neutered, microchipped, and up to date on vaccinations.



To adopt Lion-O or Fluffy, contact BVSPCA at office@bvspca.org or 302-516-1000.