

The Norman Transcript

March 26, 2011

Noble Animal Control officer works for reunions

By Jocelyn Pedersen

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NORMAN — My favorite thing is a happy reunion, Officer Jared Cox, Nobles Animal Control Officer said. I like to see the dogs happy.

Cox works hard to reunite lost and strayed animals with their owners and to find homes for those that are not claimed. He coordinates efforts with other local animal shelters and rescue facilities.

Recently, Cox took in nine dogs at once. A family of eight great Pyrenees/Anatolian Shepherd mix six puppies with their parents and a yellow lab. Cox was able to find the labs owner, and started to work with rescues online to take the Great Pyrenees family. Eventually, Cox met a representative from the Oklahoma Humane Society in Oklahoma City who helped to transport the dogs the rest of the way to a rescue facility in Kellyville.

We strive to rescue and adopt as many animals as we can, Police Chief Keith Springstead said. We got calls from California, Texas and New York on the Great Pyrenees. There was interest out there. We use the Web, petfinder.com and other avenues to get pets adopted.

There is limited space at the Noble Animal Shelter. With only a few cat cages and three large outdoor and eight indoor cages for dogs, there isnt much room for housing animals. Until last year, the outside runs didnt have a roof and even though theres a roof now, animals can only be kept outside when weather permits.

Despite limited space, Cox does his best to reunite owners with their pets. State law requires dogs and cats to wear a rabies vaccination tag, which helps in the process. Cox maintains fastest way to a happy reunion is to have the pet wear a city of Noble license in addition to the rabies tag. He said pets can be identified by either tag but explains that Vets offices close. Dispatch doesnt. City pet tags can be purchased at the police station for \$5 with proof of a veterinarian-administered rabies vaccination.

Cox became Nobles full-time Animal Control Officer in July, 2010 after working three years as a dispatcher and has attended the Oklahoma Animal Control Association Academy to study ethics, laws, investigation procedures, capture, restraint, first aid and shelter management, among other topics. Springstead said Cox will continue to attend yearly training.

If someone takes on a position, I will train them for it and continue to train for it to stay current with state laws and city ordinances, Springstead said. Eventually, Id like Jared to become a state certified trapper and work his way to become a Euthanasia Tech through the Oklahoma Veterinary Board.

Over time, Nobles animal control needs continued to grow.

The shelter was adequate for what we were doing, but we saw a need for a better facility, Springstead said. With the help from the city manager and the City Council, we enlarged our space a little, made improvements and upgrades and got a full-time animal control officer.

The city of Noble recently acquired a new pickup truck with logos on the sides, which helps to identify Cox as an animal control officer. Cox said when he drives down the street, residents sometimes stop him to report animal issues.

Funding for the shelter comes from the City, but theres always a need for more help. Currently, a container pod is used for storage at the shelter.

We get creative with space. We take baby steps, Springstead said. We have a vision and then we get there.

Springstead hopes to possibly start a foster family program, which would allow for more animals to be housed and rescued. Donations of dog and cat food, kitty litter, blankets and doghouses are always needed. Cox is seeking volunteers to walk dogs, clean cages, help feed animals at the shelter and work the website, which, according to Springstead, would facilitate Cox being on the streets more.

Cox works closely with the Noble Animal Clinic, which he describes as a really great small office. Hes working with Dr. Ryan Riddle in the hopes of offering a rabies vaccination day and a flea-and-tick-dip event. The veterinary office also provides patrons with Noble pet tag information.

Cox said making the decision to euthanize an animal is always hard.

I try to adopt out and rescue all animals we bring in. I cant risk adopting out or giving to a rescue any dog that is aggressive. If an animal is too sick, its best to put it down rather than leave it in pain, he said. Thats the worst part of the job.

Cox bases his decision to euthanize on how long an animal has been at the shelter, if there has been no interest shown in adopting the animal or if rescue centers wont take it. He said it boils down to limitations of the size of the animal shelter.

City ordinances regarding pets are listed on the city of Noble website, www.cityofnoble.org.