

The Grant County Zero in Seven Initiative

a comprehensive community-wide strategy

Our Goal: Reducing Pet Euthanasia in Grant County

The following document was endorsed by unanimous vote at a community meeting on _____ . Participants included members of organizations and agencies concerned with animal welfare as well as concerned individuals.

Introduction

Dogs and cats can be wonderful companions and fulfill important services. In some instances these animals are in need of protection from neglect, abuse, or mistreatment. They may also carry disease, pose a threat to public safety, and at times be considered a nuisance. Addressing health and safety issues while ensuring animal welfare and protecting the rights of owners can be complicated and challenging.

The following proposal outlines an innovative approach to addressing animal issues in our area. Comprehensive and community-based, the effort will increase public health and safety, enhance animal welfare and increase the effectiveness of public expenditures.

The existing system for animal care and control in Silver City and Grant County is working hard on several fronts including rabies control, removal of animals from bad situations and having places for people to take unwanted animals.

Unfortunately the current system also results in the premature deaths of thousands of animals. Up to _____ of all the dogs and cats taken in at the shelter - more than _____ healthy or treatable animals - are killed there every year. Unless significant changes are made, the very system that is supposed to protect animals will put thousands of them at risk over the next decade.

Healthy or treatable dogs and cats are being killed at the shelter because more are being admitted than the facility can hold. **This situation can be corrected if the placement of animals into good homes can be greatly increased, and if the number of animals going to the shelter can be significantly reduced.**

Accomplishment of these objectives requires participation by animal advocates, animal control officers, and the shelters.

The effort will take as many as seven years to complete. It will require investment of time and fiscal resources above existing levels, and modification of policies and procedures.

The initiative will work **if everyone actively supports the same 12-point plan, if organizations align their programs with the campaign, and if the initiative can capitalize on the benefits of broadly based cooperation and coordinated action.**

The 12- Point Plan

Experience around the country suggests that 12 activities are needed to reduce, if not eliminate, killing of savable animals at the shelter. The activities fall into three categories: (1) building a strong support base, (2) lowering intakes, and (3) increasing positive outcomes.

The four activities that would **build a strong support base** include:

1. Compassionate and resourceful leadership for shelter and animal control functions
2. Adequate funding for all aspects of the initiative
3. A strong public relations program to gain community involvement
4. Engaging lots of resourceful and compassionate volunteers

Lowered intake rates result from four main activities:

5. Increased pet retention by owners
6. A proactive approach to returning lost animals
7. High-volume, low-cost sterilization
8. A program to address feral and free-roaming cats

And finally, we can **increase the number of animals leaving the shelters** with yet another set of activities:

9. Medical and behavioral programs for animals in the shelter
10. Active reliance on rescue groups
11. Foster care
12. A comprehensive adoption program

Underlying the 12-Point Plan are three assumptions. First, animal **owners must understand their responsibilities** and be held accountable for meeting those responsibilities. Second, **the dog and cat population must be brought down** to a number more closely related to actual demand for these pets. And third, public **policy and enforcement activity must minimize the unintended consequence** of high euthanasia rates without compromising public health and safety.

The Strategic Framework

The Grant County Zero in Seven Coalition will work on ways to translate the 12-Point Plan into a workable strategy for the Town of Silver City and Grant County.

The group will agree on the best way to carry out the 12-Point Plan...perhaps by a consortium dedicated exclusively to this effort. Because many different entities are involved in local animal issues, the consortium can include animal advocates and organizations, city and county animal control units, and the High Desert Humane Society which runs the shelter for the Town of Silver City and other shelters in the county.

The 12-Point Plan will be carried out by individual teams. Each team will be dedicated to one or more of the plan elements and each will have as much independence as possible to organize and carry out their respective activities. Tasks will focus on meeting specific goals with measurable results.

Operational Details

- Name: _____

The name of the organization is of primary concern in dealings with governmental entities, potential sources of funding, and the public at large.

The intent of this title is to convey: (a) that this group includes all of the primary organizations, agencies, and individuals who are concerned with animal issues in Grant County, and (b) that accomplishment of our stated objective requires full consideration of the many people who are involved with animal issues.

- **Objective:** “Zero in Seven”

Killing of healthy and treatable dogs and cats at the shelters will be reduced to zero by the end of 2020– that is, within 7 years.

This goal can be attained if the number of dogs and cats taken in at the shelter drops and the number of animals placed in good homes increases by a combined average total of _____ animals each year between 2013 and 2020.

- **Initial Marketing/Outreach**

The initiative will develop a messaging/outreach approach to support changes in expectations, assumptions, and behavior of people towards dogs and cats. The approach will recognize the need to connect effectively with different groups of people.

- Structure of the Coalition

The Coalition will be composed of all organizations, governmental entities, and individuals that publicly endorse the objectives of the campaign and commit to support of campaign activities through contributions of time, money, or other resources.

The Coalition will be coordinated by a Council and organized into work groups.

- **The Council**

The Coalition will be coordinated by a Council. The Council will be composed of one representative from each of the campaign's work groups, one from each Animal Control unit, one from the High Desert Humane Society Board and three (3) representatives elected at large from the people working on the campaign.

Any local animal advocacy organization with more than 10 members may be offered a seat on the Council if the make-up of the Council does not include a member who is affiliated with such an organization.

The Council will meet monthly or more frequently as called by the council chair. A quorum will consist of 51% of the designated representatives.

The Council will elect two co-chairs on an annual basis. The co-chairs will be authorized to speak on behalf of the Coalition and will lead Council meetings.

Primary functions of the Council include: (a) setting intermediate goals and monitoring progress of the campaign, (b) seeking and distributing funds, (c) facilitating efforts of individual work groups, (d) helping work groups synchronize their efforts, and (e) establishing such policies or procedures as may be needed for achievement of the stated purpose of the campaign.

The Council will determine how best to handle the financial matters of the campaign including whether or not to formally organize as a not-for-profit corporation.

- **Teams**

The work of the campaign will be carried out by individuals organized into teams. Each team will be dedicated to making progress in one or more of the campaign's strategic areas. More than one team may be engaged in advancing a strategic area so long as the efforts of those teams are not in competition with one another.

Each team will put together a work plan. The work plan will consist of specific tasks or activities, a schedule, a budget, and assignments. The group may adjust the work plan based on changing conditions. Teams will collaborate with one another as needed to accomplish their objectives.

Initial work groups will include:

- Management
- Retention & Animal Return
- Spay & Neuter
- Cat Placement
- Dog Placement

- **Ground Rules**

Our campaign will be move more smoothly and efficiently if participants work within the following principles:

- Keep everything positive and moving toward our goal of "0 in 7".
- Focus our time and energy on achieving the objectives of our own team.
- Asking for help when coordination is needed – accepting that it might not take the form we expect.
- Listen to the requests of others – meet their expectations if at all possible.

APPENDIX A.

Getting Started in 2013

WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO GET DONE BY THE END OF 2013

The following are preliminary suggestions for goals to be accomplished in 2013. They are not listed in any kind of ranked order of importance.

1. Fully equip all Animal Control Officers (ACO) with chip-readers and other related equipment; markedly increase **Return to Owner (RTO)** statistics.
2. By the end of the year have everything in place - funding, agreements for facilities, staffing, etc. - needed to increase **sterilization procedures** by _____ surgeries per month.
3. Ensure that a sustainable **funding** strategy is in place and showing results in terms of private grants, City and County appropriations, and donations.
4. Develop a comprehensive strategy for **education and marketing** that targets people of all ages and has materials ready to use in January 2014.
5. See that new City and County **ordinances** are in place that address critical issues and have reduced unintended consequences or a mitigation strategy regarding euthanasia.
6. Develop and select a **logo and slogan** for the campaign.
7. Increase **adoptions, rescues and fosters** from the shelters by ____% over 2011/2012 average statistics.
8. Decrease **owner surrenders or drop-offs** to the shelter by ____% over 2012 statistics over 2011/2012 average statistics.
9. The **Grant County Zero in Seven Coalition** and all work groups are functioning.
10. **Resolutions or letters of support** are in hand from all governmental entities and partnering organizations.

WHAT WOULD WE LIKE TO DO IN THE FIRST 90 DAYS

1. **Resolutions are passed** by the HDHS Board, City Council, and County Commission in support of “Zero in Seven”.
2. **Letters of support** or resolutions are approved by animal advocacy groups wishing to participate in the consortium.
3. The **first meetings** are held of the coalition, the council, and all work groups.
4. Information related to the 12-Point Plan is collected and analyzed to establish a good **baseline** regarding animal-related issues throughout the county.
5. Agreement is formalized regarding protocols for measuring success.
6. Owner education, public outreach, RTO programs, reduced surrender practices, sterilization programs, and owner assistance are focused in this area to the greatest extent possible.
7. Formal agreements are put in place with the **Animal Control units** in support of “Zero in Seven”.
8. **Microchip reading equipment** is purchased and distributed for ACO use in support of Return to Owner (RTO) efforts.
9. An initial **logo, slogan, and branding message** are developed and approved for use.
10. A **website & social media strategy** are developed, approved for use, and implemented in support of the campaign.
11. Plans are developed and initiated to **broaden support for the campaign**. High priority contacts include judges, veterinarians, pet-related businesses, youth groups, civic groups, and news media.
12. A **fund raising plan** and case statement are drafted, approved, and initiated by the council.

APPENDIX B.

*Budget & Fundraising

| Expense item | Est. cost | Potential sources |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------------------|
| High-volume, low-cost spay & neuter program | | City / County Grants **Fees |
| Equipment for Animal Control Officers | | City / County Grants Donations |
| Graphic design services | | Donations |
| Owner education literature – develop & publish | | Grants |
| Media advertising – local papers | | Donations |
| Travel costs for out-of-state rescues | | Grants Donations |
| Staff to support increased adoptions, fosters & rescues | | City / County Grants Donations |
| Shelter improvements to facilitate adoptions | | City / County Grants |
| TOTALS | | City / County Grants Donations Fees |

**Preliminary -- for illustrative purposes and as a point of departure*

***Spay & Neuter Surgical Fees – assumes \$ ____ for each surgery x _____ surgeries.*

Donations can come from: animal organizations; businesses; individuals. Possible individual breakdown ex.: 1 @ \$1,000, 5 @ \$500, 20 @ @ \$250, 50 @ \$100, 100 @ \$35.

Funds from City and County would be above current levels of support.

Appendix C.

Draft Resolution

WHEREAS, dogs and cats can be wonderful companions and provide important benefits to their owners; and

WHEREAS, domestic animals may also carry disease, pose a threat to public safety, and be considered a nuisance, and in some instances the animals may themselves be in need of protection from neglect, abuse, or mistreatment; and

WHEREAS, addressing public health and safety issues while ensuring animal welfare and protecting owner's rights requires active involvement of pet owners, animal advocates and advocacy organizations, the Animal Control units of Silver City and Grant County; and

WHEREAS, the existing system for animal care and control in Silver City and Grant County is working well on several fronts, with the notable exception that thousands of healthy or treatable dogs and cats are killed each year at the shelters; and

WHEREAS, this situation can be corrected only if the number of animals placed in good homes can be greatly increased, and if the number of animals going to the shelter can be significantly reduced.; and

WHEREAS, the most effective and responsible way to increase animal placement and reduce shelter intake is through a multi-year, comprehensive, community-based effort; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that this governing board does hereby endorse the "12-Point Plan" of the *Grant County Zero in Seven Coalition* as it offers an important opportunity to improve the way our community addresses animal issues while enhancing the benefits of pet ownership; and

FURTHERMORE, agrees to support and work with other governmental entities, organizations, and individuals over the next seven years to reach the goal of having no healthy or treatable dogs and cats killed at the shelters – while maintaining or improving existing conditions regarding public health and safety, animal welfare, and effectiveness of public expenditures.

Appendix D.

Teams

Team 1:

Overall Coordination & Monitoring
Secure Adequate Funding
Expand Public Buy-in & Support
Recruit & Place Volunteers

Targets

Develop budget and secure funding to support 7-year effort
Develop and implement media strategy and tools (logo, etc.)

Team 2: Animal Retention and Return

Increase Pet Retention by Owners
Increase number of lost animals returned to their owners

Targets

Number of impounded animals from the target area is reduced by 50%
95% of all micro-chipped pets brought to the shelter are returned to their owners
Proposed animal ordinances are reviewed and comments provided

Team 3: Spay & Neuter

Increase number of sterilized animals through high-volume, low-cost spay and neuter

Targets

Increase education/outreach on spay/neutering
By the end of 2013, _____ spay and neuter surgeries are done in Grant County *above* 2011/2012 average

Team 4: Promote actions by pet owners (current and potential)

Promote actions by pet owners (current and potential) that support the 12-point plan such as:
Spay & neuter
Micro-chips or other id

Physical control

Getting help with pet-related problems

Finding a lost pet

Targets

75% of homes in the enforcement target area are contacted and provided with information by the Coalition

An additional _____ families are contacted and provided with information by the coalition

Team 5: Cat Placement

Increase the number of cats placed in good homes through:

Rescue groups

Medical & behavioral programs

Foster care & adoptions

Targets

Number of cats fostered or adopted increased by _____% over 2011/2012 average

Team 7

Mission: Dog Placement

Increase the number of dogs fostered or adopted through: • Rescue groups • Medical & behavioral programs • Foster care & adoptions

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