



UPDATE ON DOMESTIC ANIMAL SERVICES SHELTER REHABILITATION & RENOVATION

The Collier County Domestic Animal Services (DAS) shelter is more than 25 years old and is scheduled for rehabilitation and renovation. Many of the animals brought into DAS are sick, injured, and require immediate medical attention. Along with those scared and suffering animals, the DAS shelter continues to experience a high intake rate of *healthy* animals due to the county's population growth, economic stress on pet owners, and housing market restrictions.

Due to the demands on the shelter, renovation projects are well into the planning process, and in the short term, the shelter is ready to start work on the immediate needs of the dog buildings. This work will temporarily reduce the available housing for dogs at the shelter.

The DAS shelter remains focused on the health and well-being of our animal population, and we are committed to taking appropriate steps to ensure that our services continue to operate as seamlessly as possible for the community. *Here's how the community can help!*

Owner Surrenders: Given that the County's first priority is to care for and house sick and injured animals, we ask the community to delay, as much as possible, the request to surrender healthy animals to DAS. As we take a responsible approach to the order of facility renovations, our temporary reduced housing capacity must be dedicated to the afflicted animals in most need of attention. Additional program considerations are underway to aid pet owners with maintaining their pets in their homes.

Reunification Efforts: Animal Control Officers (ACOs) within our Code Enforcement Division are magnifying efforts to reunite healthy, stray animals with their owners before transporting lost animals to DAS. We acknowledge how busy our community members are, but no one knows our neighborhoods and pets better than the property owners and residents within them. With your assistance, we know that we can assist these wayward wanderers in reuniting with their families. Always identifying themselves with a Collier County Government-issued photo identification and driving a County-issued vehicle, our ACO and Code Enforcement staff often go door-to-door to investigate strays. These officers may leave door hangers seeking your assistance if you are not home. Where stray animals are found in need of medical attention or are in poor condition indicative of neglect or cruelty, our ACOs will promptly transport them to safety and evaluation. All information provided by the community will be used to ensure educational outreach and prosecution of those who have willfully neglected or abused an animal. Please help our team solve these cat and K-9 capers!

Adopt or Foster a Shelter Pet: The best way to help reduce our homeless shelter population is to open your heart and home to a shelter pet in need. Adopt if you can. Foster if you are able. Donate, volunteer, educate, and advocate on behalf of your community shelters.

Mosquitoes and Dog Heartworm: During Florida's rainy season, mosquitoes become a heightened concern for both humans and pets, especially dogs, due to the transmission of heartworm disease. This parasitic infection spreads through mosquito bites, where infected mosquitoes pass on heartworm larvae to dogs. Once inside, these larvae mature into adult worms residing in the heart, lungs, and blood vessels, potentially leading to severe health issues or even death. All dogs brought into the shelter are

tested and treated as needed; however, this is the time to prioritize preventive measures such as regular veterinary care, including prescribed heartworm preventatives, and effective mosquito control of your property to protect all pets from mosquito-borne illnesses.

Feline panleukopenia: In the past week, we have identified several positive cases of feline panleukopenia within a segment of our cat population and have taken safety precautions to minimize exposure. In consultation with the University of Florida, our veterinarians immediately implemented proper containment protocols to prevent the spread of this contagious disease. There are many ways for this infection to spread, including through bodily secretions, bedding, litter boxes, cages, food and water bowls, toys, fleas, and from the hands and clothing of people handling the cats. Infected cats and kittens have been separated from the healthy population. As an adoption or foster, your home would be a haven for these *healthy* felines and would be the best prevention of any spread of the disease.

There are a lot of improvements coming to Domestic Animal Services. With your help in reducing our animal population, we will accomplish these projects even faster. Please consider stopping by for a visit and adding a new member to your family today!