



# Collier County Government



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Domestic Animal Services  
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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **DAS CELEBRATES NATIONAL ANIMAL CONTROL APPRECIATION WEEK**

**April 12-18, 2009**

(Naples, FL) - Collier County Domestic Animal Services (DAS) invites the public to celebrate National Animal Control Appreciation Week from April 12 to 18. The event, sponsored by the National Animal Control Association, is the first national effort to celebrate and promote the continuing upgrade and professionalism of Animal Control.

DAS estimates that there are over 175,000 companion animals in Collier County. Its staff of 11 Animal Control Officers addresses every form of animal complaint, from barking dogs, to stray livestock, to investigations of neglect, cruelty and animal fighting.

Animal Control Officers serve the Collier County community in a variety of ways. For example, Officers Peter Hinkley, Paul Morris and Kurt Zeitler assisted removing pets from homes during the Golden Gate wildfire, May 29 to 30, 2008. Many animals were safely retrieved and reunited with their families.

Additionally, Officer Bonnie Kubicsek has investigated more than 20 dogs for dangerous declaration, helping protect the residents of Collier County from potential dog bites.

Many other officers have performed important community service such as Officers Chris Johnson and Kurt Zeitler, who responded to a "investigate neglect" call and found a dog suffering from heat stroke. Unfortunately, attempts to save the dog were unsuccessful, but the officers, DAS veterinary staff and the Collier County Sheriff's Office have prepared a criminal case that now awaits trial.

"We are proud that our animal control officers have been successful investigating such important animal-related criminal activity," said DAS Director Amanda Townsend. "Every day, when DAS officers hit the road, what awaits is unpredictable. They might find opportunities to educate the public about routine issues, they might save a stray from a traffic accident, or they might bring an animal abuser to justice."

Officer David Levitt undertook the tense job of successfully capturing a 100 pound mastiff, not your average-day call. Officer Jeremy Harrelson not only responds to animal-related calls, but he also helps staff the DAS shelter customer service desk, adopting out many animals and helping owners find their lost animals.

Several Domestic Animal Services Animal Control Officers are in the process of seeking official certification as Humane Investigators. Officers Jorge Araujo, Nick Elia, Peter Hinkley, Anita Martindale and Officer Supervisor Dana Alger this year completed a 40-hour Animal Cruelty Investigation Level II course by the University of Missouri. Once they complete the Level III course next January, the officers will become Certified Humane Investigators.

Other DAS employees are Certified Animal Control Officers, although they do not perform ACO duties in their daily work, and they are Shelter Operations Manager Nan Gerhardt, Volunteer Coordinator Kathleen Drew and Director Amanda Townsend. Stop by and visit DAS at 7610 Boulevard and find out what these officers are doing for you!

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