

# MFR Milestones

## Animal Care & Control Sees Sense & Cents in MFR



*Ruth Stalter, Director of Pinal County Animal Care & Control*

Pinal County's Animal Care and Control Division provides rabies control, and enforcement, protection, education and adoption services to Pinal County residents so they can live in a community that promotes responsible pet ownership and is protected from diseased and aggressive domestic animals. Animal Care and Control operates two shelters, one in San Manuel and the main shelter and adoption center on Eleven Mile Corner Road. There is a staff of 27 full time workers who do all the field work, kennel operations and administration. Four part time employees help in the office and kennel.

Animal Care and Control began its Managing for Results journey in May.

"We were a little apprehensive at first. We operate on such a shoestring as it is," Director Ruth Stalter said. "Since animal care and control deals with overlapping public health and safety issues, we don't want to see service or staffing levels cut from the current level. With foreclosures and the financial strain on families, the

demand for the services we provide is actually rising."

Stalter said the fear factor was diminished significantly once they realized that Managing for Results places an emphasis on telling the story of the services being provided to residents and helps demonstrate the value of those service to the county and its leadership.

"I'm really excited about some opportunities we uncovered," Stalter explained. "Because there is overlap with Public Health, we hope to partner with them in their outreach efforts to promote responsible pet ownership, specifically promoting vaccinations and the importance of spaying or neutering your pets."

Stalter said she could foresee joint speaking opportunities and partnerships through Public Health's school health liaison program.

"Education is such a huge component of what we do. Companion animals really do need regular vet care, vaccines and some all around basic training," Stalter said.

Animal Care and Control's first MFR goal is to increase the rate of rabies vaccination at the shelter and at mobile outreach clinics. The second sets out goals to measure responsible pet ownership by:

- increasing the number of spayed/neutered pets by 20 percent,
- increasing the number of licensed pets by 30 percent and
- increasing the number of adopted pets by 20 percent annually.

The third goal is to enhance customer satisfaction by setting measurable targets and establishing a means of evaluating customer satisfaction.

The final strategic priority Stalter's team established deals with animal abuse, cruelty and neglect.

"We want to see an annual reduction in these cases of 20 percent," Stalter said. "We are estimating that we will have confirmed almost 900 cruelty, neglect or abuse cases in 2008. We have to get that number down because cruelty to animals is often a precursor to crimes against humans. Again, its a matter of educating the public, and keeping a priority on enforcement and investigation."

Another opportunity uncovered through MFR is the opportunity to assist people in complying with pet licensing criteria by allowing animal control officers to sell licenses when their out patrolling or responding to complaints.

"We also launched a volunteer program in October, allowing residents to get more involved by helping with the shelter and adoptions from the shelter or through our PetSmart partnership," Stalter explained. "If we can get more people involved on the solution side of the house, that will enhance education because the volunteers will be sharing their experience with their friends and relatives."



*Grooming a sheltie that was seized in a 2007 rescue operation in Apache Junction.*

## Did you know?

- Animal Care and Control has puppies as well as adult dogs and cats for adoption? Some are even purebred animals. At the time your editors were preparing this issue, there was an adorable female Basset Hound up for adoption.
- Pictures of adoptable animals are posted on the Animal Care and Control page of [www.pinalcountyz.gov](http://www.pinalcountyz.gov). • Owners provide a variety of reasons that they must give up their pet, including illness or injury, financial hardship, moving or, simply, a lack of available time and attention for the pet.
- Stalter predicts that the demand for service will go from 8,600 calls for service in 2008 to more than 14,350 in 2013 based on population projections.
- One cute little puppy that isn't neutered can father 750 other cute little dogs over his lifespan. It's true! Check out the Puppy Mathematics part of the Animal Care and Control website!
- Rabies is a fatal disease. Pinal County has seen a jump in the number of wild animals infected with rabies. Don't let your pets become part of these statistics. Make sure you get the rabies vaccination for your pets and do not allow them to come in contact with wild animals.



**P I N A L • C O U N T Y**  
*wide open opportunity*