

Holyoke Vet Service receives pet overpopulation grant

Written by Darci Tomky

Holyoke Vet Service recently received a \$4,500 grant from the Colorado Pet Overpopulation Fund.

Funds are specifically available for people who need financial assistance to spay or neuter their pets, said veterinarian Dr. Darrell Tomky. The grant will cover half of the surgery, with Holyoke Vet Service donating \$10 to that cost so the \$4,500 grant money stretches farther.

Those who take advantage of the grant funds must be Colorado residents and can use it for two surgeries per household. Funds became available to Holyoke Vet Service clients July 1 and must be used in one year.

When asked why pet owners should spay or neuter their pets, Tomky said besides the obvious reason to reduce pet overpopulation, there are also other health benefits for the pet.

Holyoke Vet Service has received the grant several times since the Colorado Pet Overpopulation Fund was created by the state legislature in 2001. The aim is to curb pet overpopulation and reduce euthanasia of surplus, unwanted or abandoned dogs and cats.

According to the fund's website, coloradopetfund.org, of the 180,600 dogs and cats in Colorado shelters last year, 86,200 were adopted, 30,100 were returned to owners and sadly 26,300 were euthanized.

Grant money is available through income tax donations and license plate sales.

More than \$1.6 million have been donated since 2001 by Colorado taxpayers to subsidize the spay/neuter surgeries of 45,000 cats and dogs owned by income-qualified Colorado citizens.

Adopt-a-Shelter-Pet license plates became available in 2011 and generated more than \$76,000 in revenue in the first year to spay/neuter and provide medical treatment and microchip identification for shelter animals.

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For more information, visit coloradopetfund.org or contact Holyoke Vet Service at 854-3800.

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