

TAPS keeps busy to pay the bills

Animal shelter relying more on fund-raisers for regular expenses

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PEKIN - With work on the new Tazewell Animal Protective Society building under way, shelter staff have a reminder for the public.

If TAPS is to continue rescuing animals, it needs the community's financial support each and every day. So the no-kill shelter has a full slate of fund-raisers lined up to pay the daily bills.

"We have a number of fund-raisers in progress," said Sue Kyle, capital campaign chairwoman. "The Gimme Shelter miniature dog house banks that you see in surrounding area businesses are helping raise funds to keep the shelter in funds to operate on a daily basis. The little doggie banks usually get us about \$3,000 per month."

Kyle said that money is mixed with personal donations, memorial funds, dog and cat adoption fees, and special fund-raisers, all of which help pay ongoing bills.

"Our bills are just like everyone else's. We have to pay AmerenCILCO, water, insurance, employee payroll, taxes, and of course, food," she said. "Some expenses that the average person just doesn't think of are daily medicine - from thyroid pills, antibiotics, to insulin - and routine and emergency veterinarian visits, operations such as amputations, spaying and neutering fees, post-surgical treatments if needed ... and other expenses related to the dogs' and cats' general care and feeding."

Kyle said for the first quarter of 2006, the shelter's pet supplies, medical and veterinarian expenses totaled almost \$21,000.

That's why they're so grateful for donations.

"We get a lot of food, treats, a few dollars here and there. Some people die and put us in their obituary as their memorial, which is so nice," Kyle said.

Even with local veterinarians helping on a rotating basis at reduced costs, and with volunteers who clean cages, help with paperwork, walk dogs, prepare food, scrub floors, and administer medications, Kyle said it's still a struggle.

It's because of the ongoing expenses that board members are constantly asking for donations for TAPS and holding fund-raisers.

Dining for TAPS is one such fund-raiser, said Claire Maquet.

"Every month, participating restaurants donate a percentage of their customers' bills for that day to TAPS. So far, Kelly Avenue Grill, Monical's Pizza, Kouri's Pub, and McDonald's have participated," she said.

A concert called Rockin' for TAPS will be June 17 at the Pekin Boat Club.

On June 25, TAPS will have its annual Wine and Dine dinner and auction at the newly renovated Pekin Country Club. A silent auction will feature a little bit of everything, including a signed Giclee print donated by artist Mariam Graff.

Other upcoming fund-raisers include Tailwaggers at Mineral Springs Park in September, and a fall concert at the Concorde Inn in Pekin in October.

And TAPS is selling T-shirts, candles, auto magnets for pet causes, candy, cat carriers, and collars and leashes.

It seems like a lot, but Kyle said the shelter's commitment to being no-kill means animal care expenses are ongoing.

"It would be cheaper to put down a heartworm-infected, three-legged, mangy dog than to treat and save it," Kyle said. "But our goal is no-kill."

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