

## New animal shelter opens its doors

By Tara Mattimoe

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PEKIN - Tazewell Animal Protective Society staff and volunteers made the final push this past weekend and Monday to move all animals and equipment into their new and improved location on TAPS Lane. The new shelter opened for business today at 11 a.m.

"The old place was really on its last legs, so this is exactly what they needed," said Tim O'Donnell, a TAPS kennel attendant who has been with the shelter for about six years.

O'Donnell said that most of the dogs and cats were relocated into the new building over the weekend. The big dogs were moved over Monday afternoon.

The dog care area, O'Donnell said, is a great improvement over the old shelter. The new kennels provide doors for each dog, except puppies, and allows them access to an outside play area. There is a spacious kitchen area for preparing food and sanitizing food and water dishes, as well as a bath table for the dogs.

A new washer and dryer are also installed in the new building, which will be a great help, O'Donnell said, since "the old ones kept breaking down."

The new foyer area is a vast improvement to that of the old shelter, and is roomy with a number of comfortable chairs. An employee lounge has been added as well.

"We're all excited about it. The dogs and cats will have much better situations," said TAPS treasurer Rebekah Wilson.

She said that the brighter lighting, additional space, and improved air venting system make the new shelter much healthier and more welcoming for everyone, people and animals alike.

Wilson said that one of the best improvements in the new building is in the dog runs. In the old shelter, people seeking to adopt had to look at a book with pictures of the dogs, pick which ones they were interested in, and have those dogs brought out front one at a time. With the larger dog area, people can go and look at all the dogs all at once, making the process easier, Wilson said.

Another upgrade Wilson is excited about is the training room, where people can bring in their current pets to test compatibility with potential new ones. TAPS encourages people to do this before they adopt a new animal, she said, and now doing so will be easier.

The TAPS cats also have upgraded surroundings, with a comfortable, windowed room that looks much like a living room.

Although newer cats are kept in cages, felines who have proven to be healthy and compatible with other cats can go into the "open room," Wilson said.

There is also a room for the HIV cats, who wandered freely around the old shelter to keep them out of contact with the other caged cats, and a quarantine room for cats with contagious diseases, such as Parvo.

With the upgraded, spacious new shelter, Wilson hopes that it will be easier to attract volunteers and adopt animals out quickly.

The new shelter, though still somewhat in disarray and in need of some final touches, is a giant step up from the old, crowded former building.

"I just feel that the whole atmosphere is so much more upscale and upbeat that people will feel more comfortable coming in," said Joyce Fritz, a TAPS volunteer.