

Recession victims don't always have a human face



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Pekin Daily Times

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Every day, it seems that we hear from another person who has been adversely affected by the economic recession: someone who has been laid off or lost retirement savings or been forced to choose between basic necessities due to a limited budget.

No matter how many times these stories are repeated, they never lose their emotional impact. Our country is suffering, and each new story puts a human face on that suffering. However, not all of the victims of the recession can tell their stories — and not all of them have a human face.

As the economy continues to falter, a growing number of animals have been left homeless as budget cuts force people to give up their pets. The TAPS no-kill shelter in Pekin is filled to capacity, and Tazewell County Animal Control has seen the number of animals surrendered to its shelter double when compared to last year.

Last week, the Times brought you the extraordinary story of Lucky the dog, who was reunited with his owner at TAPS after they were separated when the owner left for Army training. The story was a much-needed bright spot amid increasingly gloomy news about the growing effects of the declining economy — but not every pet is as fortunate as Lucky.

Some animals end up on the street instead of in a shelter, and those that do make it to a shelter may be euthanized if they aren't adopted or accepted at TAPS.

One might say that this issue is merely a small part of recession's negative impact. That may be so, but it's still a negative effect, and there are small ways that you can make a difference.

If you're looking for a new pet, go to a shelter and find a dog or cat who is looking for a home. An adult animal might not seem as cuddly as a brand new puppy or kitten from a breeder, but why contribute to the breeding of more animals when so many existing animals desperately need homes?

If you already own a pet, do your part to limit the population of homeless animals by making sure your pet is spayed or neutered. TAPS offers a low-cost spay/neuter program to those who qualify.

Maybe you don't have a pet and you don't want one. But there are still ways that you can make a difference for the homeless animal population.

If you have some extra time, volunteer at a shelter for a few hours a week. If you're fortunate enough to have some extra income, donate money or supplies to a shelter. Every Tuesday, TAPS publishes an ad in the Times that identifies supplies that the shelter needs.

Who knows? Maybe Lucky's luck will rub off on some other animals in need.

Poll question

Last week, we asked you if you planned to pursue additional work training or develop new skills because of the current economic situation. The majority of you — 60 percent — said no, while 20 percent said yes and another 20 percent said maybe.

This week, we turn again to the Pekin City Council. Do you think the council made the right decision in selecting current member Sue Ann Kortkamp for Rusty Dunn's vacant seat?

Do you think the Pekin City Council made the right decision in selecting current council member Sue Ann Kortkamp for Rusty Dunn's vacant seat?

Yes

No

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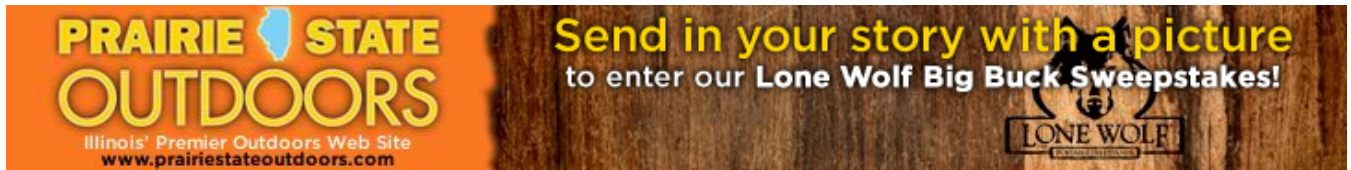
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