

STATE OF NEW MEXICO

County of Luna

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Media Release

Luna County's Board of Commissioners recently passed Ordinance No. 52 Amended, a dramatic step forward for the health and wellbeing of animals in the county.

During the Thursday, June 9 commission meeting, commissioners unanimously voted to approve the amended ordinance. After realizing the existing ordinances concerning animal control and animal welfare had inconsistencies and were weak in general, the commission appointed a committee in April to draft a strengthened ordinance. The committee was comprised of members of the public, law enforcement, codes enforcement, county personnel, a representative from the Deming-Luna County Humane Society and a veterinary technician.

"The committee met several times and came up with what I feel is a much stronger ordinance," Ira Pearson, Luna County manager, said. "With the committee's help, Luna County was able to adapt an ordinance that eliminates prior inconsistencies and conflicts in the language, and even more importantly, the new ordinance provides much stronger regulations to protect pets in the county."

The ordinance will take effect on July 16 and will apply to the owners of dogs, cats and potbellied pigs, which are referred to as "companion animals" in the language.

The ordinance introduces a new system of county licensing to be administered by the Deming-Luna County Humane Society. Residential property owners who own between eight and 14 companion animals will need to apply for a Multiple Companion Animal Site permit. Premises where more than 15 companion animals are kept or boarded must apply for a Multiple Animal Facility permit. Both permits require annual and random inspections by animal control officers.

The ordinance also provides mechanisms for the licenses to be repealed. Violations of the ordinance can result in a permit being denied, suspended or revoked. After three violations in three years, a license shall not be reinstated. Ordinance language also provides neighbors or others aggrieved by a license site to appeal the license through the Luna County manager's office.

The fees for the licenses will be set during a coming contract negotiation between the county and DLCHS. Those who apply for a license before the fees are set and after the ordinance takes effect will have their fees waived, but will still need to comply with the established standards.

The ordinance defines indoor and outdoor standards for anyone owning a pet in the county, as well as specific requirements for shade, medical treatment, space, fencing, chaining and cleanliness.

The ordinance also bans a pet owner from leaving an animal inside of a vehicle when it can be reasonably concluded to be dangerous to the animal. During hot or warm weather, animal control officers and other law enforcement may “immediately remove” an animal from the vehicle, and the owner can be charged with an act of cruelty/neglect.

The full text of the ordinance is available online by visiting <http://www.lunacountynm.us/ordinances/> and scrolling to number 52. Those looking to apply for a new license or a license renewal are encouraged to read the ordinance or contact the Humane Society at (575) 546-2024. The Humane Society is located at 2135 Onate Ave. SE in Deming’s industrial park area.

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