

AROUND YULEE

PEOPLE, PLACES, THINGS TO DO



PHOTOS BY CINDY JACKSON/NEWS-LEADER  
Nassau County Animal Control Officer Stokes uses a scanner to check for a microchip.

Above left, some of the staff at Nassau County Animal Care and Control and their years of service. From left, Dameon Miles, 6 months; Beth Thornton (seated) 1.5 years; Jessica Stokes, 3 years; Ruth Killmeyer, 11 years; Penny Burnsed, 5 years; Heather Pruitt, 1 month; Trenton Brock, 6 months; Rodolpho Rodriguez, 10 years; Lothar Eckardt, 5.5 years; Troy Murphy, 2.5 years; Director Timothy Maguire, 4.5 years. Above right, Jessica Stokes is one of four animal control officers for Nassau County. Here she does intake for a dog found wandering in West Nassau. Two shots are administered at the time of intake and a blood test is performed to check for heartworm.

# Helping the county’s animals

CINDY JACKSON  
News-Leader

Nassau County’s Animal Care and Control Department is responsible for public safety and protecting animals “through sheltering, adoption programs, education and animal law enforcement and its mandate is huge. The employees are responsible for administering and enforcing a long list of ordinances as well as adhering to a philosophy of promoting “responsible pet ownership, compassion towards animals and safe human-animal interactions.”

The ordinances the department is charged with enforcing include animal licensing, horse trailer permitting, breeder permits, riding schools and stable permits, licenses for kennels and catteries, dog trainer permits, and licenses for grooming facilities. It also responds to a wide variety of citizen calls and complaints about stray dogs and cats, dogs barking, dogs killing chickens, animals that have been hit by cars, animal cruelty and animal bites. Whenever

an individual visits a physician about an animal bite, animal control receives a notice and conducts a follow-up investigation.

And of course, the function they perform that is so near and dear to the hearts of many – arranging for the adoption of otherwise unwanted animals.

According to the Humane Society of the United States, between six and eight million dogs and cats (not to mention the birds and hamsters and rabbits and roosters) end up in shelters each year.

In Nassau County, Animal Care and Control took in over 2,100 animals in 2016-17, a 21-percent increase over two years ago. With major growth projected for all of Nassau County in the next year, the department expects those numbers to continue to increase.

The work is not easy. It requires training, compassion for animals and humans, and patience.

Director Tim Maguire started as a kennel attendant and rose through the ranks. He knows the process from the ground floor up and says that he “can’t imagine doing anything else.” That seems to be the norm for the team at Nassau County Animal Care and Control, many of whom have been there 10 years or more. Not only are they at the shelter, on the road and out and about in the community, they are also called on to help staff shelters for county citizens in the event of hurricane or other natural disaster.

In addition to the initial training required for employment, continuing education classes are also an important part of the process to keep the team at NCACC in touch with the latest and greatest methods and best tools of the trade to do the best jobs they possibly can.

Most recently, animal control officers had the opportunity to attend a conference in Pensacola about equine rescues. That no doubt was helpful when the call came in on Jan. 16 about a 24-year-old horse that had fallen into a septic tank.

The moment any cat or dog comes into the shelter, they are



Animal Control Officer Stokes transfers a trapped cat to a crate for transport back to the shelter.

immediately tested for heartworms and given two shots – one for distemper and one for kennel cough. Those help prevent any spread of disease and to keep all the pets healthy, whether they get returned to their owner or put up for adoption. The Humane Society of the United States recommends keeping strays quarantined for five days, and Nassau County does just that. After the five-day holding period, dogs and cats are transported to a clinic in Jacksonville to be spayed, neutered and micro-chipped. Spaying and neutering helps to reduce the overpopulation of animals and the microchip ensures an animal can be reunited with its owner in the event it becomes lost again.

Animal control officers are equipped with a chip reader in their trucks so that, when they come across a stray, loose, injured, or trapped animal that has been chipped, they can immediately contact the owner and return it.

The employees are also

educators. They are sincere in their efforts to teach county residents and visitors about the importance of spaying and neutering, of having proper vaccinations, and reminding everyone that being vigilant about something as simple as closing a gate can protect a pet from injury, keep it on the owners’ property, and help preserve the peace with neighbors.

The various jobs of the department also include the type that would make for a good reality show. For instance, what happens when a truck towing a horse trailer enters the agricultural weigh station at the state line and the driver doesn’t have a valid driver’s license? What happens when someone is pulled over for drinking and driving and they have an animal in the car? What happens when a bull is running rampant on a state road and the owner can’t be found, when two stubborn donkeys simply won’t get off a main thoroughfare, or when someone drops off a half-dozen roosters at the Otter Run subdivision? All of these incidents have happened at one time or another here in Nassau County.

When it comes to community partnerships, NCACC has quite a few. These include a legion of volunteers and foster families as well as animal “sponsorships” from businesses like developer KDI Homes, which helps to get some perhaps otherwise difficult-to-adopt animals into loving homes. There are weekly adoption events at Petco, gift certificates for new pet owners, and local artist Susan Sellner donated her earnings from painting pet portraits to equip the shelter and each and every animal control officer’s truck with the equipment needed to perform CPR on dogs and cats. NCACC can always use more volunteers and more business sponsors, as their mission never ends. Their goals for this year include enclosing an outside building for strays, adding an HVAC system, and acquiring in-truck computer systems.

And of course, they want to maintain their “no kill shelter” status.

The department is located at 86078 License Road in Yulee. Call 530-6150 if you need their help or want to volunteer to help them.

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BUSINESS DIRECTORY

2018

Be sure your business is listed in the *News-Leader’s* **2018 local Business Directory** published March 30, 2018.

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Notice of Special Meeting

Heron Isles

Community Development District

A special meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the **Heron Isles Community Development District will be held on Thursday, March 15, 2018 at 10:30 a.m. at the office of Compass Group, Inc., 961687 Gateway Boulevard, Suite 201M, Amelia Island, Florida 32034.** The meeting is open to the public and will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of Florida Law for Community Development Districts. A copy of the agenda for this meeting may be obtained from Heron Isles CDD, 475 West Town Place, Suite 114, St. Augustine, Florida 32092 (and phone (904) 940-5850). This meeting may be continued to a date, time, and place to be specified on the record at the meeting. There may be occasions when one or more Supervisors will participate by telephone.

Any person requiring special accommodations at this meeting because of a disability or physical impairment should contact the District Office at (904) 940-5850 at least two calendar days prior to the meeting. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8770, for aid in contacting the District Office.

Each person who decides to appeal any action taken at this meeting is advised that person will need a record of the proceedings and that accordingly, the person may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, including the testimony and evidence upon which such appeal is to be based.

David deNagy

District Manager