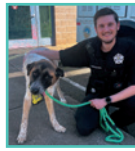




Inside



p2-3

A day in the life of an ASO



p4

Keeping cats safe indoors



p6

Playing it safe this spring and summer

Animal Tales

Summer 2025

Covey's Corner

Safety is defined in part as, "the condition of being protected from danger, risk or injury." We often describe Animal Services as being part of the public safety net in Washington County because so many of the services we provide are aimed at keeping pets and people safe. In this issue of Animal Tales, we invite you to take a deeper dive into animal safety, both at the shelter and in the community.

When it comes to field operations, our staff are skilled in handling dangerous dogs and experienced with investigating animal abuse and neglect. At the Bonnie Hays Animal Shelter, we provide a safe haven for stray dogs and sick or injured cats in need of care. While animals are at our facility, our expert shelter technicians and veterinary medical team keep them safe through intake vaccinations, proper animal handling, and clean, safe housing. We also provide public safety education to reduce the risk of dog bites.

Speaking of the information we share, please be sure to sign up to receive Animal Tales by email. The QR code and web link are on the front and back of this newsletter. We're sorry to say goodbye to the print version, but sending our newsletter electronically is better for the environment and helps us direct more of our limited resources toward animal care.

Warm regards,

Randy Covey,
Animal Services Manager



Fifteen-year-old Hazel is reunited with her family after sneaking out of her house the night before. Our team of caring shelter technicians was able to get her back home quickly because she had a microchip. Read more about how identification keeps your pet safe on page 5.



Animal Tales is going digital!

This is the final print edition of Animal Tales. Starting this fall, we will be using Constant Contact to send our newsletter by email. Subscribe to our digital mailing list now so you don't miss the next issue of Animal Tales!



bit.ly/AnimalTalesNews

Like Bonnie Hays Animal Shelter on Facebook, follow @BonnieLHays on X or follow @BonnieHaysAnimalShelter on Instagram to stay up to date on happy reunions, events, shelter news and more.

A day in the life of an ASO:

Keeping the community safe one day at a time

At Washington County Animal Services, we call the specially trained field services staff who handle animal welfare investigations and animal-related code enforcement Animal Services Officers (or ASOs). Our ASOs help the people and pets of Washington County live peacefully together. They have a wide range of duties and never know what their day might bring.



8:34 a.m.

While starting their workday following up on a barking complaint, our ASO is alerted to a priority call for a loose dog running on a busy roadway. The officer heads to the scene immediately. Not only is this a dangerous situation for the dog, but people could be seriously injured or killed by swerving cars and distracted drivers. The stray dog could also bite people attempting to help it. Public safety is a huge part of an ASO's job.



9:23 a.m.

The stray dog is caught with the help of another ASO who was patrolling a park in the area when the priority call came in. The dog is fearful and trying to bite, but our officers are trained to handle potentially dangerous dogs that need special handling.

The ASO checks the dog for identification, such as an ID tag, dog license or a microchip, but doesn't find any. After placing the dog into a kennel in their truck, the ASO contacts staff at the Bonnie Hays Animal Shelter to ask about lost dog reports matching this pup. Although shelter staff have not received a report matching this animal, they will keep looking for helpful information while the officer gives the dog a ride to the shelter.



10:19 a.m.

Our ASO responds to a call about two dogs getting into a fight. Luckily, the dogs are OK, but that's not always the case. The ASO talks with both dog owners to understand what happened and issues citations (tickets) to the owners because both dogs were off leash in an area where leashes are required. The ASO also provides education on the importance of keeping dogs on leashes and talks with them about renewing their dogs' licenses when they expire in a few months.



11:03 a.m.

A community member calls Animal Services from the emergency room after being bitten by a dog. Our officer contacts the bite victim to learn more about the situation. The ASO then heads to the dog's location to talk with its owner and place the dog in quarantine. This 10-day quarantine period is required by law and allows the dog to be watched for signs of rabies, a deadly but thankfully rare virus.



12:46 p.m.

The ASO responds to a call about an injured cat. The cat is limping and bleeding. When the officer scans the cat for a microchip at the scene, they find that it has a chip and the chip is registered. The ASO contacts the owner, who rushes to the emergency veterinary clinic where the ASO is taking the cat. Reunification between pets and their people is always a priority for us, but it's especially important when an animal is injured and decisions need to be made about their care.



2 p.m.

Time for court! Our ASO arrives at the courthouse to attend a hearing for a dog that was removed from its home when officers found evidence of neglect. Several weeks earlier, ASOs had arrived to find this dog had no access to water or shelter, and there was evidence the animal hadn't been fed regularly or received needed medical care. The animal has been under the care of Animal Services ever since. This hearing is a status check to determine if the case needs to be scheduled for a trial.

ASOs respond to hundreds of calls a year, some of which will result in criminal charges. Officers need to collect and handle evidence with care. They also need to be prepared to testify in court. We work closely with other law enforcement agencies, as well as the Washington County District Attorney's Office, to get justice for animals who have been neglected or abused.

Continues on next page



ASO Joseph Burghardt poses with a stray dog that was brought to the shelter. Officers interact with dogs showing all sorts of behaviors, but this one was mostly just goofy and playful!

Dog owners have the power to prevent bites

Dog bite prevention often focuses on the potential victim, teaching them to read a dog's body language or avoid certain situations like interacting with unknown dogs. While this is good information, it's not enough. As a dog owner, you should feel empowered to play an active role in reducing the chance of your dog biting someone. Keep in mind that any dog can bite, regardless of their size or breed.

In public, keep your dog on a leash and give other animals and people enough room to keep their distance. If your dog doesn't like interacting with strangers (human or canine), it's OK to make that clear to people who approach you. This may feel unfriendly, but dealing with the consequences of a dog bite will feel even worse!

Many dog bites happen at home, both to household members and visitors. With a little planning, you can reduce the chances of your pet injuring a visitor. Place your dog on a leash or move it to another space before opening your door or gate for delivery drivers and others. Getting bit is a real risk when trying to take food, food wrappers or toys away from otherwise well-behaved creatures, so be careful when doing this. Lastly, always monitor children carefully around your dog.

Talk to your veterinarian if you are worried about your dog's behavior around others or in general. Changes in behavior can indicate a medical problem. Even if it's not medical, your veterinarian can help you decide how to best address concerning behaviors or refer you to reputable animal behavior experts.

Many owners tell us they never thought their dog would bite, and we hope yours never does. But we also hope you feel empowered to take positive steps toward helping your canine stay out of trouble.




 **3:07 p.m.**

A sheriff's deputy is about to serve a warrant, but they can see and hear at least three dogs inside the house. Our ASO's assistance has been requested because the deputy is unsure of the animals' behavior, if there is anyone to care for the pets once the warrant is served, or if there are other concerns about the dogs. ASOs may be called upon by first responders to provide animal-related assistance in a wide variety of situations.

 **4:33 p.m.**

On their last stop of the day, the ASO drops off pet supplies at a shelter for people experiencing homelessness. Animal Services not only provides animal supplies like crates and pet food to support human shelters in Washington County that want to be pet-friendly, but we also provide guidance to help house people and pets together safely. Keeping pets under the care of people who know and love them is important to us.

 **5:02 p.m.**

While dropping off supplies, the ASO is approached by someone who saw their truck in the neighborhood. They ask the ASO where they can get their cat spayed and what to do about their neighbor's dog that keeps getting out. It's not uncommon for someone to approach an officer and ask questions. ASOs are prepared to offer resources and education whenever they are out and about.

Being an ASO is hard but fulfilling work. We hope following along on a day in the life of an ASO has given you some insight into this important job.

Keep cats safe by keeping them indoors

Even if you think your cat won't wander far if allowed outdoors, a lot can happen just a short distance from home. Keeping your cat indoors is your safest bet!



As an indoor cat, Trixie is protected from cars, wild animals and being mistaken for a lost pet.

Staying safe from cars and wildlife

Not only is your cat in danger of being hit by a car if they are allowed to roam, but they may also have dangerous interactions with birds and other wildlife while out and about.

Pets and wild animals shouldn't mix. And no matter where you live in Washington County, there is potential for this. In addition to the danger of cats and wildlife injuring or killing each other, diseases and parasites can also be passed between the two groups.

Mistaken identity

Being outside also increases the chance your cat will be mistaken for a stray, even though they have a family! Whether your cat is indoors or out, double check that the contact information associated with their microchip is current and that their tag is easy to read and accurate. This will help your cat get back home if it finds its way to a shelter or into the arms of a Good Samaritan.



Training your cat to wear a harness can give them a safe way to experience the outdoors under your watchful eye. Roshi, seen here listening to the birds near his home, was trained to use a harness as an adult cat using lots of treats and other positive reinforcement.

Moving your cat indoors

Want to move your free-roaming cat inside? One idea is to start by feeding your cat indoors, gradually increasing the time you keep them inside after each feeding. You can also try providing your cat with more enrichment like toys, food puzzles and comfy sitting spots with interesting views. The idea is to make the indoor environment just as interesting as the outdoors. Be prepared for some pushback against the move indoors, such as scratching at doors or window screens, meowing or yowling, and attempts to escape.

Catios and other outdoor enrichment for indoor cats

If you have the space and resources, you may want to consider adding a catio to your home. These outdoor enclosures provide a happy middle ground for cats that enjoy being outside and their owners who want to keep them safe. Learn more about catios during the annual Cats Safe at Home Catio Tour which takes place each September. Visit www.catssafeathome.org/catio-tour-info for more information.

Want outdoor time for your cat but don't want to build a structure? Try training your cat to spend time outdoors on a harness. This will allow you to keep a close eye on them while they get some fresh air.

Thank you for taking steps to keep your cat safe and at home with you!



Trixie loves to lounge in her catio. This fully enclosed patio allows her to get some fresh air while staying safe.

The importance of identification

One of the best ways to keep your animal safe is to make sure it has identification.

Take time today to verify that your pet's ID tag and microchip have current and updated information, and that your dog is licensed. Double-check that their collar fits well and that any tags are securely attached. You can also have your phone number embroidered or printed onto your pet's collar if the tags ever fall off.

Some owners also feel better being able to track their pet's location using global positioning system (GPS), radio frequency identification (RFID), or another type of tracking device. These tools have limitations, but they are options that can help you locate an animal.

If you have pets other than dogs and cats, or care for livestock, consult with your veterinarian about the best method(s) of identification for your animals and situation.



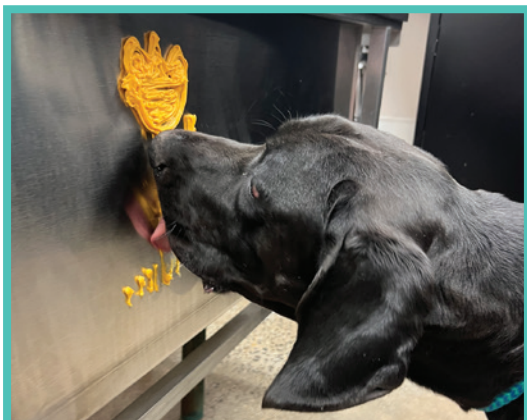
Ranger is a model canine with visible identification in the form of an ID tag and a Washington County dog license!



It doesn't matter if you're tiny like Honey or 130 pounds like Arlo, a dog license is important! These two popped by Animal Services to renew their Washington County dog licenses. This license, along with their ID tags and registered microchips, will help them get back home if they are ever lost.

Safety superpowers: Spray cheese and volunteer help

Did you know things like spray cheese and volunteer support help us stay safe when working with stray pets at the shelter?



While we're careful not to overdo it (no one wants an upset tummy), our staff can use **spray cheese and other tasty goodies** to distract dogs during medical exams or to lure a nervous pup onto a scale so we can get their weight. Shelter dog Gerkin demonstrates this by enjoying his cheesy "tulip" during an exam with our veterinarian.

Volunteers like Florence Kawai help with tasks such as animal laundry and dishes as well as cleaning kennels and providing enrichment for dogs. This "extra" help around the building from well-trained volunteers contributes to our shelter being a safer place. Not only do volunteers help by keeping things clean and tidy, they also allow our staff to better focus on each task at hand knowing they have support from volunteers.





Playing it safe this spring and summer

Flower and garden safety

- Some plants and flowers are toxic to pets. Research any new plant you plan to bring home. The ASPCA's Animal Poison Control Center has an extensive list of toxic and non-toxic plants on their website.
- Be mindful of your use and storage of fertilizers, insecticides, pesticides (including snail and slug "bait"), rodenticides and herbicides. All of these can potentially make your pet sick. Read labels and know what's in the products you use.
- Compost piles can lure pets in with interesting smells, but they can contain mold or toxic foods like grapes and onions that can make pets very sick. You'll also want to make sure you're using mulch that isn't appetizing for your pet to eat!
- If you have a pet that likes to get into things (or loves to chew!), supervise their outdoor time.
- Vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, and changes in breathing and heart rate can all be signs of poisoning, but any change in your pet's behavior or health could be a reason for concern. Contact your veterinarian, an emergency veterinary clinic or an animal poison control hotline if you think your pet might have eaten something they shouldn't have.

Hot weather safety

- Consider your pet's risk factors. Age, weight, coat type, health conditions and breed can all impact how an animal handles heat.
- Stay comfortable on walks. Take your dog out during the cooler parts of the day, keep walks short, and avoid pavement if possible. If you must walk your dog on cement or asphalt, test the surface with your hand first to avoid burned paws.
- Your pet should always have fresh, clean drinking water and access to shelter that protects them from the hot sun.
- Never leave your pet in a car. Car interiors can reach deadly temperatures in a matter of minutes even with the windows cracked or when parked in the shade.
- Supervise pets around water. Even dogs that enjoy swimming don't know their own limits and may need help to get out of the water. If you take your pet on a boat with you, get them a brightly colored life vest. Beware of algae blooms, contaminated water, rip currents, wildlife and things like fishing line or hooks when playing with your dog in or near bodies of water.
- Learn the symptoms of overheating. Excessive panting, difficulty breathing, increased heart and respiratory rate, and weakness can be some of the first signs of trouble. Overheating can also cause other symptoms such as seizures, bloody diarrhea and vomiting. Contact your veterinarian or an emergency veterinary hospital immediately if you think your pet may be overheating.





Fourth of July safety

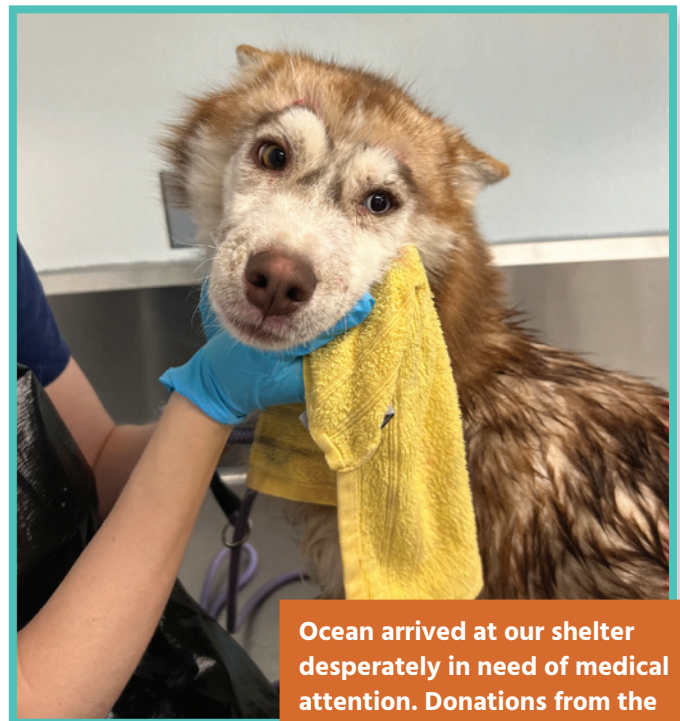
- If your pet might fear loud noises, ask your veterinarian about medication or other options for reducing your pet's anxiety during fireworks.
- Despite your best efforts to keep your pet at home, they may escape. Make sure your pet is wearing a collar with an ID tag, your dog's license is current, and your pet's microchip is registered and the contact information associated with it is correct. Double-check that their collar fits well and any tags are securely attached.
- Keep your dog on a leash for potty breaks, even in your own yard.
- Double check that your yard is secure, repair damaged fencing, and ensure any gates fully close and stay shut.
- Pick a room that can provide a safe space for your pet during the fireworks. You want them to be comfortable with the room before the action starts. They should associate the room with good things like treats and their favorite bedding. Consider adding soft music, talk radio or white noise. This room can also provide refuge if you're hosting guests.
- Hosting a BBQ or picnic? Watch out for goodies that get dropped on the ground or are otherwise accessible to your pet. Not only are some foods toxic to animals, but dog fights can break out over food. Getting bit is a real risk when trying to take food or wrappers away from dogs. Food-related items like plastic bags, foil and strings can also cause choking, intestinal blockages or other serious issues.

Donate to help us care for the pets and people of Washington County

Donations help us continue to reunite lost pets with their people, rescue stray and injured animals, investigate animal abuse and neglect, and provide specialized veterinary care for animals temporarily staying with us.

Donate online, in person, over the phone or by using the enclosed envelope. You can even make a gift to the animals in honor of a special pet or person in your life.

A general donation allows us the flexibility to use your gift where there is the greatest need. However, if you would like your donation used for a specific service, please contact us at Animal_Services@washingtonty.gov to discuss donation options.



Ocean arrived at our shelter desperately in need of medical attention. Donations from the community allow us to provide specialized veterinary care to stray pets in need, like Ocean.

**Thank you for
your generosity and
continued support!**



Protect yourself from scams



Scammers are targeting community members who are looking for their lost pets. Although these awful scams can take many forms, here are five signs someone might be trying to con you:

1. They require money upfront to return your lost pet, hold the animal at a shelter, or pay for veterinary care. If your pet is located where fees might be involved, you can usually pay when picking them up.
2. You're asked to purchase gift cards or use other hard-to-trace payment methods to pay fees.
3. A caller or texter asks for a verification code that has been sent to your phone or email. This is an attempt to gain access to an online account.
4. The finder refuses to meet in person, is unable to provide clear photos or videos of your pet in their care, refuses to tell you where they found your pet, or cannot provide other specifics about your animal.
5. There is an unusual sense of urgency for you to send money or provide information quickly. The scammer may even make threats regarding your animal to create that urgency.

If you receive a suspicious call or text about your lost pet, Google the phone number or the organization they claim to be with. If the organization is a shelter or veterinary clinic, you can then call them directly to ask if they have information about your lost pet.

You can find additional lost and found pet resources on our website at www.WashingtonCountyPets.com.

A thank you to our volunteers

By Chris Hoffman, Volunteer Coordinator

Volunteers provide critical support to Animal Services, both at the shelter and out in the community.



We were thrilled to see many of our dedicated volunteers at Washington County's annual volunteer recognition event in April! Our volunteer coordinator and one of our animal shelter technicians are pictured here with two long-time volunteers.

Volunteers not only lighten the workload for our staff when it comes to tasks like animal laundry and dishes, but they are also fierce advocates for the work Animal Services does in the community.



- Shelter assistants support animal care at our facility through tasks like laundry, washing dishes, cleaning kennels, and providing enrichment activities for shelter dogs.
- Dog walkers take shelter dogs out to the exercise yards for playtime and potty breaks.
- Volunteer ambassadors act as a community resource when there are questions about pets or a potential need for assistance from Animal Services. Volunteer ambassadors also assist our staff at community events by engaging with the public, answering questions, and sharing information about our work.

Volunteers not only enrich the lives of the shelter animals, but they make life better for our shelter staff as well. In addition to the physical work volunteers do to lighten the load on staff, they are also a resource for knowledge and skills, trusted confidants, and fierce advocates for Animal Services.

Volunteer contributions go far beyond the work done in the shelter, and we are fortunate to have such a knowledgeable, compassionate and dedicated team of volunteers!

If you're interested in getting involved with us, keep an eye on our website or social media feeds. Opportunities will be posted there as they become available. Thank you to our current and future volunteers at Washington County Animal Services!

Donations: Friends of the Animals

October 1, 2024 through March 31, 2025

Every effort was made to ensure accuracy. Please accept our apologies for any errors or omissions.

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Many of our generous donors ask that their donations be made in honor or memory of a special person or pet. We list them all here together in recognition of the human-animal bond and our regard for our loved ones who are with us as well as those who have passed. We so appreciate these gifts and the many ways that people and pets touch our lives.

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Sharlene and Len Ludwig

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Floyd Halvorsen
Will and Janet Wright

Hannah
Joseph and Carol Monty

Isabell Heckert
Christie and
Richard Ripkowski

Heidi and Lucky
Marlene Duyck

Bev Hess
Mary Ann and
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Hiker
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Andrew Garland-Forshee

Holly
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Judy Howell
Cleo Howell

Hudson
Charles Sabo

Hurley
Mark and Tran Miers

Huxley
Laura Wells

Isabella
Jane Williams

Isabella Fluffmuffin (Bella)
Marisa Cupps

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Doug Circosta

Izzy
Sandra Lawson

Jasmine
Dawn and Scott Baum

Jax
Jody and
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Keelee
Lacey Ohlmann

Clay Koehler
Christie and
Richard Ripkowski

Liam Koehler
Christie and
Richard Ripkowski

Kona
Benjamin Yahiku

Kota
Jean Taylor

Leemon
Parisa Dodson

Lexi and Gracie
Darlene and Gary Dick

Lilly Belle
James Hiller and
Shane Bunn

Lily
Mary McCoy

Lily Beth
Nancy Shillingburg

Dahlia Lines
Christie and
Richard Ripkowski

Zin Lines
Christie and
Richard Ripkowski

Little Guy
Janie Coleman

Logan
Ralph Weil

Louie
Ali Freibott

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John Martilla

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Onyx
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Thank you! 🐾



Bonnie L. Hays

SMALL ANIMAL SHELTER

WASHINGTON COUNTY

1901 SE 24th Avenue, MS 53
Hillsboro, OR 97123



Animal Tales is going digital!

This is the final print edition of Animal Tales. We've loved bringing stories from the Bonnie Hays Animal Shelter and Washington County Animal Services straight to your mailbox over the years. Our commitment to sharing the work of our dedicated team isn't changing, but the format for that news is. Subscribe to our email list to receive future digital editions of Animal Tales in your inbox.



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Washington County Board of Commissioners: Board Chair Kathryn Harrington, Pam Treece, Jason Snider, Nafisa Fai and Jerry Willey
Department of Health and Human Services Director: Mjere Simantel • **Animal Services Manager:** Randy Covey • **Newsletter Editor:** Stacy Beckley
Phone: 503-846-7041 • **Fax:** 503-846-7074 • **Email:** Animal_Services@washingtoncountyor.gov • **Mail:** 1901 SE 24th Ave., MS-53, Hillsboro, OR 97123
washingtoncountypets.com