

Annual Airport Days set date

2nd Annual Airport Days Grants Pass, Oregon - Josephine County Commissioners and

Airport Advisory Board announce 2nd annual Airport Days: Saturday, September 6 at the Grants Pass Airport.

This year's event emphasizes the many ways in which aviation is growing with Grants Pass.

The day kicks off at 8:00 a.m. with a pancake breakfast by the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA). Throughout the day visitors are up close and personal with vintage, classic and home-built aircraft and pilots and builders.

There will be fly-bys of iconic aircraft and a display of aerobatic flight by the Rogue Valley Flyers R/C club.

At mid-day the skies

will fill with paragliders arriving from their jump site atop Mt. Walker.

This year special emphasis is focuses on those middle school-high school students and their parents who are considering future career directions.

Aviation businesses are expecting many job vacancies over the next decade as military veterans begin to retire from the industry. The opportunities for young people will abound.

Airport Days: Saturday, September 6, 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. - No admission charge - Free shuttles from parking areas - Food vendors throughout the day - free access and photos to all the aircraft.

Additional information: Please contact Art Kelly, 541-472-9683.



Skate Park Memorial for Nathan Ray Gerber.

Animal advocates come together in the Valley

By **Annette McGee Rasch**
IVN Senior Contributing Writer

A group of experienced Illinois Valley-based animal advocates has come together to improve the plight of countless stray or under-cared for animals in the area.

"We're organizing resources and seeking more volunteers," said Valley resident Linda Sisson, who is helping lead the local effort.

About one fifth of the people living in Josephine County reside in the Illinois Valley and according to volunteers and professionals involved with animal welfare issues throughout the region, the Valley has some of the highest rates of animal neglect.

"Animals need advocates," Sisson said. "I believe we're most effective in creating change when we first work within our circle of influence, and where we live is ground-zero for our circle of influence. The well-being and management of animals is both an individual and community responsibility that needs guidance and support."

Sisson is a board member with the Grants Pass-based "Shelter Friends," a nonprofit organization that supports the Josephine County Animal Shelter and has done a remarkable job of boosting the numbers of shelter animal adoptions. Now, Sisson's goal is to create a local network tailored to the specific needs of Valley animals.

"Our biggest priority is to identify more short-term emergency 'foster homes' for both dogs and cats," Sisson said. "If people have securely fenced-in areas or a kennel, and a little extra time, they can make such a huge difference and help alleviate much suffering."

Sometimes the need is just for a day or two, until more permanent arrangements can be made or the animal is adopted into a "forever" home.

"There are quite a few of us who are willing to do this rescue work," said Illinois Valley Working Dogs head trainer Theresa Dugas. "But our ability to make a real impact hinges on people helping us foster needy dogs right here in the Valley."

Dugas believes dog training is critical to keeping dogs off the streets and out of shelters.

"We will pre-qualify potential owners," Dugas said. "To adopt a dog, people must make a commitment to training."

Several regional animal welfare organizations help low-income Valley residents cover the costs of rabies shots, spaying and neutering, and help provide fencing for yards and kennels to get dogs off chains.

"We're all thrilled to see people organizing in the Illinois Valley," said Linda Milner, co-founder of the family-based Jo Co Spay & Neuter Fund that has paid for getting hundreds of pets fixed in the Valley. "We all work together really well, Jo Co Spay and Neuter, the Toby Fund, Shelter Friends, Animal Control and the Rogue Valley Human Society, we're all friends."

Milner says it's very sad when animals have to be euthanized because pet owners shirked or ignored their responsibilities. She also says there are few good reasons to breed cats and dogs and that getting them fixed improves their health and temperaments.

"Our biggest problem is the high number of un-spayed and un-neutered animals that breed and create more animals that end up suffering," Milner said.

Nationwide, out of all puppies who go into new homes from their birth litters, only three out of ten will remain in these homes for their entire lives. Seven out of ten dogs will be moved from home to home, or are abandoned, get hit by cars, shot, poisoned, succumb to disease or starve to death. Overall, 80 percent of these dogs will be dead before they are three years old, according to the Humane Society of the United States. One major issue is how many people adopt pets when they are young and cute, but when they reach adulthood, many "get rid" of their pets who have become an inconvenient problem.

"We need more education and this needs to start with middle-school kids," said group member Nancy Lindquist. "We must teach children about the adverse situations that cats, dogs and other pets too often find themselves in and the importance of spaying and neutering."

Child psychologists say small children do not distinguish between cats, dogs, horses and people. So, when kids witness animal neglect and suffering, they learn that some life forms don't matter — and this can contribute to bullying and racism.

"We also want to provide pet fos-

tering services for victims of domestic abuse," said group member Linda Naydol. "We're aware that some people won't leave their abusive situations because they have no place to take their animals. Some abusers threaten their spouses with potential harm toward their pets."

Sisson said people need to get involved when they see animals suffering.

"Animals, like children, cannot defend themselves," Sisson said. "People need to say or do something when they witness neglect, abuse or abandonment. We must be their voice."

The new group will also work to discern ways to cope with feral cats, mother cats with kittens and more. Sisson wants people to know if volunteers foster animals already in the county's shelter program that fostering costs will be covered.

A recent rabies clinic in the Valley was well attended and another will be held on August 30, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Shop Smart's parking lot. For \$15 people can get a rabies shot for their pets and receive a county license.

"A license is a ticket home for a lost dog as well as supporting the animal shelter, so it's a win-win," said group member Anita Savio. "Too many people are very lackadaisical about putting identification tags on their dogs and that only costs a few dollars. Without tags, we go through a lot of trouble to reunite dogs with owners. Dog ownership is an important responsibility, it's not a trivial thing."

The group also plans to offer assistance for all species of animals, including horses and goats.

"The Illinois Valley is home to many equines and other hooved animals," Naydol said. "I would like to see a system of resources that includes a "hay bank" to help animals in dire need and assist owners who find themselves facing problems associated with care and maintenance."

Naydol wants to partner with other large-animal rescue groups to help re-home horses or provide transportation during emergencies.

Donations of fencing, poles, dog and cat beds, pet gates, crates of all sizes, cages, collars and leashes, dog and cat food, hay, straw, bags of feed, and of course, time, labor and money are needed. Anyone wanting to donate or get involved can contact Sisson at spacepug@yahoo.com. Smaller items can be dropped off at the Illinois Valley News Office in Cave Junction.

LAST DAY AUG. 29

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