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SHELTER HONOR

Stafford selected for prestigious shelter fellowship



Stafford Animal Shelter's Director of Development Alicia Davis and Executive Director Steve Leach are pictured outside the shelter. Leach will serve as the shelter's representative for a University of Wisconsin-Madison Shelter Medicine Program's Northern Tier Shelter Fellowship. (Enterprise photo by Nate Howard)

By Enterprise Staff

The Stafford Animal Shelter was one of only four shelters from Washington, Alaska, Minnesota, Idaho, the Dakotas and Montana to be accepted into the prestigious University of Wisconsin-Madison Shelter Medicine Program's Northern Tier Shelter Fellowship.

The Shelter Fellowship program was created in conjunction with the University of California-Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program for animal shelter administrators to deliver life-saving knowledge and services to the nation's homeless pets and communities, a Stafford news release said.

"It was a pretty competitive process," Stafford Executive Director Steve Leach said in an interview last week. "We were just thrilled that we were chosen."

The fellowship makes it possible for administrators to work directly with academic and clinical instructors from both institutions as well as national animal welfare organizations, to benefit from their expertise on diseases, shelter procedures, community programing and more, according to the release.

Leach will serve as the shelter's representative for the fellowship and will attend the training courses in Madison, Wisconsin as well as participate in continuing education.

"The University of Wisconsin is leading the nation in shelter medicine and animal welfare protocols," Leach said in the news release. "We have called on them several times to assist with situations here at Stafford. Our participation in this ongoing fellowship will undoubtedly thrust Stafford into the upper echelon of cutting edge animal welfare operations which will

help benefit our community and most importantly the homeless pets entrusted to us.”

The fellowship begins June 4 with a travel-expense-paid trip to the University of Wisconsin.

Then the fellowship will be ongoing, with projects to complete, including a presentation of results, and twice-a-month phone conferences.

“(It) makes us a much more efficient and medically sound organization ... we’re excited about it,” Leach said last week.

He added he’s been charged with disseminating what he learns to other shelters in Montana.

“It’s going to be a real positive for us,” Leach said.

He added, “I’m just very excited, and we’re proud that we got chosen.”

Stafford Animal Shelter is an open-door shelter that accepts every pet in need regardless of species, breed or medical condition. They have no restrictions on length of stay and pets are provided a safe haven for as long as it takes to find them a new home.

To learn more about Stafford, visit www.staffordanimalshelter.org.

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