

## Lawton Animal Welfare Division Shelter Myths and Facts

**MYTH :** Pets are in shelters because they didn't make good pets.

**FACT:** Most pets end up in shelters through no fault of their own. In fact, the main reasons pets are given up include:

- Owners moving to housing that doesn't allow pets
- Owner develops allergies to pet
- Owner having personal problems
- Owner can no longer afford the pet
- Owner no longer has time for the pet

**MYTH:** You can't find a purebred pet at a shelter.

**FACT:** Twenty-five percent of all dogs in shelters are purebreds

**MYTH:** Shelter pets aren't spayed or neutered.

**FACT:** Unless there is a health issue, the Lawton Animal Shelter spays or neuters each dog or cat before it is released for adoption.

**MYTH:** The Lawton Animal Shelter charges citizens to turn over stray animals.

**FACT:** The Lawton Animal Shelter is an open acceptance facility and takes in strays, at no charge to the citizen, who is willing to bring them to the shelter.

**FACT:** The Lawton Animal Shelter takes in all animals to include exotics, wildlife, birds, mammals, fish, livestock, snakes, lizards, turtles, llamas, emus, etc. We have a great network of rescues, animal facilities, sanctuaries, local pet stores and zoos that work with the shelter to place animals that need a home or have special needs. The shelter also has staff that are State certified staff wildlife rehabilitators and when possible, release the wildlife back into the wild once they are well.

**MYTH:** Animals are put to sleep as soon as they are caught.

**FACT:** Once impounded, an animal is held at the Lawton Animal Shelter for a period of 72 hours. This does not include the day it comes in or days the facility is closed. This time frame was established to give owners a chance to find and claim their pets. After 72 hours and if considered adoptable, the animals are scheduled to be spayed or neutered. After a day or two of recovery, the animals are then placed for adoption, sometimes being held up to 3 weeks, to give them a chance at being adopted. The shelter also works with several approved animal rescue organizations authorized to pull animals from the Lawton Shelter and local pet stores which will take the animals to other facilities for opportunities to be placed in homes. Some of our animals have gone as far as California and New York through these agencies and were placed with families.

**MYTH:** All Pit Bulls are killed immediately

**FACT:** The Lawton Animal Shelter does not offer to the public, breeds of animals that have been identified as potentially aggressive or dangerous and that are over 6 months to 1 year of age. However, these animals are offered to approved animal rescue organizations that have the time and resources to do a more in depth evaluation of an animal's behavior and provide corrective training and /or obedience training to afford the animal a second chance at being placed.

**FACT:** Regardless of the breed, animals that are relinquished to the shelter by owners are subject to being put down first, in the event the shelter becomes overrun with animals and running out of space. The space is needed to house those animals that must be held for the 72 hour period for owners to locate lost pets.

**MYTH:** Shelter pets are not healthy

**FACT:** Shelter pets are no more prone to poor health problems than pets obtained through *any* other source. . No sick animal is ever intentionally offered for adoption. Unfortunately many of the various canine and feline illnesses have incubation periods that exceed the timeframe in which animals are normally held at the facility. Due to this, and in a proactive effort to adopt out healthy animals, the Lawton Animal Shelter vaccinates each animal that appears adoptable on the day it arrives. However, if the animal has already been exposed to an illness or virus, the vaccinations do not act as a treatment or cure; this is why it is so important that pet owners have all of their pets taken to a veterinarian for initial and annual vaccinations. Many of these diseases are totally preventable and the shelter strongly encourage pet owners to contact local veterinarians to learn about any special programs or half price vaccination days they may offer.

We offer a 72 hour no questions asked return policy with the adoption fee refunded as well as a 7 day refund policy for the adoption fee with a vet statement explaining any health issues found during the health exam that the new owner chooses not to deal with. Vaccinations provided by the Lawton Animal Shelter include: Dogs: canine distemper/adenovirus type 2, parainfluenza/parvo virus vaccine, leptospira bacterin, canine bordetella vaccine. Cats: feline rhinotracheitis, calici-panleukopenia, Chlamydia psittaci vaccine.

**MYTH:** Shelter pets should be free and the facility is simply trying to make money by charging an adoption fee.

**FACT:** The animals offered for adoption through the Lawton Animal Shelter have already received veterinary treatments to include: Spaying/Neutering \$75-300, Vaccinations \$15-45, Microchip \$30-50. The cost to adopt an animal for the Lawton Animal Shelter is \$45 - \$80..

**MYTH:** All feral cats impounded by the Lawton Animal Shelter are euthanized immediately.

**FACT:** These cats are considered stray and are also held for the 72 hour initial period. The shelter has a (TNR) program, (Trap Neuter and Relocate) where cats are placed on a Farm Cat List. Anyone wishing to house farm cats and reside outside the city limits may get on the list for a farm cat. The cats are sterilized and vaccinated and then offered to those on the list at no charge. Those adopting feral cats are educated on what procedures to take to establish these cats in their barns or on farms.

**MYTH:** The Lawton Animal Shelter uses questionable methods to euthanize animals.

**FACT:** The Lawton Animal Shelter uses the same methods as veterinarians to euthanize an animal. All staff members required to carry out this procedure are certified through the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners and hold an OBN and/or DEA license authorizing the custody and use of the restricted meds.

**MYTH:** There is no need to micro chip your pet, the shelter does not scan for microchips.

**FACT:** The Lawton Animal Shelter has 2 universal scanners on hand, and scans each animal upon arrival. If a micro chip is found, calls are made to the chipping agencies to obtain the pet owners information on file. Micro chipping your pet is an excellent way to find the pet should it get lost or identify it in the event it is stolen. However, micro chipping is only as good as the information registered. If the owner fails to register the pet with the chip agency or does not update the information in the event the ownership of the pet changes or the family moves, the microchip is useless and the pet is lost forever. Should a citizen find an animal and decide to locate an owner themselves, staff will be happy to scan the animal free of charge to search for a microchip.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Lawton Animal Welfare Division is located at 2104 South 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Hours of operation for the facility are Tuesday- Friday 11 – 6 (closed from 1-2 for lunch) and on Saturday from 10 – 2.

Hours of operation for Field Services are: 7:30a.m. to 6:00p.m. Monday –Friday. 6:00p.m. - 7:30a.m. Standby (emergency calls only).

Saturday and Sunday 8:00 a.m. -11:30 a.m. regular calls with emergency calls all other hours through 7:30 a.m. Monday.

If you are in need of assistance by an Animal Welfare Officer at any time, please call 581-3271

To speak with Kennel staff during operating hours please call 581-3448, Please note that if your missing pet did not have any identification on it, the shelter will not identify it over the phone.

For all other assistance or questions, please call 581-3219