



**Animal Service Center
of the Mesilla Valley**

2013



Annual Report

Background

The municipal animal shelter facility located at 3551 Bataan Memorial West, in Las Cruces, NM is the only open admission animal shelter currently operating in the Doña Ana County area. The facility was built in 1985 and had been operated by a third party contractor, the Doña Ana County Humane Society (DACHS). The City of Las Cruces (City) and Doña Ana County (County) have been the primary financial supporters of this facility.

On January 29, 2008, the City and County entered into a Memorandum of Agreement to temporarily operate the animal shelter after DACHS notified the City and County that it would no longer operate the animal shelter. The City and County determined that it was imperative that they enter into a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) to create an independent public agency to provide animal sheltering related services. The JPA was entered into by both Parties on August 4, 2008. This new public agency is named the "Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley" (ASCMV).

The Board charged with governing this new agency consists of local officials from both the City and County. Dr. Beth Vesco-Mock was initially hired by the City to run the facility in April 2008. Upon the Board's creation, Dr. Beth Vesco-Mock was made Chief Executive Officer (Executive Director) of the ASCMV.

This will be the fifth comprehensive annual report released by the ASCMV, comparing the progress made by the agency towards achieving the community's euthanasia reduction goals during the past year with previous years.

Letter from the Executive Director



As we discuss the challenges and achievements of the ASCMV, I believe it is important for there first to be a distinction made between a publicly funded municipal animal shelter, such as the ASCMV, and a privately funded animal welfare group, such as a humane society. As a municipal shelter, the ASCMV is tasked with receiving any and all animals turned over to it, either directly from members of the community or through one of the local Animal Control departments. The basic function of a municipal shelter is to allow owners to reclaim their missing animals, attempt to adopt out the unclaimed animals, and euthanize any animals that are left over. Under my direction and the guidance of the ASCMV Board, however, this agency has chosen to go above and beyond this limited mandate in order to save as many animal lives as possible.

Despite many challenges, the ASCMV and its allies have made great progress in saving lives and improving the lives of the animals in this community. Across the community, momentum is propelling the ASCMV forward through the visionary leadership and programs implemented in May, 2008. Through improved and expanded programs and new initiatives, the ASCMV is ascending at a pace that is leading us toward a new level of achievement.

Highlights in 2013:

- The overall number of animals impounded at the ASCMV dropped by 4.43%, to 12,774 animals.
- The rescue transfer program continued to soar with a 63.4% increase, with 1,786 animals leaving to private organizations.
- The 2013 NM State Legislature appropriated \$215,000 to purchase and equip an animal transport vehicle.
- Our New Mexico Facility License was renewed.
- The ASCMV was able to continue to perform many affordable sterilization surgeries, for a total of 2,153.
- An RV was purchased, and there are plans in 2014 to retrofit it into a mobile spay and neuter vehicle.
- The euthanasia rate continued to decrease by 7.77%, down to 42.6%.
- The ASCMV completed the Carroll Petrie Fund Grant requirements, and earned \$38,600. We received money for every dog rescued over and above the previous year. We plan to use this money to purchase a local transport van.
- The ASCMV ended up 3rd in their division and 6th in the nation in the ASPCA Rachel Ray 100K Challenge. Total lives saved for the months of June, July and August was 1,766, which was 545 lives saved over and above the previous year. The ASCMV earned \$5000 for saving at least 300 more lives than the previous year, and also earned \$10,000 for being the Most Improved Shelter in Division Five, with a 45% increase over the previous summer, netting a grand total of \$15,000 from the Challenge. A special thank you goes out to the entire body of volunteers and staff who helped with this awesome achievement. We plan on using the money to refurbish the mobile spay/neuter van.

I would like to take this opportunity to again publicly thank the ASCMV staff and volunteers who have gone above and beyond, day-in and day-out, to push forward with the plans we put in place back in 2008 because we know that, at the end of the day, it saves lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Beth Vesco-Mock', written over a light-colored rectangular background.

Beth Vesco-Mock, DVM
Executive Director
Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley

Statistical Report

This report focuses on the following categories:

1. Intake Statistics

- **Methods of Intake**
- **Intake Method Comparison**
- **Monthly Intake**
- **Species Intake**

2. Outcome Statistics – Adoptions, Euthanasias, Reclaims by Owners, Rescue Transfers, etc.

- **Overall Outcomes**
- **Adoptions**
- **Rescue Transfers**
- **Euthanasias**
- **Stolen/Missing Animals**

3. Public Services and Community Outreach

- **Public Attendance**
- **Affordable Pet Sterilization Surgeries**
- **Community Outreach**

4. Volunteer Program

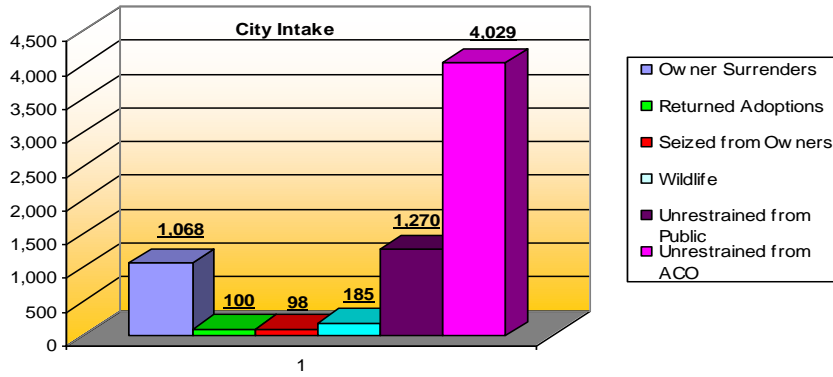
5. Facility Improvements

6. Looking Ahead

1. Intake Statistics

- Methods of Intake

Table 1: Intake from the City of Las Cruces – Total: 6,750



An additional **555** animals were received by the **ASCMV** for the year of **2013**, which could not be attributed to either the **City** or the **County**. These animals were typically left at the **ASCMV** facility after-hours with no notification by the delivering party as to the animal's origin. These undesignated animals raised the **ASCMV's** total intake for the year to **12,774**.

Table 2: Intake from Doña Ana County – Total: 5,469
Including Animals from the City of Sunland Park, Village of Hatch, Town of Mesilla, City of Anthony, and the NMSU Campus)

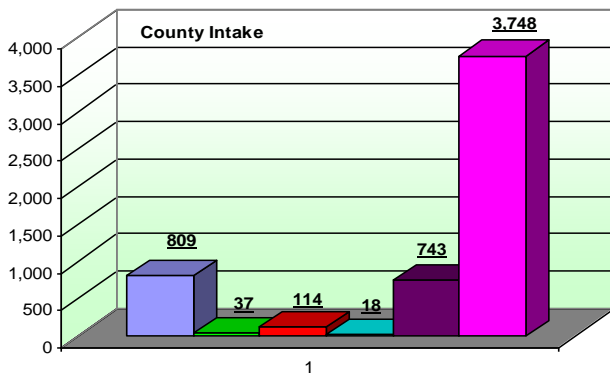


Table 3: Combined Intake from the City of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County – Total: 12,219

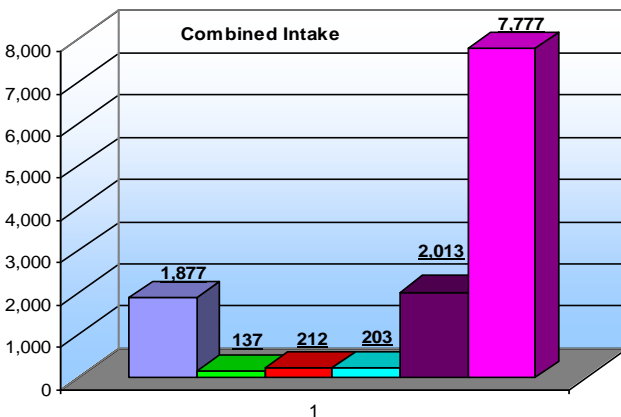
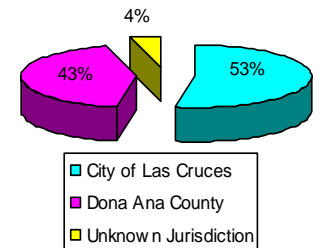


Table 4: Jurisdictional Breakdown 2013

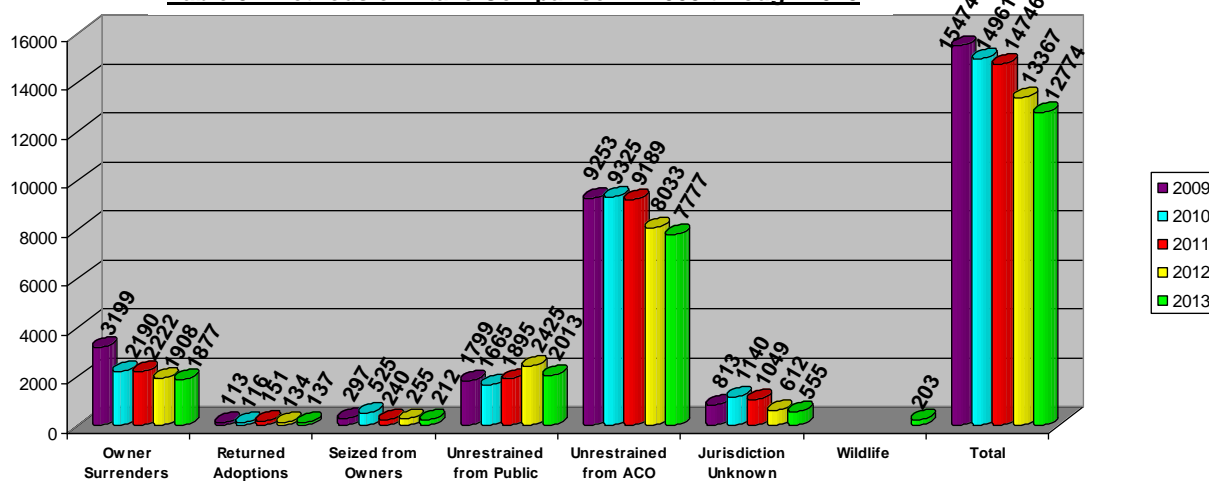


Animals brought in from the **City** accounted for approximately **10%** more of the **Total Intake** than those brought in from the **County** for the year of **2013**.

• **Intake Method Comparison**

The overall ratios of the **Methods of Intake** stayed pretty consistent in relation to each other in **2013**, with a general drop seen throughout all intake methods.

Table 5: Methods of Intake Comparison – 2009 through 2013

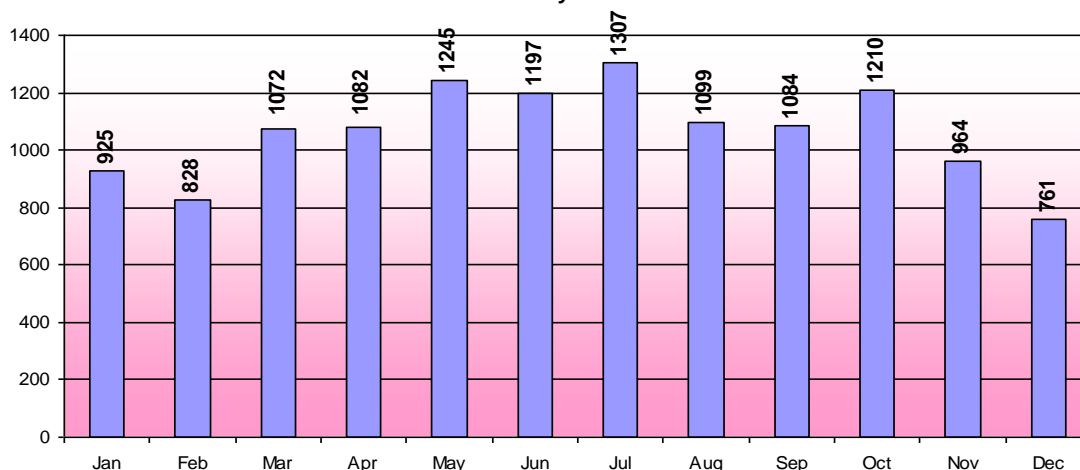


The overall number of animals impounded at the **ASCMV** dropped by **593** animals from **2012** to **2013**; for a **4.43%** decrease. That decrease is much less than the 9.35% seen from 2011 to 2012.

• **Monthly Intake**

As seen in previous years, a clear seasonal pattern can be observed in the **monthly intake** numbers over the course of the year. The **highest** intake numbers typically being received during the **summer** months and the **lowest** received during the **winter** months.

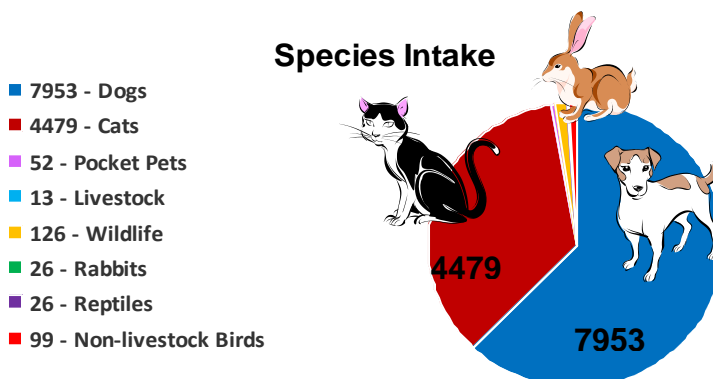
Table 6: Monthly Intake - 2013



It's important to keep in mind that an annual intake of **12,774** animals means that an average of more than **35** animals was received by the **ASCMV** **each day**. In turn, roughly the same number of animals must then leave each day to make room for those coming in. It is the constant goal and struggle for the **ASCMV** to see that those animals leaving do so alive and well.

• **Species Intake**

Dogs and **cats** are, by and large, the main source of intake for the **ASCMV**. Other species received by the **ASCMV** only amounted to approximately **2.3%** of the overall intake for the year of **2013**.



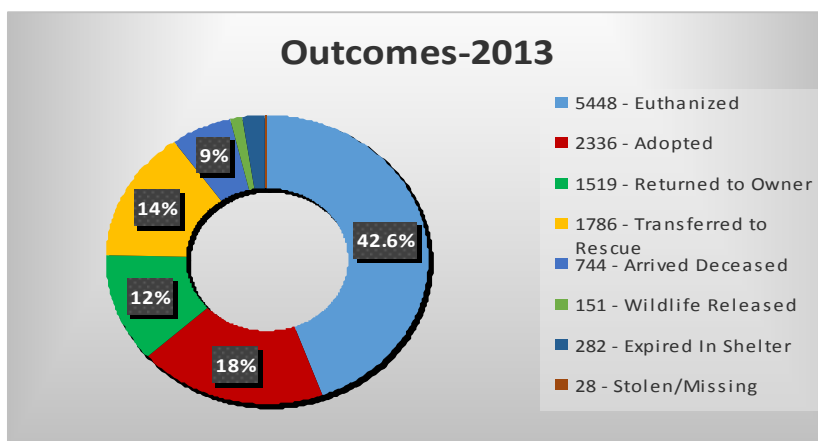
There was a **1.38% decrease** in the **actual number** of **Dogs** received by the **ASCMV**; from **8,064** in **2012** to **7,953** in **2013**.

There was a **1.11% decrease** in the **actual number** of **Cats** received by the **ASCMV**; from **5,038** in **2012** to **4,479** in **2013**.

2. Outcome Statistics – Adoptions, Euthanasias, Reclaims by Owners, Rescue Transfers, etc.

There are 4 basic potential **Dispositions** for each animal received by an animal shelter. The most preferable being: **Reclaimed** by the Original Owner (which would arguably include releasing wildlife to their original habitat). Second and third being: **Adopted** or **Transferred** to a reputable Rescue Organization. The last and least preferable: **Death** (which would include Arriving Deceased, Expiring in the Shelter, and Euthanasia).

• **Overall Outcomes**



The **Percentages** shown in this graph are relative to the year's overall **Outcome** or **Disposition** numbers. The standard calculation for an Animal Shelter's official **Euthanasia Rate** is calculated relative to the year's overall **Intake** numbers, which comes out to **42.6%** for **2013**.

The total combined number of **Adoptions**, **Reclaims**, and **Rescue Transfers** increased in **2013** by **6%** from the year before, mostly due to the increase in transfers; while the total number of **Euthanasias** decreased by **22.3%**.

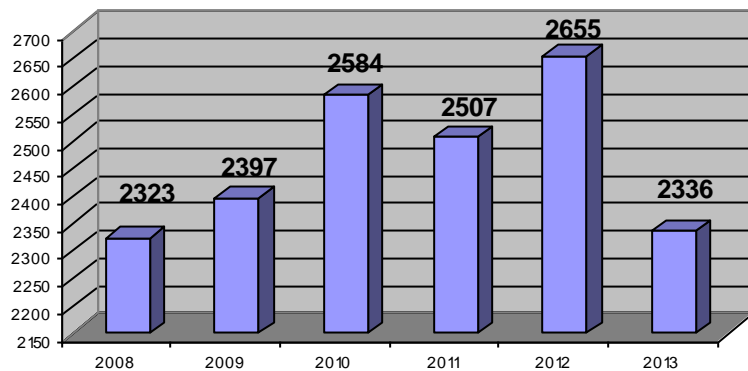


The biggest change in outcome numbers was a **57.63%** increase in the number of animals **Transferred to Rescues**. **653** more animals were transferred out, increasing from **1,133** in **2012** to **1,786** in **2013**.

• **Adoptions**

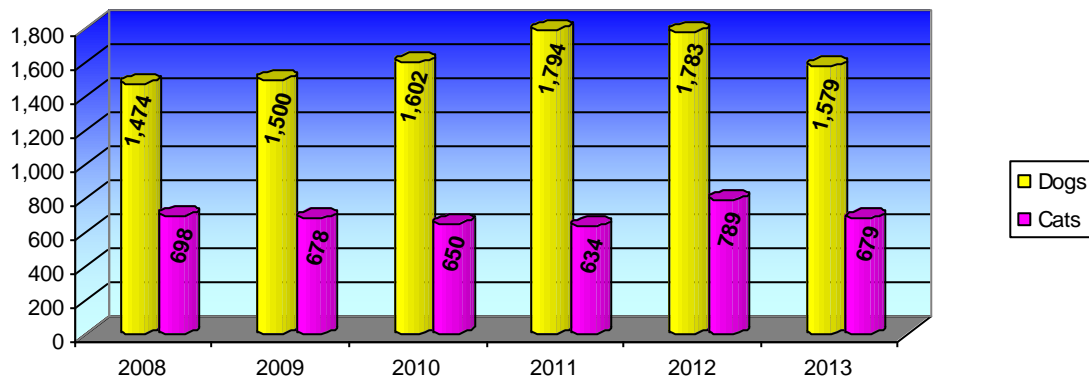
From **2012** to **2013**, the number of animals **Adopted** from the ASCMV unfortunately **decreased** by **319** animals from **2655** in **2012** to **2336** in **2013**. This was almost the **lowest** number of adoptions in the past **5** years.

Table 9: Adoption Comparisons - 2008 through 2013



And as you can see, there are always far more **Dog Adoptions** than **Cat Adoptions**. However, the actual overall **increase** in cat adoptions from **2008** to **2013** is only **13**.

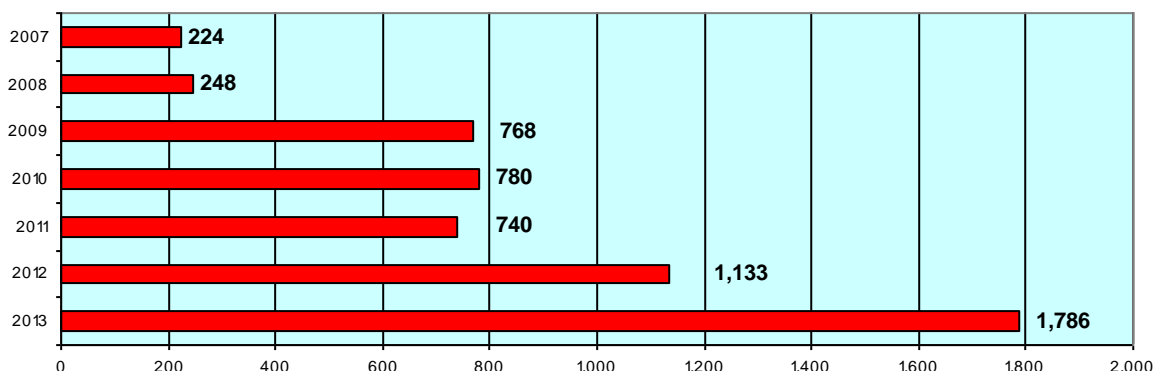
Table 10: Canine vs. Feline Adoptions - 2008 through 2013



• **Rescue Transfers**

The **ASCMV's Rescue Transfer Program** is everexpanding. In **2013**, the **ASCMV** transferred **1,786** animals out to **40** different reputable animal welfare groups, including traveling as far as **San Diego, CA** and **Denver, CO**. As you can see, the number of lives **saved** through **rescue transfers** is on a significant upward trend.

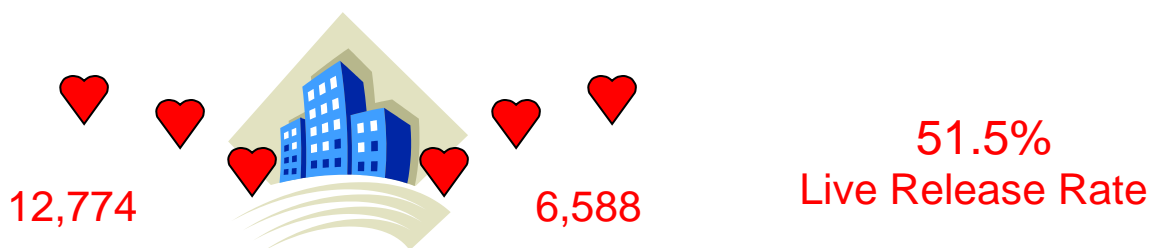
Table 11: Rescue Transfers: 2007 through 2013



Thanks to the efforts of many people, the **2013 NM State Legislature** appropriated **\$215,000** to buy and equip an **animal transport vehicle**. The **ASCMV** hopes to have this up and running by the end of **2014**.

• **Live Release Rate**

Most progressive shelters are now discussing their numbers in a more **positive** manner. **Live Release** is "**Heartbeats Out ÷ Heartbeats In**". It is the combining of **Adoptions, Return to Owners and Transfers**.

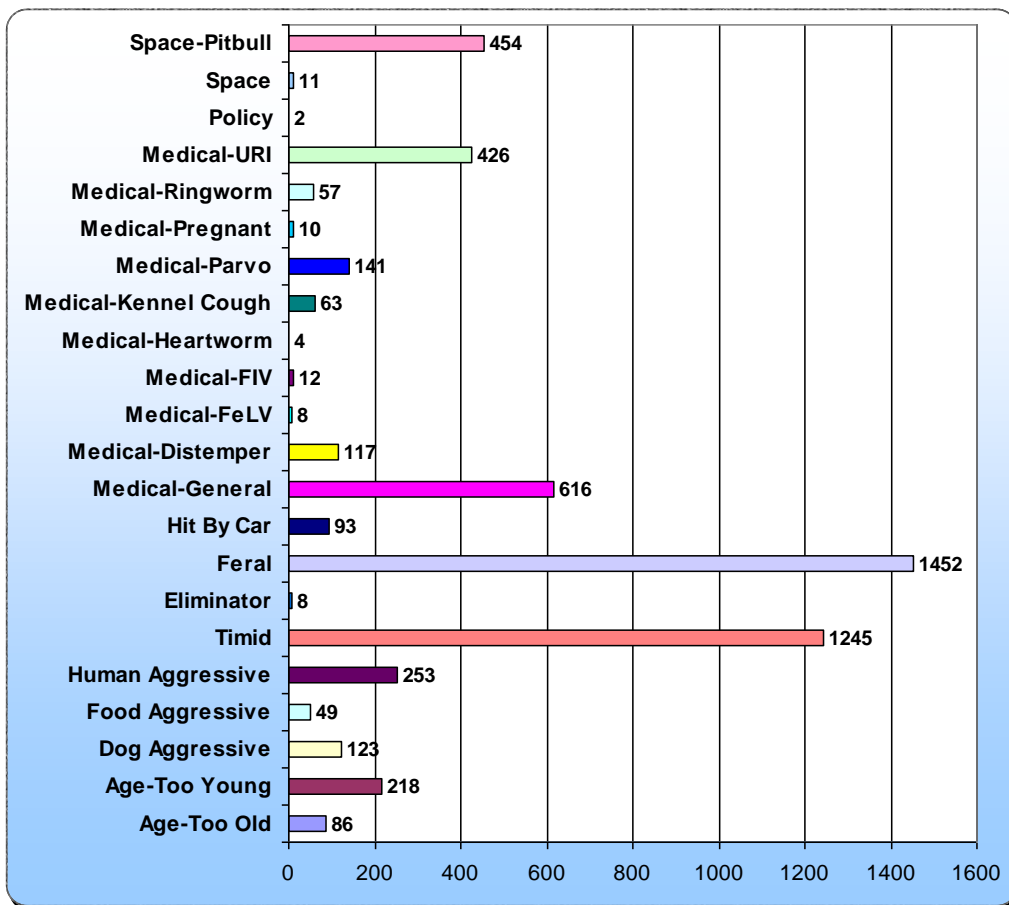


• **Euthanasias**

The **particular reason** for each decision to **Euthanize** an animal at the **ASCMV** is always determined and documented.

Depending on the severity of an illness, injury, or temperament issue, the **ASCMV** will isolate and treat such animals, as long as there is space and staff available for such care and treatment.

Table 12: Euthanasia Breakdown 2013

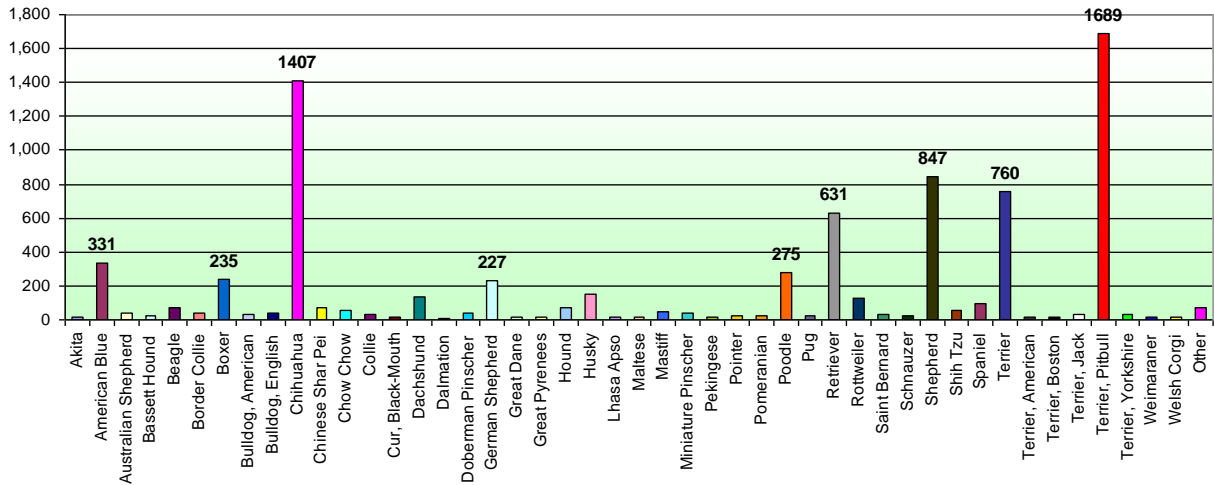


Animals that were **Euthanized** at the **ASCMV** due to an apparent **Feral** temperament accounted for approximately **26.7%** of all **Euthanasias** in **2013**, a slight increase from 2012. **Timid** animals accounted for approximately **22.9%**, which was also up from 2012. This is a very difficult category because with time, many of these animals would come around.

We are pleased to note that there were **no** cats euthanized due to **space** in 2013.

Dogs that were euthanized due to **Space-Pitbull** accounted for **8.3%** of the euthanasias in 2013, which was down from 2012. The category labeled “**Space – Pitbull**” under the **Reasons for Euthanasia** deserves some extra attention and explanation. The **ASCMV DOES** adopt out Pitbull breed dogs. Even the **ASCMV’s mascot, *Enchantment***, is a Pitbull mix. However, because the **ASCMV** receives such a high number of Pitbull mixes each year from this community, it becomes extremely difficult to get even healthy/friendly Pitbulls out alive. In **2013** the **ASCMV** received **1,706** Pitbull mixes, by far the highest number of any breed received. The closest second was Chihuahua mixes at **1,407** impounded in **2013**. It’s important to keep in mind also that while several rescues will accept Chihuahua mixes, almost none are willing to take Pitbull mixes. In fact, Pitbulls are banned by law in Denver and many other areas. Combine that with the fact that this community is already so saturated with Pitbull mixes, the difficult decision has to be made as to how many Pitbull mix dogs can occupy our adoptable cages vs. non-Pitbull breed dogs...certainly never an easy decision to make.

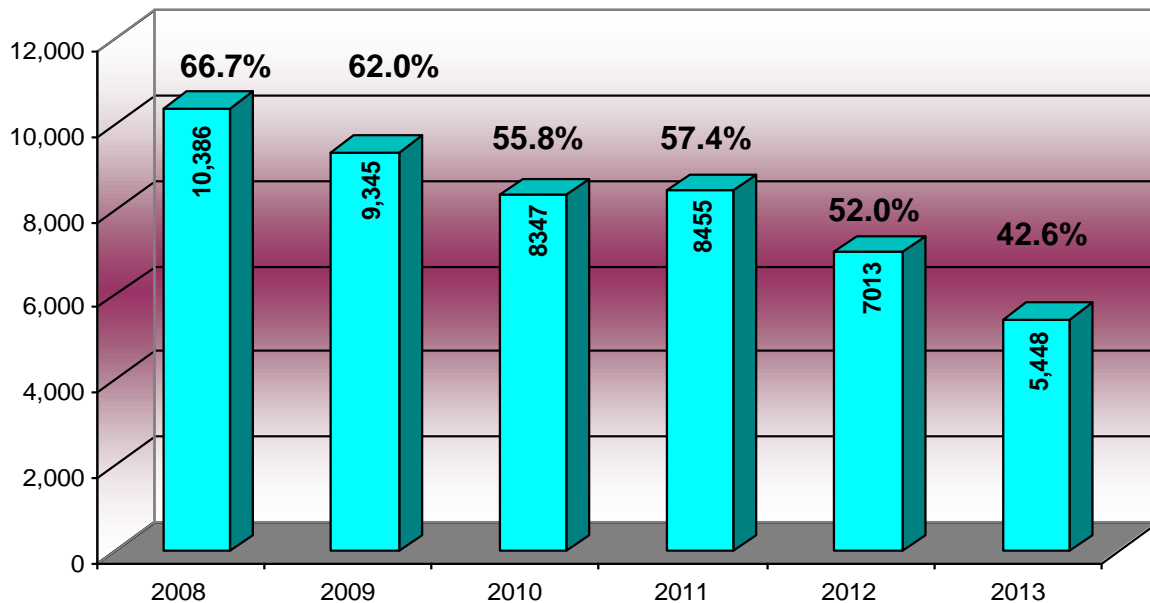
Table 13: Breed Intake Breakdown 2013



The percentage of animals **Euthanized** out of the **Overall Intake** numbers **decreased** by approximately **9.4%**; from **52%** in **2012** to **42.6%** in **2013**.

The **actual number** of animals **Euthanized** **decreased** by approximately **22.3%**; from **7,013** in **2012** to **5,448** in **2013**; for a total of **1,565** less animals **Euthanized**. That's **4,938** less animals **Euthanized** in **2013** than in **2008** when the ASCMV was first created.

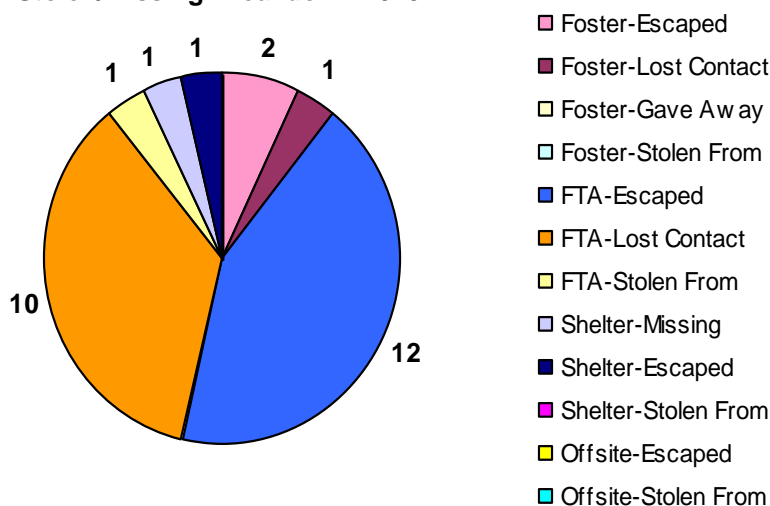
Table 14: Euthanasia Rate Comparison-2008 through 2013



• **Stolen/Missing Animals**

The number of animals **Stolen/Missing** from the ASCMV decreased by **30%**, from **40** animals in **2012** to **28** animals in **2013**. The number of **Stolen/Missing** animals from the ASCMV accounted for approximately **.21%** of the total Outcomes for **2013**. Virtually all shelters have a small number of Stolen or Missing animals. Most shelters bundle these numbers together with the animals that have passed away while under shelter care, which also occurs at virtually all animal shelters, private and municipal.

Stolen/Missing Breakdown 2013



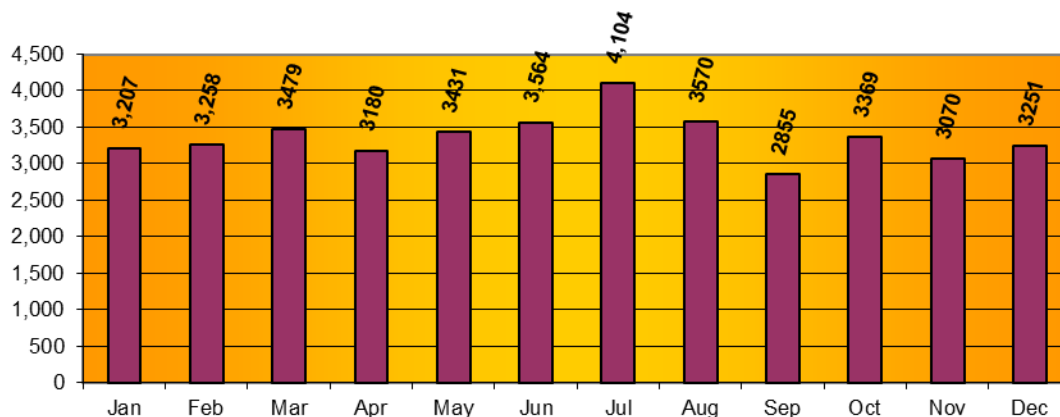
Even the behemoth of a shelter, the *Denver Dumb Friends League*, for example, whose **2012** total revenue was more than **\$19 million**, reported **189** animals as Died or Lost while in shelter care in **2010**. However, unlike the ASCMV, the DDFL and most other shelters do not break these numbers down any further in their reports. The ASCMV has taken the extra step for this Annual Report with the adjacent information and graph.

3. Public Services and Community Outreach

• **Public Attendance**

The ASCMV averaged approximately **111.7** visitors through the facility each day in **2013**. **Public Attendance** was highest in **July** with **4,104** visitors and lowest in **September** with **2,855** visitors. These numbers do not include the attendance of members of the public at off-site adoption events and other events not held at the ASCMV facility.

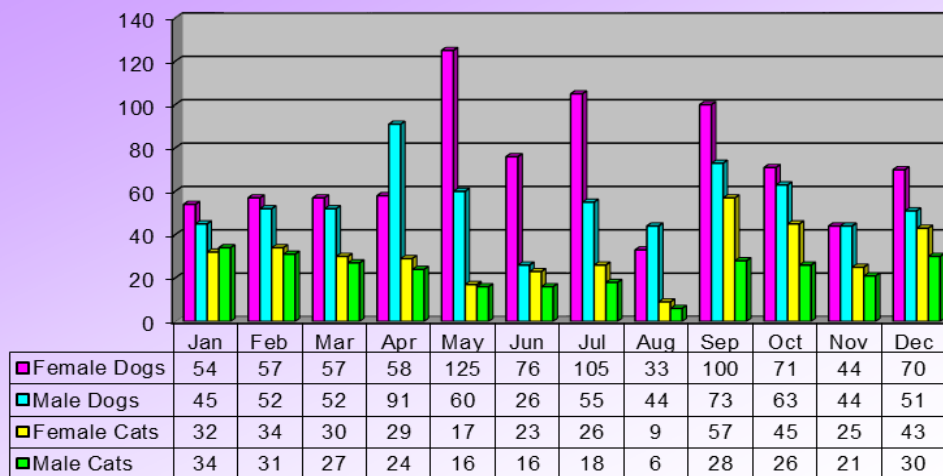
Table 16: Public Attendance at the ASCMV 2013



• **Affordable Pet Sterilization Surgeries**

The **ASCMV**'s Medical Team performed a total of **4,878** surgeries in **2013**. **45** of those were special life-saving surgeries, ranging from prolapsed rectum repair to a splenectomy. **2,153** were **Affordable Sterilization Surgeries** for the general public and private rescue organizations, which was down by 114 from 2012. **45** of those Surgeries were performed in association with the local **Spay and Neuter Action Program (SNAP)**. **101** were performed in association with **Action Program for Animals (APA)**. And **247** were performed in association with the **Coalition for Pets and People**. **933** of the Surgeries performed were **Neuters** and **1,220** were **Spays**.

Table 17: Affordable Sterilization Surgeries 2013



The **ASCMV** also continued to offer vaccinations to members of the public for those animals which underwent sterilization at the **ASCMV**'s Medical Facilities. **4,061 Rabies Vaccines**, **223 Feline Vaccines**, and **869 Canine Parvo/Distemper Vaccines** were given, and of the 869, **612** were adult and **257** were puppy vaccines. The **ASCMV** also continued to offer **Affordable Pet Identification Implantations** to all members of the public.

• **Community Outreach**

Pet-of-the-Week:

In order to promote **Pet Adoptions**, the **ASCMV** continues to send out **Pet-of-the-Week** information to all local media (newspapers, radio, and television), and posts a bio of the **Pet-of-the-Week** online at **ASCMV.org** and on the **ASCMV Facebook** page. In addition, the **Pet-of-the-Week** is introduced at **Las Cruces City Council** meetings each Monday, and bimonthly at the **Doña Ana Count Commission** meetings. The City and County Information Officers receive the **Pet-of-the-Week** bios and distribute the information through their respective channels as well.

Radio:

Local radio stations **KSNM 570AM**, **KVLC 101Gold**, and **KMVR Magic 105**, continue to host regularly scheduled spots for the **ASCMV** to come in and discuss the **Pet-of-the-Week** and other happenings at the **ASCMV**. **KKVS 98.7FM**, the Spanish station for Radio of Las Cruces, ran a full pledged Spanish ad campaign throughout the year. The Executive Director periodically guests on the **KSNM 570AM** Thursday evening **Drive Home with the Bulletin** and **Let's Talk, Las Cruces** with Bill Varcuola.

Publications:

The **Sun-News** continues to publish a biweekly section on Fridays called **Critter Corner**. The ASCMV provides pictures and bios of six adoptable animals for each edition. The ASCMV Executive Director submits a bimonthly article for this section concerning **Pet Ownership Responsibilities**.

The **Bulletin** continues to publish a weekly promotion for the **Pet of the Week**. We have also been fortunate to have the **Bulletin** publish requests for Volunteers on our behalf.

Both papers have assisted in providing remarkable coverage of ASCMV events whenever needed.

Television:

ABC, FOX, and **NBC** news crews frequently respond and cover ASCMV press releases for special events or special needs animals.

Online:

The ASCMV continued to maintain a **Facebook** page, which promotes, not only our **Pet-of-the-Week**, but also our **Off-Site Adoption Events, Special Adoption Events, Rescue Transfers, Special Needs Animals,** and **News Articles** related to **Pet Ownership Responsibilities**. The page has also become a great avenue for keeping in contact with the local radio stations. Some of the local DJs follow the page and even talk about us on the air, using the information gleaned from the **Facebook** page.

Special Adoption Events and Programs:

The ASCMV hosted and participated in numerous events such as the **Adopt a Furry Valentine** event (all adoptions for \$14), **Senior Expo** adoption event, **Spring Fest** adoption event, **Cinco De Mayo** adoption event (all adoptions for \$18.62), **Fetch-a-palooza** adoption event in Albuquerque NM, **Mutt-Show** adoption event, **Health Fair** adoption event, **Pride Festival** adoption event, **Gold Group** adoption event, **Adopt a Cat Month** (free cat adoptions for the whole Month of June), **Spirit of 1776** adoption event (all adoptions for \$17.76), **Tax-Free Weekend** adoption event (free adoptions all weekend), **Woofstock** adoption event in Edgewood NM, **October Free Pitbull Month** (adoptions of all Pitbull dogs for free, any dogs with us more than 6 months for free, all adult dogs for \$50), **Pits for Peace** adoption event, **Dog Lovers Fair** adoption event in El Paso, **Lions Gun Show** adoption event, **Black Friday** adoption event (all black animals for free and everything else half-off), **Home for the Holidays** free adoption event sponsored by DACHS, and a **Free Spay/Neuter** event in honor of **World Spay Day** with **60** free sterilizations performed.

The **Adopt-A-Kennel Program** continues to flourish since it started in 2012, and has made it possible for **3** new kennels to be built to house puppies.

The ASCMV participated in the **DACHS Senior Program**, which connected approximately **53** seniors with free adoptable dogs and cats.

Education:

The ASCMV participated in the **Humane Society International's Expo Internship Program**.

The ASCMV attended **Career Day** at the **Hillrise** and **Conlee Elementary Schools**.

The ASCMV attended the **City of Las Cruces Health Fair**.

The ASCMV hosted the **NMSU ACES** group.

Hillrise Elementary sponsored a **Cans for Canines** program.

The ASCMV director was the keynote speaker for the **DACHS Annual Board Meeting**.

4. Volunteer Program

The **ASCMV Volunteer Program** has had a most successful and positive year in in **2013!** Dedicated volunteers, staff members and community engagement increased in a steady manner to help boost the Volunteer Program. Volunteer numbers skyrocketed and hit all-time highs in the months of April through

September—the only **900+ hours** for five consecutive months! With approximately **430 volunteers** helping us to change the face of the community in Las Cruces in 2013, and over **130 volunteers** remaining to carry on with efforts that vary widely from photography to cat care, canine and animal care, fostering, special events management, marketing, advertising, and ASCMV Liaison volunteers. Volunteer total hours reached over **10,500 hours** for **2013**.

Volunteers, community members, staff members and community businesses pulled together in **2013** to place **6th nationally** in the **Rachael Ray 100K Challenge**; earning ASCMV not one, but two well-deserved awards and titles through the ASPCA. All of the Rachael Ray accomplishments were involved in the process of saving **1,766** animal lives in three months! We had an unwritten slogan and proved that **T.E.A.M.** works (TOGETHER EVERYONE ACHIEVES MORE). Continuing to excel, our volunteer team also runs, manages, trains and organizes our off-site adoption locations such as **Petco** and **Farmers Market** every Saturday. The other organized special adoption events and programs mentioned earlier were all made a success from determined and dedicated volunteers with one goal in mind—**Saving Lives**.

The increase in volunteer efforts displayed concern for animal's well-being, a humane approach to saving lives and a need in the community to assist the ASCMV's efforts to strive towards the goals of 0 in 7. Volunteers acted as liaisons and spoke to political figures, placing their own money, time, fuel and hearts on the line for a just cause, an educational effort for ASCMV to raise awareness of our ongoing needs and concerns. These volunteers, after tiresome and emotional trial and determination, were key in obtaining a much needed new transport vehicle for ASCMV.

From canine enrichment and a growing photography team to educational awareness efforts our volunteers have shown tremendous support in our life saving mission. Our cats on location adoption sites at Petco, Pets Barn and Dona Ana County Building were successful in 2013. These adoption sites have been rewarding for those who provide care for the cats, and the locations where the cats are housed.

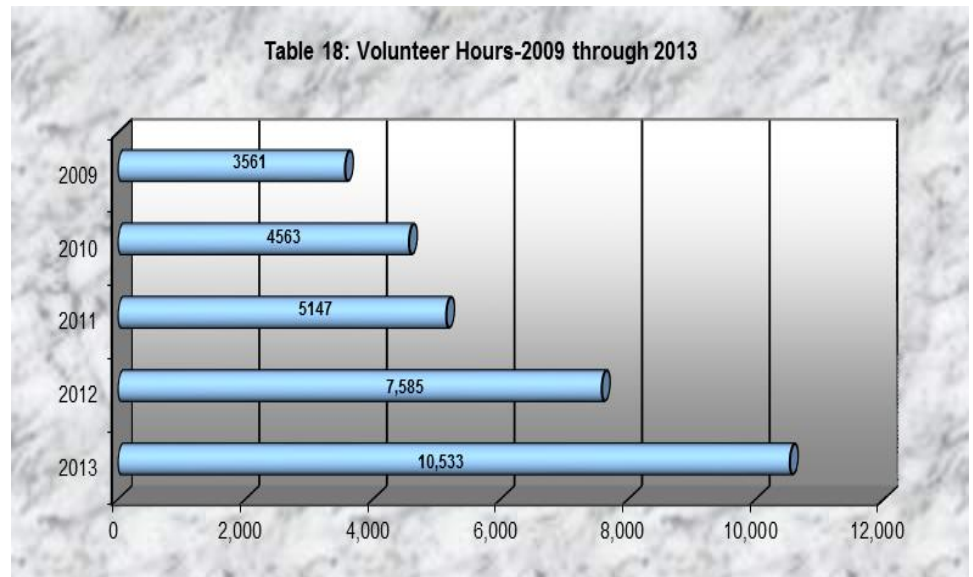
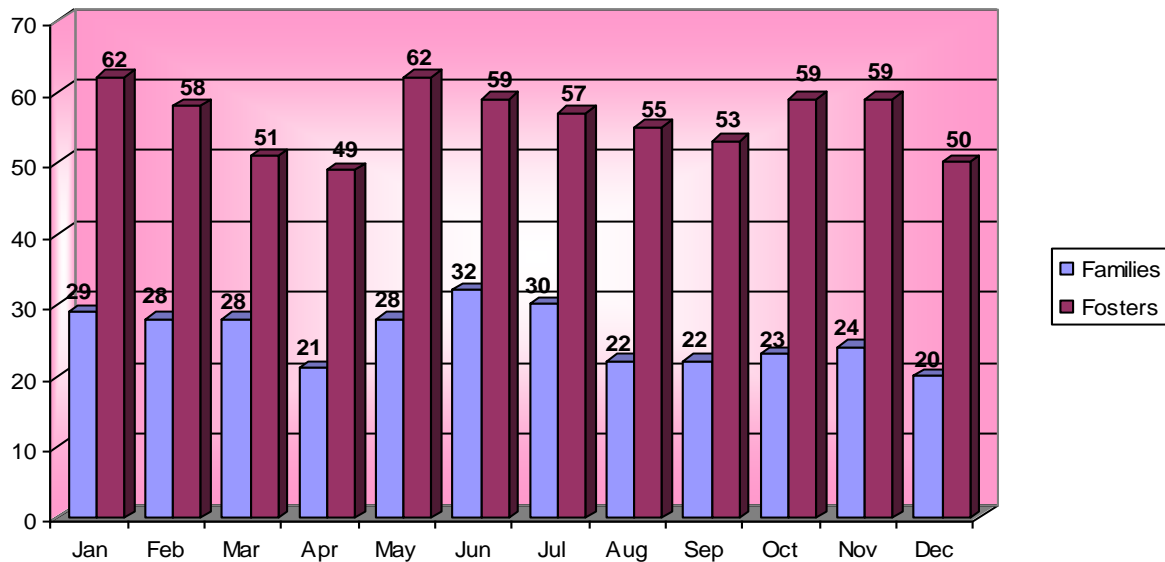


Table 19: Foster Families and Foster Animals-2013

Another indispensable part of the Volunteer Program is the **ASCMV's Foster Program**. Under the Foster Program many Volunteers are able to remove an animal from the shelter environment and temporarily place him or her in their own home, while the animal recovers from an injury or illness or often just until the animal can find his or her new forever home. Many of these Foster Parents are able to not only provide these animals with the additional time and care they need and deserve, but are also often able to promote these animals and actively seek their new forever home. This, of course, not only helps those animals placed in Foster Homes, but allows ASCMV staff to focus on and care for other animals as well. This is an area in which the ASCMV truly desires to see additional growth in from the community in 2014.

5. Facility Improvements

We made many more great improvements to the **ASCMV** facility this year. To name just a few:

- **Donna's Dream Infirmary:**
 - Installation of a new door.
 - Built a new set of steps.
 - Painted the new steps and the deck.
- **Puppy Room:**
 - Completed new design.
- **MedWing Kennel:**
 - Improved lighting
- **Infirmary/Observation Room:**
 - Added a wall, separating cats and dogs.
- **Public Surgery Building**
 - Installed new flooring
- **Enrichment Area:**
 - Added 4 new shade structures
 - Built a new access ramp.



- **Down Under Area:**
 - Installed isolation panels.
 - Built 3 new kennels.
- **Added outdoor lighting to Impound Area, Puppy Patio and Outside Kennels.**

6. Looking Ahead

There are many unique challenges faced by this community. First and foremost, the number of unwanted or unclaimed animals produced by this community is staggering. There are far more animals in need of care in this

community than this community is financially equipped to handle. Second, compared to many other communities we are, in a sense, an island. We do not have a large nearby urban center surrounded by dense, affluent suburbs. This means not only a smaller pool of potential adopters, but also fewer and smaller private animal welfare agencies available to help address the enormous number of unclaimed animals.

Table 20: 2013 Intake Rate Per Capita

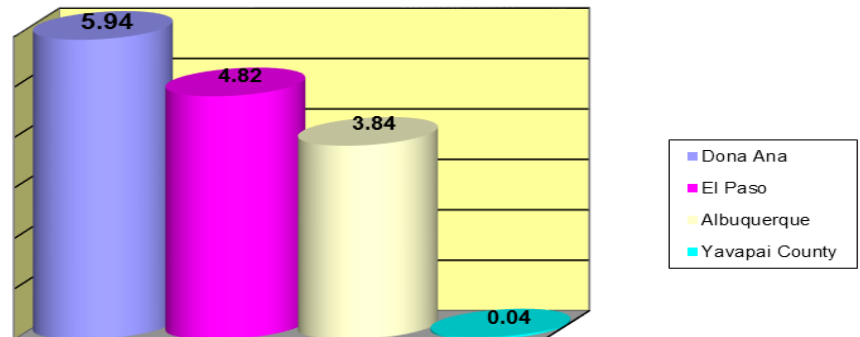
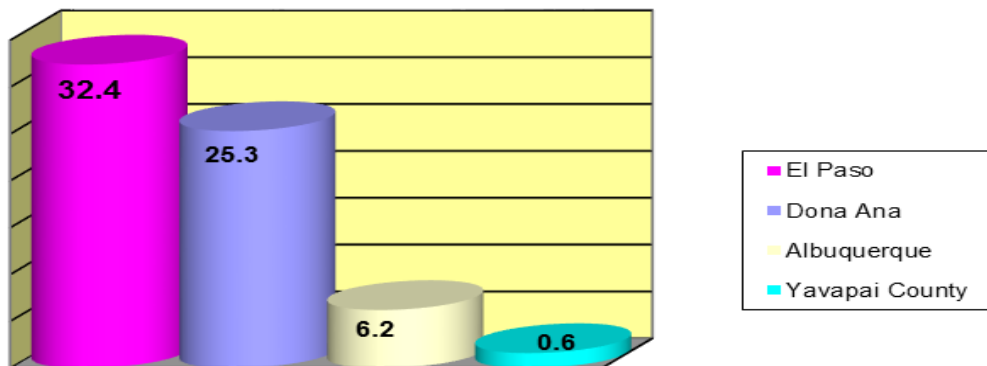
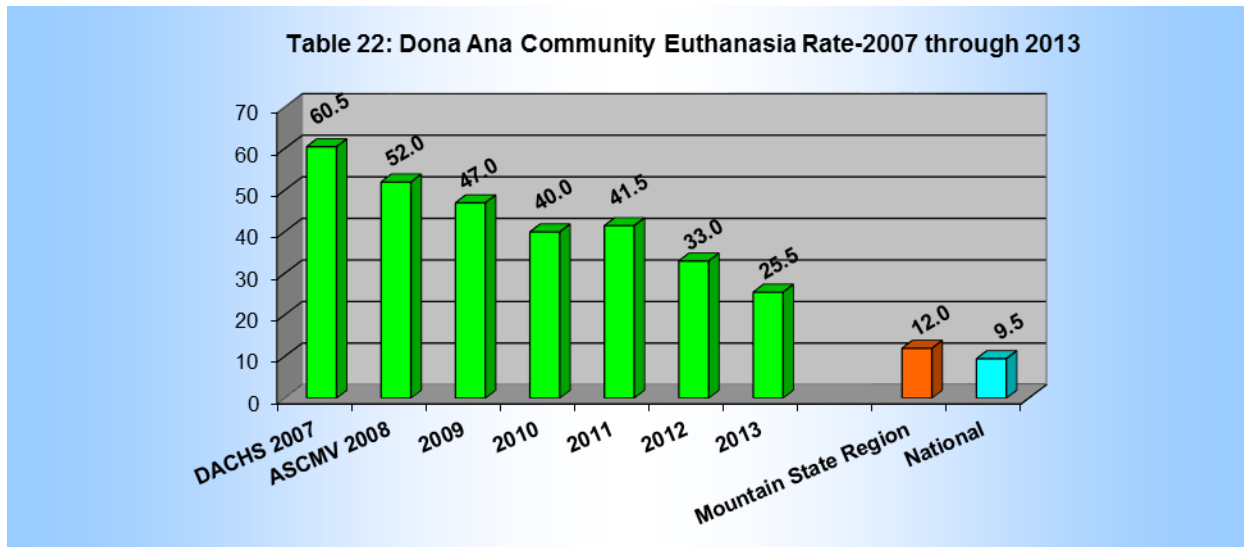


Table 21: 2013 Community Euthanasia Rate



The industry standard for calculating a **Community's Euthanasia Rate** is the number of animals **killed** per every **1,000 residents**. The following graph compares the **Community Euthanasia Rate** for **Dona Ana County** with the rates of **El Paso, TX**; **Albuquerque, NM**; and **Prescott, AZ**. As you can see, our community is in poor shape and our closest neighbor to the South is in even worse shape.

In **2013** the **ASCMV** euthanized approximately **25.8 animals** for every **1,000 residents** of **Doña Ana County**, while the national average for 2013 has been estimated to be at **9.5**. The **Euthanasia Rate** in **Doña Ana County** continues to be one of the worst in the nation, at nearly **3 times** the **national average**. However, as you can see in the following graph, the tide **IS** changing. The **Community's Euthanasia Rate** has dropped by more than **35** animals per 1,000 citizens in the last **6 years**.



We at the ASCMV are beginning to see some signs that the efforts by the **Coalition for Pets and People** are beginning to have an effect, particularly in regards to the intake at the ASCMV via animal control. It appears that in several regards, influence by the Coalition has resulted in the local Animal Control departments becoming more on-track with progressive enforcement tactics, such as **Returns to Owners in the Field**. These successes and others give us hope for the **“Zero in Seven”** campaign, and we will continue to push for focus on:

- **The Promotion of Pet Ownership Responsibility,**
- **The Promotion of Pet Retention,**
- **The Promotion of Affordable Medical Treatment,**
- **The Promotion of Affordable Sterilization Surgery, and**
- **The Promotion of a Comprehensive Rescue Program;**

Which should, in turn, keep even more of our precious animals in **Doña Ana County** **ALIVE.**