

September 2024



## Mountainous Milestones!

Today we are filled with an overwhelming sense of pride and gratitude as we share the remarkable journey of the Tobacco Valley Animal Shelter.

Our mission to save and care for animals in need has been nothing short of extraordinary, and it is with great joy that we announce our most recent milestone: celebrating the rescue of our 10,000th animal since our doors opened on January 1st, 2008.

But, our accomplishments extend far beyond this remarkable number. In the past year alone, we have saved over 600 precious pets from uncertain fates in Lincoln County. These animals have found refuge, love, and a second chance at life, all thanks to the tireless efforts of our dedicated team and the unwavering support of our community.

Moreover, we have supported over 400 spay and neuter surgeries, recognizing the importance of responsible pet ownership in curbing overpopulation and reducing the number of homeless animals. Through our efforts, we are not only saving lives but also working towards a future where every pet has a loving home.

In addition, we have distributed over 1,000 pounds of pet food to families facing financial hardships, ensuring that beloved pets receive the nourishment they need to thrive. Our commitment to supporting the well-being of animals extends beyond our shelter walls and into the hearts of our community.

Central to our mission is the hosting of spay and neuter clinics, providing essential veterinary care to pets in underserved communities. These clinics play a crucial role in preventing future generations of homeless animals, offering accessible and affordable services to those in need.

None of this would have been possible without the unwavering support of our donors, volunteers, and supporters. Your generosity has been the driving force behind our success, enabling us to make a tangible difference in the lives of animals and the people who love them.

As we celebrate this momentous occasion, let us also renew our commitment to our mission. Let us continue to work tirelessly to save lives, promote responsible pet ownership, and create a brighter future for animals in need. Together, we can make a difference—one paw at a time.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for standing by us, for believing in our cause, and for helping us reach this incredible milestone. Here's to the next 10,000 animals saved and the countless lives touched along the way.

Thank you!!!!

*Wendy Anderson*  
- Exec. Director -



### In this newsletter you can expect:

News and Updates

Upcoming Events and Fundraisers

Adoption Success Stories

Staff & Volunteer Spotlight

Trainer's Tips

Current Residents

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# Tobacco Valley Animal Shelter Ends Contract with Lincoln County Animal Control

After much thought and discussion, the Director and Board of Tobacco Valley Animal Shelter have made the decision to sever the contract with Lincoln County to house and care for pets impounded, seized, and quarantined by Lincoln County Animal Control. This decision allows us to focus more of our time, energy, and commitment on our mission statement of helping the pets and people of Lincoln County in various aspects of pet ownership.

## Refocusing on Our Core Mission

Our mission has always been to prevent relinquishment to the shelter by providing services such as:

- Training and behavior counseling
- Food and supplies when needed
- Increased access to spay/neuter services to prevent unwanted litters
- Adoption services

By redirecting our resources, we can better support pet owners in Lincoln County and ensure a higher quality of life for both pets and their families.

## Financial and Operational Considerations

While the county contract constituted only 21% of our budget, fulfilling the contract meant we were responsible for all impounded pets in Lincoln County. This responsibility has become fiscally unsustainable.

## Future Directions:

Moving forward, Tobacco Valley Animal Shelter will concentrate on:

- Expanding our preventive services
- Enhancing our community outreach programs
- Strengthening our adoption services

Our commitment remains steadfast in creating a supportive and resource-rich environment for pets and their owners in Lincoln County.

## Save The Date



October 19th sees the start of some new puppy classes at the shelter, ran by **Ace's School for Dogs**.

The classes are set to run for 6 weeks, at the Tobacco Valley Animal Shelter, with the puppies expected to graduate on November 23rd, just in time for Thanksgiving!

The first two classes, called *AKC S.T.A.R Puppy*, and *AKC Canine Good Citizen*, will be with veteran dog trainer, Rich Sherman, and local volunteer and trainer, Alissa Esslick.

If you are interested in this fantastic opportunity to work alongside some fabulous trainers, and really give your puppy the best start possible, contact Alissa on;

**406-293-1757 or  
aschoolfordogs@gmail.com**



## DOGS DAY OUT! DOG WALK-A-THON

**Tobacco Valley Animal Shelter Presents:**

**1st Annual Dog Walk-A-Thon  
Saturday, September 28th  
9:00am - 11:00am  
@ Rails-to-Trails**

**To Register Visit or Call the Animal Shelter 406-889-5457**

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## Volunteer Spotlight

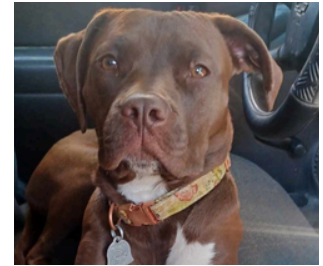


Alissa Esslick

"Being a volunteer is the way I give back. Helping dogs is my favorite way to put something good into the world. Knowing you've been an important part in helping these sweet souls on their way to adoption is the best. I cannot describe all the ways it is important. If you can, come to the shelter and see for yourselves." - Alissa Esslick

## Success Story of the Quarter

Belle, the roadside pup that was found back in February, has found a wonderful new home and is currently living her best life!



Her owner, Jennifer George, said, "Well, she has gained a lot of weight from when we first got her. She loves to chase butterflies and grasshoppers and spends her days going for walks, playing with her toys, and laying in the sun."

It can be a difficult task to find homes for pitbulls and pitbull mixes, but Belle has landed on her feet with her new family.

George said that featuring Belle in the newsletter would be a great way to show how good she turned out to be, after the awful start in life that she had.

## Current Residents



Princess

Princess is a 1 year old female who is very sweet.



Pumpkin

Pumpkin is a very sweet 10 week old male German Shepherd mix.



If you are interested in meeting Princess or Pumpkin, please contact the shelter on 406-889-5457, or stop by Monday-Friday 12 - 5 p.m.

## Trainer's Tip

Does your dog not listen to you, or seem indifferent?

Try the '*Nothing in Life is Free*' philosophy.

Many dogs live a life where everything appears magically; food, water, affection, etc. If it's time for a treat or affection, then ask for something first. Maybe a 'sit', 'shake', or just call him or her over to you, instead of just going over to them. If the dog can't be bothered to come over - then no treat! It's that simple. It is the basis of reward training.

Lots of walks, on a lead, can work wonders too!

-By Rich Sherman



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# Don't Give Up on the Difficult Ones

Imagine being dropped off on the side of a back road and your family driving off and leaving you there. This was the beginning of Rhyla's adoption journey, although for her, at the time, it must have felt as though her little world was collapsing around her.

Brought into the Libby shelter by a witness, Rhyla was later transferred to the Eureka shelter where she spent a long 6 months before we came along.

Recently moving to the area, I knew I wanted to adopt a shelter dog from the Tobacco Valley Animal shelter - because as the saying goes, a house isn't a home without a dog!

I fell in love with Rhyla as soon as I met her back in September 2023. Her big smile melted my heart.

Rhyla came home with us that night, and in the days following ran away, pulled so hard on her leash that it was painful to walk her, and caused general chaos at home. Panicked, and feeling like I had made a wrong choice, I called the shelter and trainer, Rich Sherman, for help. With many tears shed, we returned Rhyla to the shelter for a short time to weigh up our options, and finally settled on some training sessions with Rich Sherman as we knew we didn't want to give up on her. It took one 30 minute session with Rich before we knew what we had to do. 'Give her 3 months' was his advice, and we are thankful, ever single day, that we did.



We took her home again after that week, and in November 2023, while I was out of the country, Rhyla began suffering from drastic weight loss, vomiting and diarrhea daily. After weeks of tests, and feeling utterly helpless, Rhyla, a 90lb dog, weighed 50 lbs and was so dehydrated that she couldn't walk. We begged for her to be opened up to see what was wrong, and there, in her intestines, the vet found a disintegrating Kong toy! Poor Rhyla had been living with this pain and discomfort for months, long before her adoption and probably rescue!

After being operated on, and by December 2023, Rhyla was a different dog. She is incredibly loyal, obedient, friendly with other dogs, and above all, happy and healthy.

Her favorite things are swimming, bird watching, helping in the garden, morning snuggles in the bed, the occasional bite of pizza, and going to work in the truck.

We are so grateful for the support we received with Rhyla, and now couldn't imagine our lives without our sweet girl, who brings a smile to our faces each and every day! She is one, extremely lucky and loved pup!

- By Jessica Wood



*Thank you for reading!*



If you are interested in adopting, volunteering, donating, or would just like to stop by and visit us:

We're open: Monday-Friday  
12 p.m. - 5 p.m.  
Find us at: 19 Independence Way  
PO Box 1815  
Eureka, MT 59917

Contact us on:  
406-889-5457  
tobaccovalleyanimalshelter@gmail.com