

DEAR EDITOR:

Dear Fellow Delphos Residents,

I am writing to commend Mike Birkemeier for addressing council on what seems to be a deterioration of the neighborhoods and houses in our city. I would like to address another contributing factor to the decline of our neighborhoods, the overabundance of feral and domestic cats. Unfortunately, this situation is not unique to Delphos, and many municipalities find themselves dealing with the problem. I know there are many dissenting opinions about how to handle these cats. Almost every solution proposed has its detractors and its advocates. Licensing requirements and leashing recommendations for cats can prove to be unsafe for the animals, and difficult to enforce. I would like to suggest the implementation of a Trap, Neuter, and Release program for feral cats, and a cost assisted spay and neuter option for domesticated cats. These programs have at least proven to be effective in other places.

As far as I could determine, there are no such programs like these in our city. Cost of sterilization surgery is prohibitive for many people, especially those dealing with more than one cat. Feral cats need to be humanely trapped before they can be spayed or neutered. That's where the appointment issue gets problematic. It would be immensely helpful if there was a same day surgery option, or at least a place to take trapped feral cats until surgery. Our local vets would be a valuable asset in our efforts to sterilize both feral and domestic cats. Corporate sponsorship and fundraisers could offset the financial costs of such a program.

To fix the cat problem in our town, we have to stop this profuse production of kittens. There are too many kittens, and not enough homes. According to one estimate, the average number of litters a fertile cat can have in one year is three. The average number of kittens in a feline litter is 4-6. In seven years, one female cat and her offspring can theoretically produce 420,000 cats. Only 1 in 12 of those 420,000 cats born finds a home. More conservative estimates conclude the offspring of one female cat could be 400 by the end of 7 years. Even 400 is 400 too many. There are no place for these cats to go.

I can think of so many examples of times when our community came together for the greater good. It is one of the best features of Delphos, and I know if we join together we can make a profound difference in our community concerning the forgotten cats.

Thank you,
Bev Jettinghoff