

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bay County Makes Improvements to Save Homeless Dogs and Cats

BAY CITY, MI – The 2017 numbers are in and Bay County is proud to announce a nearly 20% increase in the number of animals leaving its shelters alive. Since making significant changes last year, Bay County's Live Release Rate increased to 85%, up from 66% in 2016.

Shortly after taking office one year ago, Bay County Executive Jim Barcia began to make good on his campaign promise to become a "No Kill" county where at least 90% of all animals are saved. To get to the goal, Barcia requested help from the non-profit, all-volunteer organization Michigan Pet Fund Alliance and organized a Strategic Plan Committee to implement Best Practices for the care and rehoming of shelter animals.

"The work of this committee is ongoing," said Debra Russell, Committee Chairperson and Bay County Administrative Services Director. "Over the course of six months, our group drafted and implemented a strategic plan identifying areas that need improvement to reach our goal of saving healthy and treatable dogs and cats, reducing the number of animals by spaying and neutering, and increasing our adoption rates."

In 2017, Bay County Animal Control made the following improvements:

- Improved the layout of the facility to reduce stress and illness in animals
- Added portals to the cat enclosures to promote overall wellness and enrichment
- Began partnering with All About Animals Rescue to spay/neuter all animals prior to adoption
- Implemented a managed admission policy to accept cats and kittens by appointment only
- Stopped the intake of feral and trapped cats
- Began participating in the trap-neuter-release program for feral cats at the Humane Society of Bay County
- Replaced outdated software

According to the Bay County Strategic Plan, "The term 'No Kill' means saving the lives of all cats and dogs in a shelter that are healthy and treatable. Euthanasia is therefore defined as the practice of intentionally ending a life in order to relieve pain and suffering and is reserved for animals that are too sick for treatment or are vicious and cannot safely be rehomed and therefore would have not quality of life."

Michigan Pet Fund Alliance chairperson Deborah Schutt said: "Debbie Russell kept the committee moving and on task. She was a great person to work with. She is retiring in one week and how wonderful that she has these results as one of her final accomplishments."

ABOUT MICHIGAN PET FUND ALLIANCE

Michigan Pet Fund Alliance is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organization that works with shelters, rescue organizations and animal advocates to achieve the goal that no healthy or treatable animal is euthanized due to lack of shelter space or permanent home. For more information, please visit www.michiganpetfund.org.

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