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Animal Friendly plate promotes pet population control

AUSTIN – Sadly, more than half a million animals are euthanized in Texas each year. Spaying and neutering is the most cost-effective and humane way to reduce the number of homeless animals in Texas communities. Motorists and animal lovers can support programs for free and reduced-cost spaying and neutering for dogs and cats by purchasing Animal Friendly specialty license plates from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). TxDOT and county tax assessor-collector's offices are featuring the Animal Friendly specialty license plate as the plate of the month for May.



“In theory, a single female cat and her offspring can produce 420,000 kittens over a seven-year period, and a female dog and her offspring can produce 67,000 dogs in six years,” said Debbie Speicher, Department of State Health Services Zoonosis Control branch. “Since their introduction in 1998, the Animal Friendly specialty plates have funded \$750,000 in grants to charitable organizations across the state for low cost and free pet sterilization.” Cities like Houston, Dallas and Fort Worth have reduced the number of animals euthanized in shelters by 30 percent since low cost sterilization clinics were established. The Animal Friendly license plate is one of the three most popular specialty plates in the state.

The Animal Friendly specialty plate features a drawing of a white cat and dog, against a dark blue background, under a red sun, with the slogan “Animal Friendly” across the bottom. It is available to motorists for a \$30 annual fee, plus \$40 if personalized, in addition to regular vehicle registration fees. Of the \$30 annual fee, \$22 is deposited into a special fund administered by the Department of State Health Services for pet spaying and neutering programs.

Applications for Animal Friendly plates are available at county tax offices, on TxDOT's Web site (www.dot.state.tx.us), by calling the TxDOT Help Desk at (512) 465-7611, or by calling TxDOT's Fax-On-Demand forms line at (888) 232-7033.

TxDOT started its specialty license plate program in 1965. Today, there are more than 100 different plate designs, many of them benefiting a particular group, organization, college or university.