

NEWS RELEASE

MAY 28, 2020 | NR #052820033

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Best Friends Animal Society and City of Abilene partner to improve animal outcomes at shelter during search for Animal Services director

INTERIM ANIMAL SERVICES DIRECTOR TO BEGIN WORK JULY 1

Abilene, Texas – The City of Abilene is pleased to announce that Best Friends Animal Society will be committing a qualified staff member to serve as interim director of Abilene Animal Services for the next 12 months. Under the terms of the partnership, the interim director will directly oversee the management of the animal shelter and its employees.

"The strong team of management and field services staff already in place at Abilene Animal Services will blend well with Best Friends' expertise in executive leadership, deep familiarity with the philosophy and role of animal services and proven lifesaving programming," said Michelle Logan, Best Friends Animal Society's director of national shelter embed programming.

"We very much appreciate the opportunity to work with Best Friends, and for our animal services team to be able to benefit from the organization's expertise and resources," said Abilene Deputy City Manager Mindy Patterson. "Collaborating with Best Friends in this way will enable us to continue working towards the creation of a sustainable system that meets our goal of improving animal outcomes while also working to hire a permanent Animal Services director," said Patterson.

"As part of our goal to help every shelter in every community achieve no-kill by the year 2025, our organization has a vested interest in helping Abilene Animal Services manage an important leadership transition and continue to increase its save rate in a sustainable way," Logan said. "We are very pleased to announce that Michael Bricker, our director of operations for the shelter embed program, will be stepping into the interim director position on July 1, 2020."

Since June of 2018, Michael has been embedded as both the director of operations and the interim executive director for Palm Valley Animal Society (PVAS) in Edinburg, Texas. Working closely with the team at PVAS, Michael helped develop a new lifesaving chapter for companion animals in one of the largest-intake shelters in the country. Within five months of his arrival, PVAS' save rate increased from 34% to 54%. So far in 2020, PVAS is maintaining a 90.53%, putting the shelter firmly on the path to achieving no-kill status this year.

About Abilene Animal Services:

Abilene Animal Services works to protect the health and safety of Abilene citizens, visitors, their pets, and property while promoting lifesaving in all it does. The division's mission is to educate the public to increase responsible pet ownership and prevent animal homelessness through the promotion of humane and compassionate treatment of animals in its care and throughout the community. Through the work of Animal Services' three divisions; field services, shelter, and adoption center, the department works with area animal placement groups to place animals in loving homes. In an average month, Abilene Animal Services takes more than 700 animals into its shelter, with the majority adopted out, returned to owner, or transferred to partner rescue groups.

About Best Friends Animal Society:

Best Friends Animal Society is a leading national animal welfare organization dedicated to ending the killing of dogs and cats in America's shelters. In addition to running lifesaving programs in partnership with nearly 3,000 animal welfare groups across the country, Best Friends has lifesaving centers in New York City, Los Angeles, Atlanta and Salt Lake City, and operates the nation's largest no-kill sanctuary for companion animals. Founded in 1984, Best Friends is a pioneer in the no-kill movement and has helped reduce the number of animals killed in shelters nationwide from an estimated 17 million per year to around 733,000. That means there are still about 2,000 dogs and cats killed every day in shelters, just because they don't have safe places to call home. We are determined to bring the country to no-kill by the year 2025. Working collaboratively with shelters, rescue groups, other organizations and you, we will end the killing and Save Them All. To check out our community lifesaving dashboard and for more information, visit bestfriends.org.

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