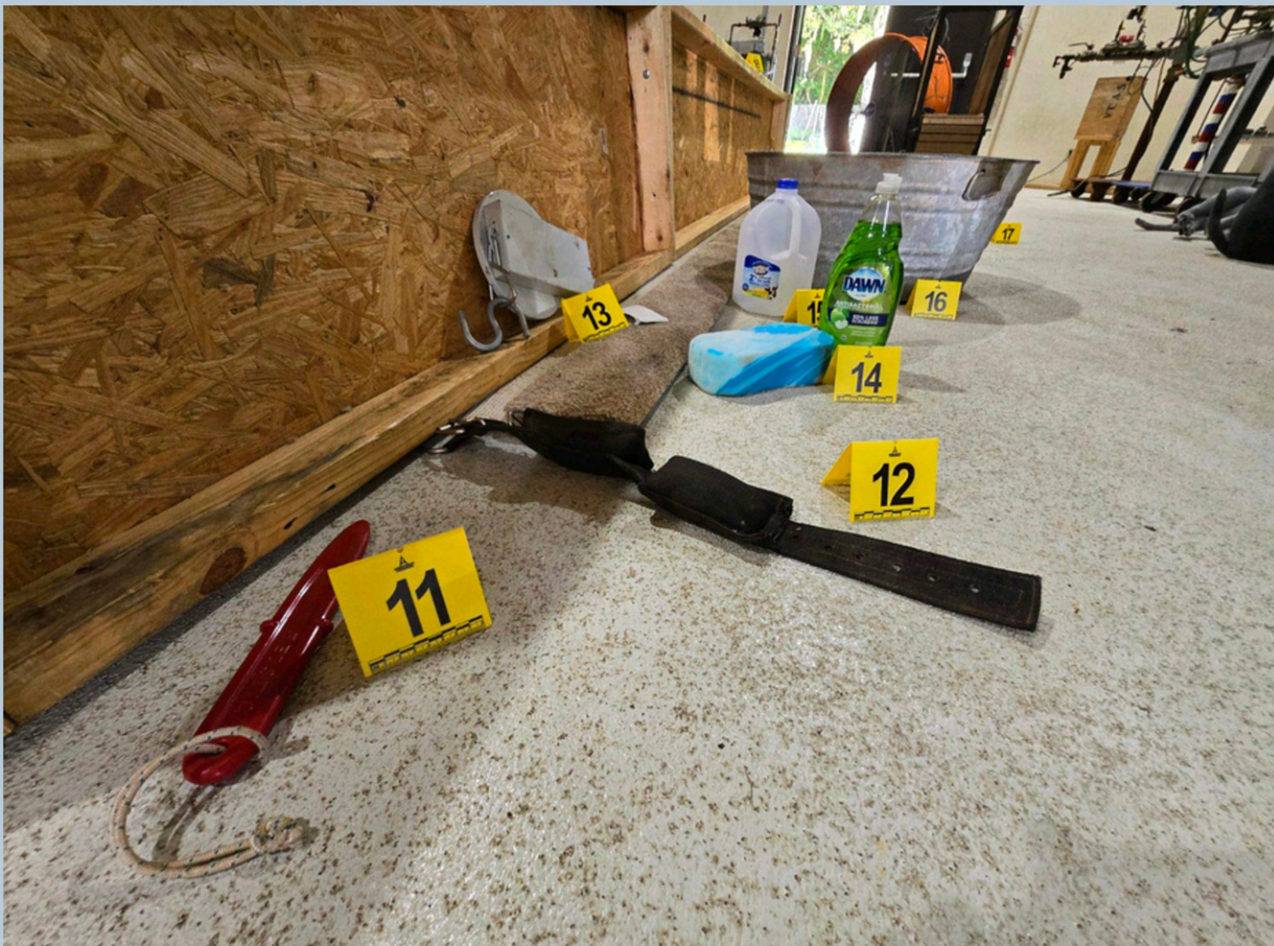


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AI FOR ANIMAL CONTROL: THE
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TABLE OF CONTENTS



- 06 THE POWER OF AI IN COURT FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICERS
- 9 CHUG THE GOAT REUNITES WITH OWNER 2 MONTHS AFTER GETTING STOLEN, STUCK UNDER BRIDGE IN KANSAS CITY
- 11 PAWS FOR A CHANGE
- 14 LEADING THE WAY IN FIELD SERVICES
- 18 UNVEILING THE NEXT FRONTIER: ACO III
- 21 MEET THE 2024 NACA BOARD OF DIRECTOR CANDIDATES
- 24 CHARTING THE FUTURE: NACA'S DEDICATION TO STRATEGIC PLANNING

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we welcome vibrant colors of fall, I'm reminded of the resilience and dedication that defines our animal care and control community. This season, our work is more crucial than ever as we face a nationwide capacity crisis in animal shelters. The influx of animals, combined with resource challenges, has pushed our shelters to the brink. Yet, in the face of these obstacles, I'm inspired by the commitment of our animal care and control professionals who continue to go above and beyond to ensure every animal receives the care and compassion they deserve.

We hope you enjoy this issue, where we dug into the innovative strategies and collaborative efforts being implemented across the country to address this capacity crisis. We also celebrate the successes that remind us why we do this work—stories of lives saved, communities strengthened, and animals finding their new homes.

Despite the challenges, I'm filled with optimism. Our community has proven time and again that when we come together, we can overcome any hurdle. Let this fall be a season of renewed energy and hope, as we continue to advocate for the welfare of animals and the safety of our communities. Together, we will rise to meet this moment with courage, compassion, and a renewed commitment to our mission.

Thank you for all that you do.



Jerrica Owen
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR





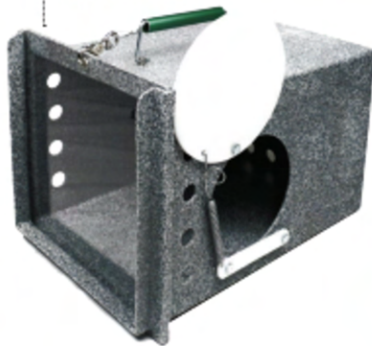
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- Mon. Sept 23rd: [AAWA Leadership Accelerator: Effective Strategies to Make DEI Stick](#)
- Sept.30- Oct.1: [2024 TN Animal Care & Control Conference](#)
- Tues, Oct 1st: [Solving Conflicts with Bobcats](#) (L White/HSUS)
- Oct. 2-4th: [2024 Missouri Animal Control Association State Conference](#)
- Oct. 9-11th: [Michigan Pet Alliance Conference 2024](#)
- Oct 12th: [Jump Start your AI Journey \(JCH\)](#)
- Oct. 18-19th: [2024 Animal Protection and Wellness Expo](#) (Georgia)
- Tues, Nov 5th: [Using Innovative Alternatives to Incarceration and Recognizing the Role of Trauma in Violence Against Animals](#) (J Chapman/D Rosengard/ALDF)
- Nov. 17-20: [2024 AAWA Conference](#)
- Nov. 17-20: [2024 Texas Animal Control Association State Conference \(TACA\)](#)
- Tues, Nov 19th: [Connecting the Dots in Military and Civilian Families: Animal Abuses Links to Other Family Violence](#) (P.Arkow/National Link Coalition)

2025

- Feb 20th: Florida Animal Protection & Advocacy Conference (Orlando)
- Feb 20th: Best Friends National Conference (Palm Springs CA)
- Feb 22nd: Kansas Animal Control Association Conference
- Feb 25th: Carolinas Unite Conference
- Feb 26th: [Due Process vs Disposition Holding Animals & Remains as Evidence](#)

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SPECIAL ISSUE:

THE POWER OF AI IN COURT FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICERS

BY NACA

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an indispensable tool across various sectors, and animal control is no exception. For animal control officers, the integration of AI into court proceedings can enhance efficiency, accuracy, and overall effectiveness. However, it's crucial to understand both the potential applications and the challenges associated with using AI in legal contexts.

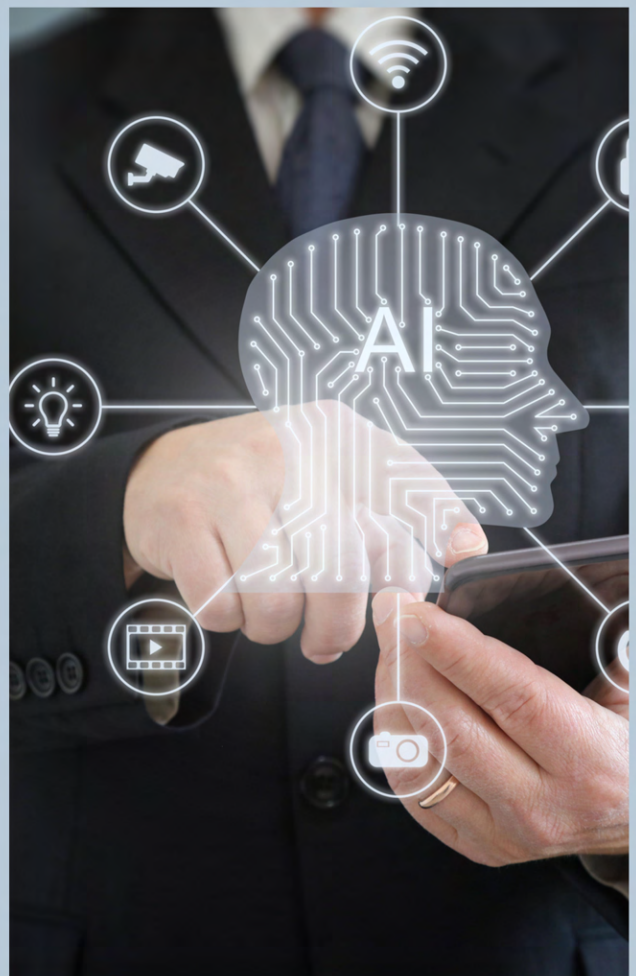
AI can process vast amounts of data quickly, identifying patterns and anomalies that might be missed by human analysts. For example, AI can analyze reports, witness statements, and historical case data to build a robust evidence base. Predictive analytics can help foresee potential outcomes based on historical data, assisting in strategy formulation for court cases.

AI-powered image recognition tools can analyze footage from security cameras, drones, or other sources to identify instances of animal cruelty or neglect. This can provide concrete evidence in court. Facial recognition technology can help identify perpetrators in cases where animals are abandoned or mistreated in public places.

AI can streamline the preparation of legal documents, ensuring that all necessary information is included and reducing the likelihood of human error. This can speed up the process of filing charges and submitting evidence. Natural language processing (NLP) tools can assist in drafting and reviewing legal documents, making the process more efficient.

AI can analyze social media and online forums to gauge public sentiment about specific cases or broader issues related to animal control. This can be useful in understanding public opinion and preparing for potential public relations challenges.

While AI offers numerous benefits, there are several critical factors that animal control officers need to consider when using AI in court. AI systems can inadvertently perpetuate biases present in their training data. It is essential to ensure that the AI tools used are trained on diverse and representative datasets to avoid biased outcomes that could undermine the integrity of court proceedings. Regular audits and updates of AI systems can help mitigate bias and ensure fair and equitable treatment of all individuals involved in animal control cases.



“THE ACCURACY OF AI TOOLS IS CRITICAL IN LEGAL SETTINGS”

The decisions made by AI systems need to be transparent and explainable. Courts require clear, understandable reasoning behind evidence and conclusions presented by AI. Black-box AI models, which do not provide insight into their decision-making processes, can be problematic in legal contexts. Employing interpretable AI models or ensuring that AI-generated insights are accompanied by comprehensive explanations can help address this issue.

The use of AI involves handling large amounts of sensitive data. Ensuring the privacy and security of this data is paramount. Animal control officers must adhere to data protection regulations and implement robust security measures to protect the information. Data breaches or misuse of data can not only compromise court cases but also lead to legal consequences and damage public trust.

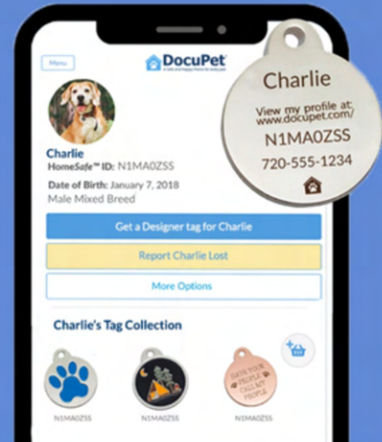
The accuracy of AI tools is critical in legal settings. False positives or negatives can have significant implications in court cases, potentially leading to wrongful convictions or acquittals. Regular validation and testing of AI systems against known benchmarks can help ensure their reliability and accuracy.

The ethical implications of using AI in legal contexts must be carefully considered. This includes the impact on privacy, the potential for abuse of AI technologies, and the broader societal implications. Developing and adhering to ethical guidelines for the use of AI in animal control can help navigate these challenges.

The integration of AI into court proceedings for animal control officers presents exciting opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of legal processes. By leveraging AI for data analysis, evidence compilation, and document automation, officers can build stronger cases and streamline their workflows. However, it is crucial to remain vigilant about the challenges associated with AI, including bias, transparency, privacy, accuracy, and ethical considerations. By addressing these issues, animal control officers can harness the power of AI responsibly and effectively in their pursuit of justice for animals.



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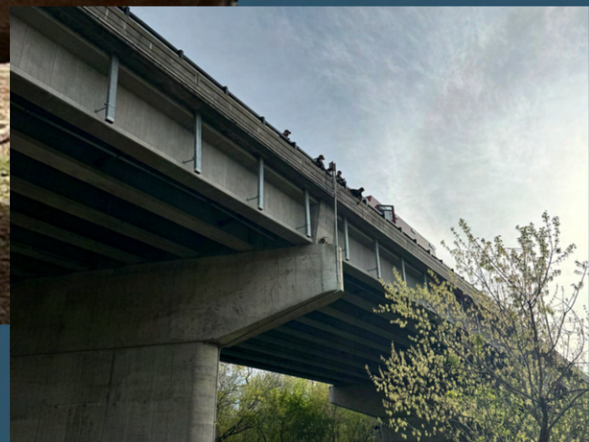
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—Dr. Gary Weitzman, President and CEO, San Diego Humane Society

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CHUG THE GOAT REUNITES WITH OWNER 2 MONTHS AFTER GETTING STOLEN, STUCK UNDER BRIDGE IN KANSAS CITY



After nearly two months of turmoil, Chug the goat has finally found a happy ending. Initially stolen from a farm in Bethany, Missouri, about two hours from Kansas City, Chug's adventurous journey brought him to an unexpected location.

In April 2024, first responders rescued Chug from a ledge below a bridge on 63rd Street in Kansas City. The goat had found himself precariously perched about 80 feet above the ground, requiring the combined efforts of Kansas City police, firefighters, and the KC Pet Project's animal services team to secure and retrieve him safely.

Chug's owner, Brittany Slaughter, never expected to see him again. "We're just really excited to get him home and have him where he belongs," she told reporters. "Surprised to see him again, to be honest." Brittany recognized Chug from news reports detailing his dramatic rescue and was able to confirm his identity through his unique markings. She contacted the KC Pet Project, where Chug had been receiving care.

The rescue was not without its challenges. The team managed to secure Chug with a rope, but he still fell about fifteen feet into some brush, rendering him unconscious. Fortunately, KC Pet Project's chief of veterinary medicine was present, and the team quickly stabilized and sedated Chug before transporting him to their facility. X-rays were performed, fluids administered, and within an hour, Chug began to recover.

Chug's ordeal was part of a larger, two-month urban adventure. After being stolen in March, he was captured by animal control officers wandering on Independence Avenue. A local family adopted him, but Chug's adventurous spirit led him to jump over a fence, unable to integrate with the family's other goats, and he was on the loose again until his rescue.

CHEERS FOR CHUG!

“We have no idea how he made it this far to Kansas City, what the situation was, if he was removed from the property by somebody, or if he wandered. You know, it’s hard to say in these situations. You wish that they could talk and tell you their whole story,” said Tori Fugate from KC Pet Project.

On Wednesday, Chug was joyfully reunited with his owner. He will now return to his farm, greeted by his family and 80 acres of land to roam. This resilient goat’s story has captivated many, but he can now transition back from explorer to grass grazer, living safely where he belongs.



PAWS FOR A CHANGE

BY NACA

SOURCE: BROOKS ANIMAL LAW DIGEST

New York Bill Would Prohibit Importation of Certain Wildlife and Restrict Live Animal Markets

New York bill [A10645](#) would prohibit the importation of certain wildlife and fish, including all bat, rodent, and primate species until the restriction of a particular species is proven unnecessary, to protect native fauna, agricultural interests, and public health and safety from zoonotic transmission. It also would impose new animal welfare and public health restrictions on the operation of live animal markets, including a ban on the sale of bats, rodents, and primates in live markets.

Hawaii Establishes New Dangerous Dog Requirements and Penalties

Hawaii Governor Josh Green [signed House Bill 2058](#), defining “dangerous dog” and establishing new requirements and penalties for owners of dogs deemed dangerous.

New York Bill Would Penalize Drivers for Careless Car Accidents with Domestic Animals

New York bill A10660 would amend the state’s vehicle and traffic law with regard to vehicle accidents involving domestic and companion animals. While current law already requires drivers to exercise due care to avoid hitting domestic animals, the bill would specifically add companion animals to that requirement. It would also create penalties for drivers who injure a domestic or companion animal in a vehicle accident while failing to exercise due care. It further would increase fines for leaving the scene of any vehicle accident injuring a dog, cat, horse, or cattle without reporting it.

Pennsylvania Updates Dog Law

Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro [signed Senate Bill 82](#), which amends Pennsylvania’s “Dog Law.” The legislation imposes additional public health-related measures on commercial kennels and updates dog licensure provisions.

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PHOTO FROM NACA ACO III MOCK CRIME SCENE: FORENSIC DOG FIGHTING INVESTIGATIONS

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Washington State Proposes Rule to Allow Individuals to Relocate Beavers

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife proposed a rule to enable “the existing pilot Beaver Relocation Permit Program to continue and allows individuals to relocate wild American beaver in conflict with landowners as an additional alternative to lethal removal.” The pilot program began in 2019. The proposed rule would include “requirements for beaver relocation permit application, beaver capture, housing, caretaking, and release, and penalties for violating the rule.”

Louisiana Criminalizes Use and Possession of Bait Dogs

Louisiana Governor Jeff Landry signed Senate Bill 476, which criminalizes the possession or use of bait dogs in training for dog fighting. The legislation creates criminal penalties of imprisonment for one to ten years and fines from \$5,000 to \$25,000. The legislation is effective as of August 1, 2024.

Vermont Creates Division of Animal Welfare

Vermont Governor Phil Scott signed H.626, creating a single-employee Division of Animal Welfare within the Department of Public Safety to streamline the investigation and enforcement of state animal welfare laws and regulations. The legislation also establishes the Animal Welfare Fund to fund the new division and removes humane society employees from the definition of “humane officer.”





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LEADING THE WAY IN FIELD SERVICES



NACA is committed to its mission of providing high-quality education and professional development opportunities for animal care & control professionals across the nation.

The HSUS and the National Animal Care and Control Association Launch Innovative Leadership Course Series

By Julie Falconer

What makes a successful leader? The question has been pondered by ancient Greek philosophers, modern-day corporate tycoons and countless others throughout the ages.

Last year, staff from the Humane Society of the United States' [Law Enforcement Training Center](#) and the [National Animal Care and Control Association](#) began studying the question through a narrower lens: What do people need to know to thrive as leaders in animal services?

It wasn't a mere thought exercise. Both organizations aimed to fill a gap in available training for animal care and control professionals.

In the past, training courses for field services have largely focused on “boots-on-the-ground” skills, says NACA executive director Jerrica Owen. But it's just as important that agency leaders have the skills and knowledge they need to guide their teams and support staff retention.

Owen and members of the HSUS law enforcement training team started by talking with leaders of agencies of various sizes, budgets and organizational structures, identifying a set of common challenges.

“Our vision was to create content that was appropriate for leadership in the field services space, to empower them and their officers to be in the place where we want field services to be, not field services from 50 years ago,” Owen says.

The result was the field services leadership academy, a virtual eight-hour course series taught by experts in leadership skills, data analysis, public relations and strategies for supporting emotional resilience.

LEADING THE WAY IN FIELD SERVICES, CONTINUED

Loren Reese, a specialist with the HSUS Law Enforcement Training Center, expected that about 20 people would sign up for the course. But 48 hours after NACA put the application on its website, 100 people had applied—a clear sign that field services staff are hungry for guidance on how to be better leaders, Reese says.

The inaugural leadership academy launched in January with 28 students from animal services agencies across North America. “We wanted to keep the class size small so people felt comfortable sharing what they’re seeing in their community and talking amongst their peers,” Reese says.

Among the participants was Brad Schargorodski, division manager of Code Compliance and Animal Protection for the city of Bowling Green, Kentucky. Schargorodski spent most of his career with the city working as a code enforcement officer before he was promoted to division manager and found himself overseeing his city’s animal services officers. That was nearly four years ago, he says, but compared to many of his peers, he doesn’t have much experience in animal services.

The course gave him a chance to learn about different approaches from other field services agency leaders. It also generated “pages and pages of notes of things I need to work on.” Things like identifying underlying reasons for some of the problems animal services officers commonly encounter. “I like data,” Schargorodski says, “but I’d never gotten the training to identify root causes.” He’s since started analyzing response data and incident reports from recent years to help his team address pet owner needs in his community.

One of the many highlights of the event was the announcement of grant recipients from California for All Animals. Five deserving agencies were selected to receive thousands of dollars in funding to support their vital work in animal control and community outreach. These grants will enable these agencies to implement innovative programs and initiatives aimed at improving the lives of both animals and people in their communities.



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LEADING THE WAY IN FIELD SERVICES, CONTINUED

The public relations class, with tips for speaking to the media, also served him well. "It gave me more confidence," he says. "My most recent interview was about a rabies clinic. I watched it on TV, and it's the best I've ever done."

The most challenging part of the course for Schargorodski was the class on compassion fatigue. "I'm not touchy-feely," he admits. At the same time, he adds, part of being a good manager is knowing your weaknesses and leaning on staff members who are strong in those areas. Earlier this year, he encouraged one of his team members, a seasoned animal services officer who is comfortable discussing emotional issues, to complete a certification class in mental health.

For small agencies with limited budgets, the free trainings offered by NACA and the HSUS are invaluable, Schargorodski adds. The leadership academy exceeded his expectations and gave him tangible ways he could better serve his staff and his community.

"It's easy to get caught up in day to day, especially in animal services, when you're going from this dog to the next dog to the next chicken," he says. "Now we're looking at the big picture, and we're literally better as a team."

“IT'S EASY TO GET CAUGHT UP IN DAY TO DAY, ESPECIALLY IN ANIMAL SERVICES, WHEN YOU'RE GOING FROM THIS DOG TO THE NEXT DOG TO THE NEXT CHICKEN,” HE SAYS. “NOW WE’RE LOOKING AT THE BIG PICTURE, AND WE’RE LITERALLY BETTER AS A TEAM.”



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“AS A LEADER, YOU HAVE TO KEEP GROWING.”

These are the types of results Owen hoped for when she began working with the HSUS to develop the course curriculum. The feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive, she says, affirming that the topics were relevant to field services leaders' needs.

“I think we hit nail on the head,” she says. “Now we can start to build it out and expand the course series.”

The next leadership academy is slated to launch this fall, and Schargorodski is eager to sign up some of his team members.

“I have officers who are leaders, too. Even though they're not managers, they're leaders in the field,” he says. “As a leader, you have to keep growing.”

LEARN MORE: Get more details on the [field services leadership academy](#).

Reprinted from [HumanePro.org](#), published by the Humane Society of the United States.



UNVEILING THE NEXT FRONTIER: ACO III



The excitement continues to build as we delve deeper into the in-person modules of the Animal Control Level 3 Certification, offering an unparalleled learning experience that will propel participants to new heights in their careers. From simulations of mock crime scenes to real-world scenarios, participants will gain invaluable experience that transcends traditional classroom learning. The emphasis on practical skills ensures that graduates are not only knowledgeable but also proficient in applying their expertise in the field.

Officer Safety - Self-Defense: Protecting animal control officers is our priority. This module offers tailored self-defense training, equipping participants with essential skills to handle field challenges confidently. Join us for hands-on instruction and simulated scenarios to enhance safety in the field.

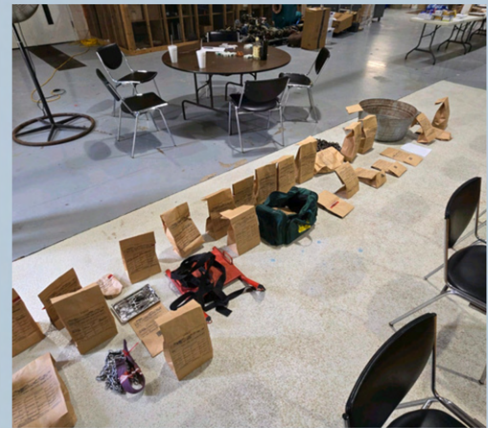
Crime Scene Documentation: Learn essential techniques for thorough documentation and evidence processing. Join us to gain practical skills through hands-on exercises in a realistic setting.

Investigation of Complaints: Learn to handle complaints effectively through a blend of classroom instruction and hands-on training. Gain confidence and professionalism as you navigate real-life scenarios and master essential techniques.

These hybrid modules represent a crucial aspect of the Animal Control Level 3 Certification, offering participants the opportunity to hone their skills and expertise in a dynamic and engaging environment. With a focus on practical application and real-world scenarios, this certification ensures that graduates are not only knowledgeable but also prepared to excel in the challenging and rewarding field of animal control. Don't miss your chance to be part of this transformative learning experience to take your career to the next level! Be on the lookout soon for more information and your chance to enroll. NACA members will be among the first to receive the registration notifications, not a member? Join today!



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MEET THE NACA BOARD OF DIRECTORS CANDIDATES!

As part of our commitment to increasing the professionalism and leadership of our association, we are thrilled to introduce our board candidates! These individuals bring diverse skills and a passion for advancing our mission. Your vote is crucial in shaping the future of our organization. Take a moment to learn about each candidate, and remember to cast your vote to ensure your voice is heard in this important election. Your participation is essential to continuing our journey towards excellence and growth!



Alexis Pugh

Director, Lifesaving Programs,
Best Friends Animal Society USA



Anna Payton

Administrator, Will County
Animal Protection Services, IL



Dr. Christina Avila

Animal control supervisor
City of Perris, CA



Sarah Hock

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Kathy Duncan

Director, National Programs,
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Chris Lutgen

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All of this and more can be found at:
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CHARTING THE FUTURE: NACA'S DEDICATION TO STRATEGIC PLANNING



In a significant move towards shaping the future of animal care and control, the National Animal Care and Control Association (NACA) board of directors and staff recently dedicated time to strategic planning. This focused effort is aimed at ensuring the organization remains at the forefront of advancing animal welfare, supporting animal control officers, and fostering community engagement.

During the strategic planning sessions, the NACA team meticulously worked through various key areas that are vital to the organization's mission and vision. The highlights of this comprehensive plan include: Professional Development and Training; Community Engagement and Public Outreach; Advocacy and Policy Influence; and Organizational Sustainability and Growth.

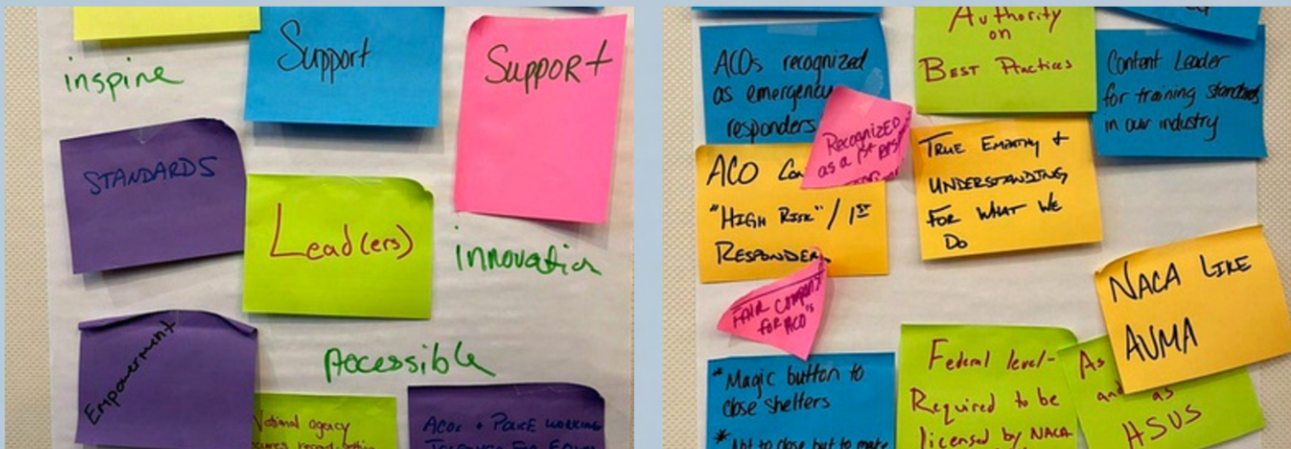
CHARTING THE FUTURE CONT'D

Professional Development and Training

NACA is committed to enhancing the skills and knowledge of animal control officers through continuous professional development. The strategic plan emphasizes expanding training programs, incorporating the latest best practices, and providing accessible educational resources. This initiative aims to ensure that officers are well-equipped to handle the complexities of animal control and welfare with proficiency and compassion.

Community Engagement and Public Outreach

Recognizing the importance of community involvement, NACA's strategic plan focuses on strengthening relationships with the public and various stakeholders. By promoting awareness, education, and proactive engagement, NACA aims to foster a collaborative environment where communities are actively involved in animal welfare efforts. Public outreach programs and campaigns will be integral in achieving this goal.



Advocacy and Policy Influence

NACA plans to take a more proactive role in influencing animal welfare policies and legislation. The strategic plan outlines initiatives to advocate for humane treatment, better resources for animal control officers, and stronger enforcement of animal protection laws. Through partnerships with policymakers and advocacy groups, NACA aims to be a leading voice in shaping policies that benefit animals and the community.

Organizational Sustainability and Growth

Ensuring the long-term sustainability of the organization is a key priority. The strategic plan includes measures to enhance financial stability, improve operational efficiencies, and expand membership. By focusing on growth and sustainability, NACA aims to continue its mission of supporting animal control officers and advancing animal welfare for years to come.

The strategic planning sessions were held in San Antonio and were a testament to the dedication and forward-thinking approach of the NACA board of directors and staff. The collective effort and insights gathered during these sessions will serve as a foundation for the organization's future initiatives. As NACA moves forward with this strategic plan, the organization remains committed to its core values of compassion, professionalism, and excellence. The strategic initiatives outlined will not only enhance the capabilities of animal control officers but also ensure that NACA continues to be a leader in animal welfare and community engagement.

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- **The OMNI MAX** - The perfect scanner for any environment
- **The XTEND MAX** - Our stick scanner that protects your hands from nervous animals

All of PetLink's universal scanners read all available companion animal microchips on the market. They are easy to use, portable, and are equipped with rechargeable, lithium-ion and lithium-polymer batteries. Email us for questions on adding this pet reunion essential to your Animal Professional toolkit.



Questions?

Call or email CherylAnn Fernandes at (781) 281-5167 & cherylann.fernandes@petlink.net

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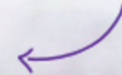
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- Blog
- Member only resource center
- Calendar of ACO related trainings, events, and conferences



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– because if we unite,
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