



KC PET PROJECT

ANIMAL SERVICES DIVISION

— A SERVICE FOR THE CITY OF KCMO —

KCPP Animal Services Division Annual Report for 2023

Citations Issued / Enforcement / Criminal Deterrent Efforts

In 2023, the Animal Services Division issued **762** criminal citations for violations of the Kansas City Municipal Code of Ordinances. Citations are one of the many compliance-based tools that each Animal Services officer is trained to use to gain compliance for humane care and animal ordinance requirements. Animal Services Officers also issued **235** verbal warnings for violations and **76** official Notice to Correct Violation warning tickets to residents in 2023. Prior to the issuance of citations, verbal and/or written warnings for violations are presented by the officer, and citations are not submitted if compliance with animal ordinances are achieved within the given corrective action period.

State-Level Prosecution for Animal Cruelty/Animal Abuse

Our Animal Services Division takes a zero-tolerance stance to egregious acts of animal abuse and in 2023 worked with the Jackson County Prosecutor's Office and the Kansas City Police Department to create a referral process for state and felony-level animal cruelty cases. This unprecedented accomplishment resulted in **7 animal abuse/cruelty cases being submitted to the Jackson County Prosecutor's Office in 2023 for state-level prosecution**, ensuring we are holding perpetrators of animal abuse in our community accountable for their actions to the full extent of the law.

- ✓ In July, we announced class-E felony animal abuse charges and the arrest of a local man who intentionally hurt a bulldog named Rom. The dog had numerous injuries, including two broken legs, was bleeding from the mouth and face, and later died from his injuries. The man was also charged in a KCMO murder case that same week and was being held in jail without bond.
- ✓ We worked with the Jackson County Prosecutor's Office to file state-level animal cruelty charges in the case of Jolene, a dog who Animal Services Officers discovered in winter left inside a wire crate, frozen, and unresponsive. Our Animal Services Division successfully pursued felony level animal cruelty charges through the Jackson County Prosecutor's Office, and in April an arrest warrant was issued in this case.

Community Presence

Animal Services Officers maintained a fleet of 10 patrol vehicles equipped to perform animal control functions for the City of Kansas City. Our vehicles spent 7,566 hours out in the community and traveled **157,175** miles throughout Kansas City, MO, providing essential services to the people and pets in our community.

- ✓ We met with KCMO Chief of Police, Stacey Graves, along with KCPD liaison Captain Lionel Colon to discuss how to partner more effectively with KCPD on cruelty/abandonment cases, serving warrants, and officer safety concerns.
- ✓ Chief Ryan Johnson attended numerous neighborhood



association meetings throughout the year to meet with residents and offer solutions to animal-related concerns in their community.

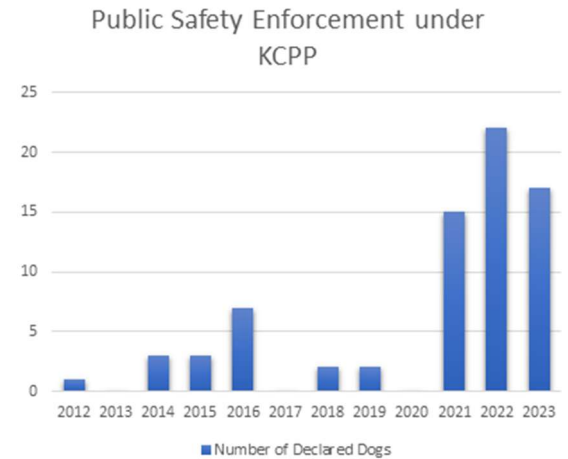
- ✓ Officers attended and/or hosted community events throughout the year, including the Kansas City Royal's Bark at the Park event, pet food donation drive-through events, and Project Pet Warmth to provide information, pet supplies, dog houses, and free pet ID tags. At the Kansas City Royal's Bark at the Park event at Kauffman Stadium, Chief Ryan Johnson was honored for his community service as the Buck O'Neil Legacy Seat recipient for the game.
- ✓ Animal Services Division officers received CPR training by the KCMO Fire Department and Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution Training for First Responders through the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, as well as a supply of Narcan and field resources from the University of Missouri-St. Louis. This certification provides lifesaving training and tools for our officers to recognize signs of opioid overdose when in the field.

Public Safety – Dangerous Dog Declarations

In 2023, KCPP's Animal Services Division continued to raise the bar for enhanced public safety through compliance with local dangerous and potentially dangerous dog ordinances.

Our Animal Services Division worked collaboratively with the City Prosecutor's office and representatives from the Thin Blue Line (TBL) citation system to add charging language for non-compliance citations to be issued when a person fails to comply with city ordinance provisions of owning a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog.

In 2023, eleven (11) citations were issued to owners for failing to comply with the mandatory ordinance requirements of owning a declared dangerous or potentially dangerous dog.



Through state-of-the-art GPS geofencing capabilities onboard all Animal Services vehicles, officers are alerted when they are near any address for a dog that has been registered as dangerous or potentially dangerous so compliance can be monitored year-round.

Animal Services Division – Total Case Activities for 2023

Officers worked **21,626** unique case activities -- composed of all calls from residents received through the 311 Call Center or direct calls to Animal Services dispatch team, online reports submitted via the website by residents, and the additional follow up activities required to resolve cases or ensure compliance.

- ✓ We saw a **2%** increase in the number of calls for service over 2022.
- ✓ We saw a **231%** increase in the number of animals that were abandoned and left behind by their owners in 2023.
- ✓ We saw a **51%** increase in the number of pets left behind due to evictions in 2023.



Animal Services Dispatch – Call Center Metrics for 2023

During the hours of 7 AM – 10 PM every day, our Dispatch Specialists handle all incoming calls from residents through the City’s 311 Call Center, direct calls to our Animal Services’ Dispatch Team, and our after-hours phone queue. (Dispatchers also receive reports from residents via email through our website). Each reported animal-related concern is documented by location, assigned based on priority, and logged by council district as well as zip code.

FY 2023	<u>Answered</u>	<u>Unanswered</u>	<u>Total Calls</u>	<u>Abandoned Rate %</u>
Dispatch INBOUND Performance	39,682	4,266	43,948	10%
Dispatch OUTBOUND Performance	9,918	2,934	12,852	N/A
Total Performance for 2023	49,600	7,200	56,800	

- ❖ Our Animal Services Dispatch team answered **39,682** live phone calls, completed **12,852** outbound calls, and resolved 2,639 voicemails.
- ❖ Our average wait time for calls to be answered through the 311 Call Center menu was **25.6 seconds** in 2023. Our Dispatch Team maintained an overall call abandonment rate of 10% across all hours of service.

Reasons for Animals Impounded by Officers in 2023

Animal Services Division Seizures/Impounds	2023	2022	% Change
Abandoned in Home/Yard	384	116	231%
Bite Quarantine	168	225	-25%
Cruelty/Neglect	46	53	-15%
Death of Owner	71	54	31%
Dead on Arrival	89	100	-11%
Evictions	89	59	51%
Injured	12	37	-68%
Left in Hot Car	7	11	-36%
Other Ordinance Violations	26	1	2500%
Medical Emergency	69	52	33%
Meet Police/MAST/Fire	9	41	-78%
Police Arrests	110	105	5%
Sick	6	10	-40%
Signed Over by Owner in Field	246	347	-29%
Stray/At Large	2,064	1,805	14%
Total Animals Impounded:	3,396	3,016	13%



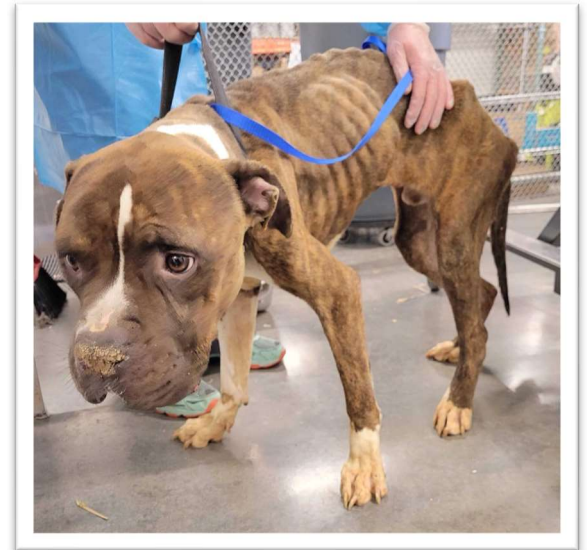
As our community continued to face economic challenges such as financial insecurity, lack of affordable housing and access to veterinary care, and rising costs associated with pet ownership, the Animal Services Division saw an overall increase of 13% in animal impoundments in 2023 – the largest number of animals impounded by officers since 2019.

Dog/Cat Bites Investigated in 2023

- ✓ **778** (57%) bites from dogs/cats occurred on their property or inside the home
- ✓ **479** (35%) bites from dogs/cats occurred off property, i.e., stray dogs at large
- ✓ 98 bites from dogs/cats were reported at businesses or were not classified

Interrupting the Cycle of Animal Abuse/Cruelty in Kansas City

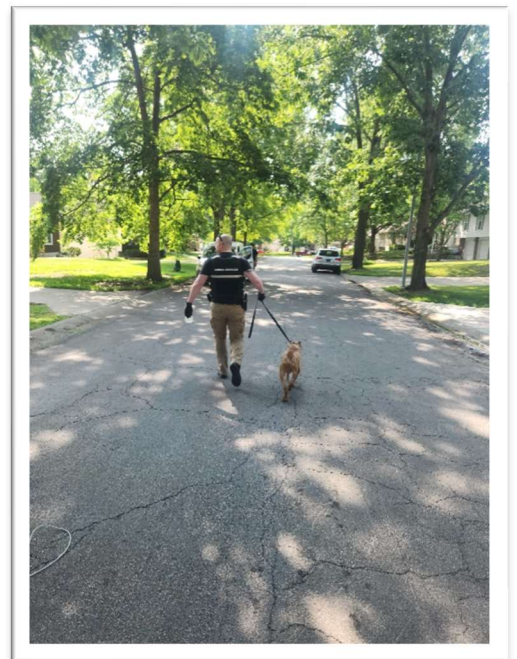
- ✓ In March, KC Pet Project's Animal Services Officers seized 14 dogs from a large-scale cruelty case at 11225 Crystal Avenue in KCMO. Animal Services executed a search warrant for the seizure of all the dogs on the property following a report of a critically ill dog at the home and the discovery of six (6) additional deceased dogs at the home.
- ✓ Officers attended the "Safer Together Missouri" training on domestic violence and animal cruelty hosted by the Missouri Alliance for Animal Legislation and joined the *Child and Animal Neglect/Abuse Coalition (CANA)* for the Kansas City Region.
- ✓ In 2023, our Animal Services Division continued our partnership with two domestic violence shelters, Synergy Services and Rose Brooks, to create **ICU (Identify-Connect-Unite)** a one-of-a-kind program designed to teach Animal Services officers to recognize the co-occurrence between animal cruelty and domestic violence in the community and make referrals for services.
- ✓ Chief Ryan Johnson gave a presentation on local animal cruelty data trends for attorneys at the Jackson County Prosecutor's Office in September.
- ✓ KCPP's Animal Services Division partnered with the Kansas City Police Department, and the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) in November to host a full day of training for law enforcement, humane investigators, animal control agencies, veterinarians, prosecutors, and judges on the topic of *Advanced Animal Cruelty Investigations and Evidence Collection*. Topics included warrants, 4th amendment issues, forensics and investigation techniques, interviewing suspects, preparing expert witnesses for trial, and evidence collection.



Notable Stories from the Field – Search Warrant Executed to Save Abused Dog

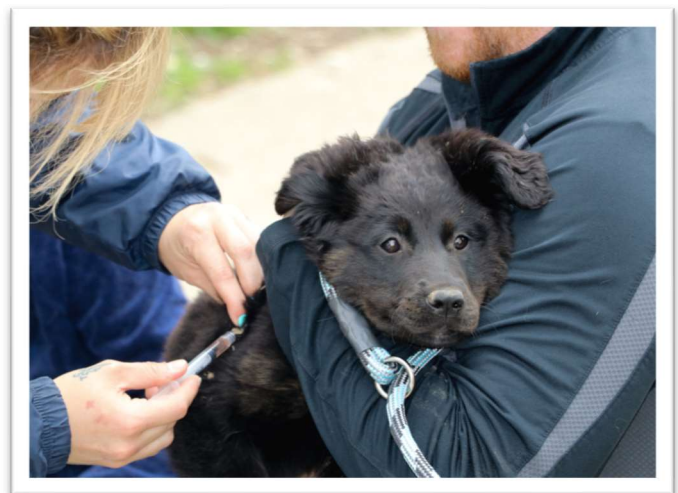
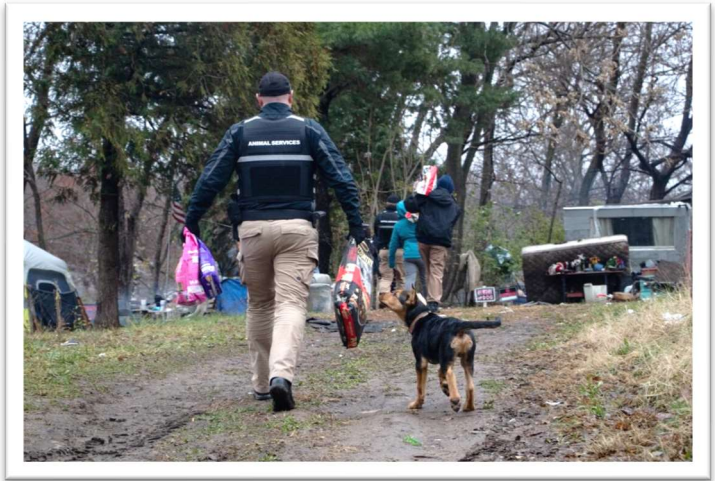
In June, Animal Services received an online report containing photographs of an emaciated dog being starved and concealed inside a residence. Animal Services Officers responded to the address and were met by an uncooperative owner who would not allow us to inspect the dog and would not offer any information for our investigation. Based on the photos we received, we determined that immediate intervention was necessary to prevent any additional suffering by this dog. Animal Services quickly submitted an **affidavit of probable cause** to the City Prosecutor's office in conjunction with a request for a **search warrant**. The warrant was quickly approved, and we began completing our critical incident planning, including collaborating with the KC Police Department, for the execution of the warrant.

When Animal Services Officers served the warrant, the owner was uncooperative, presented a safety risk to the team, and we left the scene. The following day, our officers returned to seize the dog, but when the dog owner spotted our officers, he turned the emaciated dog loose from a side door. The dog was quickly impounded and taken to KCPP for medical treatment. Charges were issued for animal cruelty, failure to license, and having a dog at large.

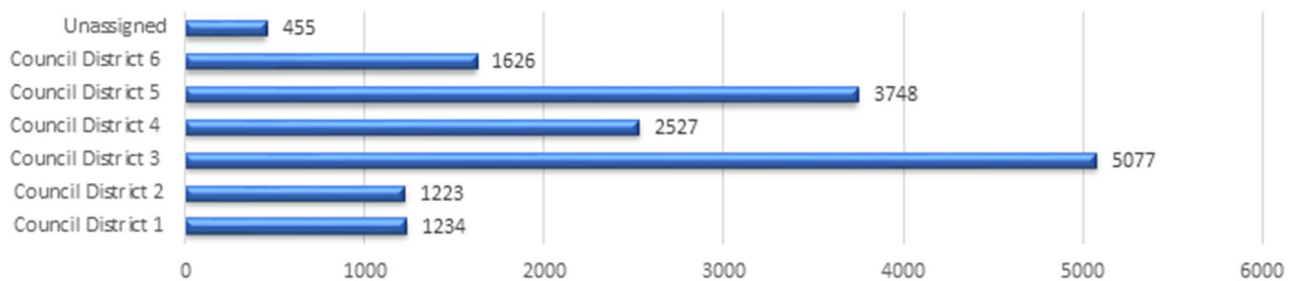


Media Coverage/Public Education/Community Engagement Highlights in 2023

- ✓ Field Services Manager Anna Redford was featured in a local Fox 4 news story, “KC Animal Services Searching for Pets in Distress During Heat Wave.” News Reporter Sean McDowell did a ride along to see firsthand how our division is working to interrupt the cycle of heat-related neglect cases in Kansas City, MO.
- ✓ In June, Chief Ryan Johnson was accompanied in the field by a KMBC 9 reporter for a story which highlighted the shelter’s capacity crisis and the role Animal Services plays in reducing unnecessary impoundments.
- ✓ Chief Ryan Johnson gave an interview in July during a ride-along with a KSHB 41 reporter as they ran calls for dogs left in extreme high temperatures. The news story highlighted how our officers work to make connections and build trust with residents to find solutions to animal-related issues.
- ✓ We shared pet safety awareness campaigns throughout the year addressing extreme temperatures, fireworks, and the importance of pet ID tags.
- ✓ Officers provided pet foods and critical pet supplies to thousands of residents in need across our community, including resource deliveries to several large houseless camps in Kansas City. Staff from our Vet Clinic provided free vaccinations and microchips for pets living in the camps.



Total Number of Animal Services Cases by City Council District for 2023



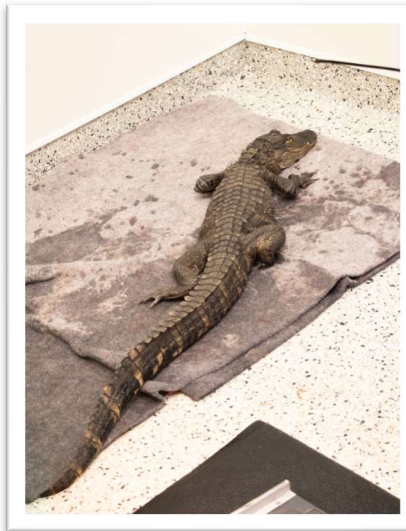
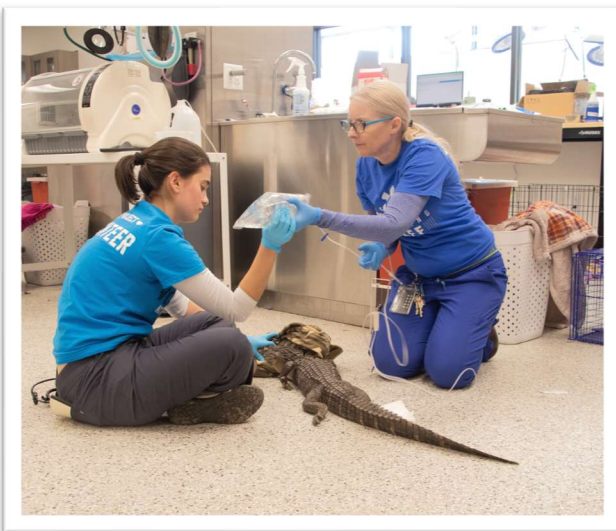
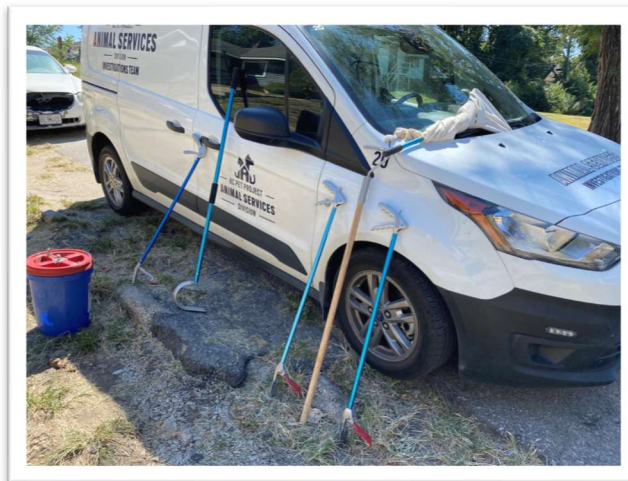
	Council District 1	Council District 2	Council District 3	Council District 4	Council District 5	Council District 6	Unassigned
Cases	1234	1223	5077	2527	3748	1626	455

Notable Stories From the Field – A House Full of Venomous Snakes and an Alligator

In September, Animal Services Officers conducted a joint investigation with MO Conservation Department agents into the illegal and prohibited ownership of venomous snakes by a KCMO resident. At the end of a street sat a house like every other house on the block. However, the inside of this residence was something out of a nightmare. This house contained many exotic and very dangerous snakes.

Inside the home, Animal Services Officers discovered several species of Rattlesnakes, Copperheads, Spitting Cobras, and an 18-foot-long Python.

Not only is it a violation to own such snakes in Kansas City, but it is also highly dangerous for all occupants and visitors to the home. The owner was charged with multiple ordinance violations and was scheduled to appear before the Municipal Court in November. However, officers were called back to the home in late October when it was reported that a large alligator was being kept inside the detached garage. Officers captured the alligator and transported it to our shelter's veterinary clinic for medical treatment.



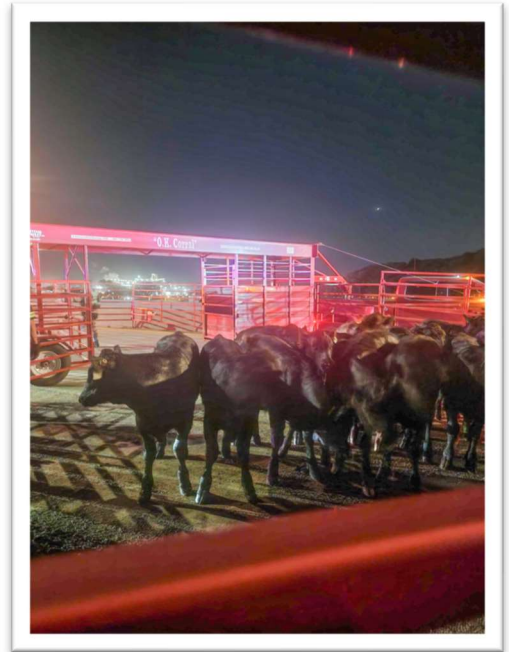
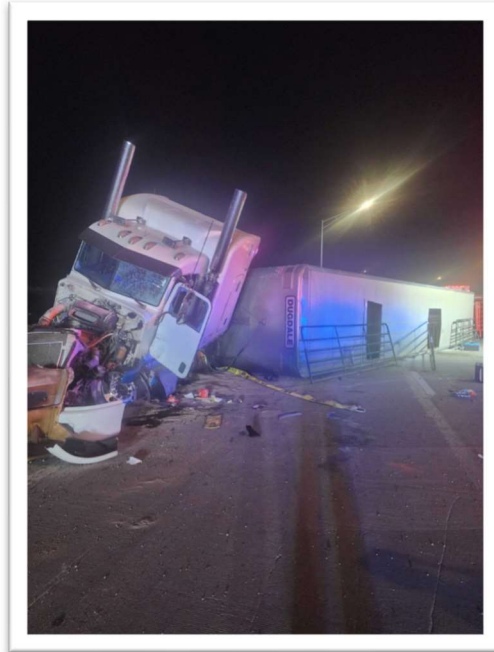
Disaster Response / Emergency Planning Readiness in 2023

- ✓ Chief Ryan Johnson attended a disaster planning workshop in September focused on managing a potential manmade or natural disaster in the Kansas City metro area.
- ✓ Animal Services leadership team participated in a mock disaster event in October hosted by KCMO city officials involving 250 first responders and emergency disaster planners to identify opportunities for better collaboration if a natural disaster were to occur in Kansas City.
- ✓ Animal Services and KCPP leadership met with KCMO's Office of Emergency Management to update the City's Emergency Pet Sheltering Plan and discussed the role Animal Services plays helping residents with pets in a disaster.
- ✓ All Animal Services officers complete Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) training to learn the incident command system used by first responders in disaster and emergency situations, including ICS-100, ICS-200, ICS-700, and managers complete ICS-800.

Stories From the Field – Officers Respond to Overturned Cattle Truck Disaster on the Bond Bridge

On September 28th at 3:30 AM, our Animal Services Division responded to a call to assist other first responder agencies with an overturned cattle truck on the Christopher Bond Bridge.

Eighty (80) traumatized and injured cows were inside the semi's trailer – one was deceased upon arrival and several others had to be euthanized due to their injuries. Cows were evacuated from the lower level of the trailer and a large hole was cut out of the roof to allow the remaining cattle to be removed. The cows were eventually loaded back into another trailer. Our officers work 24 hours a day and operate in a state of readiness to respond to whatever emergency may come their way day or night.



A Message from the Chief of Animal Services, Ryan Johnson

The unification of Animal Services and sheltering services under one organization has streamlined processes to help more residents and brought a higher level of public safety, community engagement, enhanced collaboration, and improved animal welfare that benefits both animals and our community as a whole. This has been one of the hardest years yet for pets and people in Kansas City, and we commend our Animal Services Officers, shelter staff, local outreach groups, and our law enforcement partners for doing this physically and emotionally challenging work to achieve a greater impact for our community.

Public safety remains our top priority, along with enforcing humane standards of care for pets in Kansas City. I am honored to have been **elected to serve a 3-year term on the National Animal Care & Control Association (NACA) board of directors** and I am so proud to see our division in Kansas City already emerging as nationally recognized leaders in this field.

Submitted by,

Teresa Johnson

Teresa Johnson, President/CEO & Chief Lifesaving Officer, KC Pet Project

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan Johnson".

Ryan Johnson, Chief of Animal Services, KC Pet Project