

Animal Control Van Set Ablaze

Burning animal control van comes days after New York town mandates death for dogs who attack people.

Just days after the Troy, N.Y. City Council boosted the penalties against the owners of dogs who attack humans, a brand-new van used by the city's animal control officer was torched while it sat outside his home Sunday morning.

According to Troy police, a rag had been stuffed in the 2006 Chevy Express van's gas tank then set ablaze around 4 a.m. However, damage to the van was limited and no one was injured, according to Animal Control Officer Kevin McDonough.

On Thursday, May 4, the City Council toughened Troy's 2002 dangerous-dog law, mandating the euthanization of dogs who attack people or pets and among other things, forcing their owners to pay the victims' medical and veterinary bills.

The change removed a judge's discretion and requires that a dog be killed the first time a person or pet is attacked. An owner convicted of harboring a dangerous dog would be barred from owning or possessing another dog unless the police chief or city animal control officer approve.

As of Monday, there was no evidence to link the vandalism to the new law, according to authorities. McDonough stopped short of blaming anyone specifically for the arson, but said he found it strange that no other vehicles on his block were damaged.

An unusually large number of attacks so far this year is what prompted the council to toughen the dangerous dog law. The most recent incident was when a 13-year-old boy was repeatedly bitten by an American Bulldog.

In the last two months, a total of nine dogs, mostly pit bull-type dogs, have been put down after they were seized by Troy officials after attacks. Overall, McDonough estimated there have been about a dozen dog attacks in the city since February.

There were about 10 attacks all last year, he said.

McDonough said the city might look to neighboring cities for help while its van is out of commission, or possibly fit another vehicle to hold the cages.

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