

Illinois Implements Pet Reclamation Fee

A fee to reclaim runaway pets may prompt owners to leave them in shelters, some animal control officials say.

Illinois shelters will begin charging pet owners a \$25 fee to reclaim runaway dogs or cats, effective Jan. 1, 2006, reports The Register-Mail (Galesburg, Ill.).

The fee is part of animal control legislation approved by the state in 2005. Fees collected will fund spay and neuter services for pets from low-income households, The Register-Mail reports.

While animal-control officials like the idea of funding spays and neuters, some think the fee may discourage owners from reclaiming their pets.

Over here, we have a real problem with people claiming their dogs, period, Robbin Sage, the city's public service officer, tells the paper. I definitely think the euthanasia count would go up [with the introduction of the fee].

John Kennedy, a Knox County Sheriffs Department animal control officer, says the best solution is for owners to take all precautions to avoid losing their pets in the first place. This means keeping animals properly contained, he says; keep dogs on a leash and in fenced yards.

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