

Cat owners urged to keep pets safe

CAT owners in the south-eastern corner of Feilding are being advised to keep their pets indoors at night after the deaths of five felines from dog attacks in the past two weeks.

Manawatu District animal control officer, Lesley Butler, said the spate of attacks started in late January when an East Street owner spotted her cat being mauled by two brown-coloured dogs, one bigger than the other, in the early hours of the morning.

A few days later a second cat was killed in Denbigh Street and then three more deaths, in Owen and Harris Streets, were reported on Monday. A sixth cat was also found dead on its property in Monkton Street.

All the animals had died of wounds consistent with dog bites and DNA samples had been taken from the bodies.

Ms Butler said there had only been the one sighting of the dogs possibly responsible and animal control officers had "little to go on" at this stage. Extra patrols are planned and a door-knocking programme is to be undertaken to check out dogs in the area.

Any person who spots roaming dogs at night are being asked to immediately contact the Manawatu District Council on 323-0000 and dog owners are urged to check the whereabouts of their animals each night.

"We are taking this very seriously," said Ms Butler. "There are some distraught owners out there who have lost their loved pets in the most horrible way."

She said it would be surprising if the dogs responsible were not bitten or scratched around their muzzle and these would become swollen as a cat's claws and teeth were full of bacteria.

"And I would be surprised if dog owners do not become aware of such injuries," she said.

Economy must build confidence

THE council year is now well underway and in the past week meetings have been held dealing with the strategic roading network report jointly commissioned by Land Transport NZ and the Horizons Regional, Palmerston North City and Manawatu District Councils. This report will be finalised in April and we can be reasonably confident that it will give us a clear pathway to follow in the next 20 years.

Vision Manawatu ran another of its quarterly economic report forums, this one featuring health, and some quite staggering statistics were evident. The sector has a total budget well in excess of \$500 million and employs 14 percent of the region's workforce.

The previous quarterly forum featured education and similar figures were talked about, so it can be seen that these two sectors are extremely significant to us. Add defence and agriculture and one can easily understand the makeup of our economy, as they all require a great deal of servicing.

Manawatu's regional economy needs to build the confidence of our community in order to show the rest of the country and the world what a wonderful place this is to live and work. To achieve this we are going to have to revisit our Regional Economic Strategy and give it some real teeth and leadership – and this leadership must be driven by our three incumbent councils.

Other important issues facing council now include the Himatangi Beach sewerage scheme, with a preliminary meeting to be held this Saturday to outline council's progress. The scheme's costs have halved, as it attracted a 50 percent subsidy, and council plans to outline one or two other initiatives to make the proposal more palatable for the community.

We also have an 80 percent subsidy in place for the Rongotea water scheme and intend having one more meeting on this before going to a referendum. These are great opportunities for the communities and council feels that it would be positive for both if they were to proceed.

One last thing: Great charity bike ride from Whanganui to Palmerston North on Sunday and everyone interested should get prepared for the Mayoral Cycle Challenge at Timona Park, Feilding, on Sunday, February 28.



MAYORAL COMMENT
by Ian McKelvie

Flood system to be explained



INFORMATION on the workings of a major flood protection system (pictured) on the northern outskirts of Feilding will be available at a combined Armed and Emergency Services Open Day at Manfield Park on Saturday, February 20.

Manawatu and Horowhenua Districts' Emergency Management Officer, Ross Brannigan, said there were some misconceptions in the community on the operational detail surrounding the two sluice gates in the bed of the Makino Stream, upstream of Reid Line.

"After heavy rainfall in late October caused streams to come right up we had a number of calls as to why the gates weren't closed to divert the Makino into the floodway," said Mr Brannigan, "and the reason is they will only be used in extreme circumstances, such as the 2004 flood event."

He said the open day provided an opportunity for people to be informed of how the system worked.

The family-orientated event from 9am to 3pm (gold coin donation) has been organised by Feilding Police and involves a variety of displays and activities from the Army, Air Force, Navy, Civil Defence, Coastguard and Ambulance and Fire Services.

"There should be a lot of things that will interest the public and encourage their involvement in this activity," said Mr Brannigan.

- Bulk refuse collections -

BULK refuse collections will be held at Waituna West on Saturday, February 13, and at Pohangina on Saturday, February 20. The collections will be carried out at the former skip bin sites between 9am and 11am. Normal waste disposal fees apply.

Public responds to customer survey

MANAWATU District Council was overwhelmed by the amount of public feedback to a customer service survey conducted in the district over the past few weeks.

The survey, containing a number of council-focused questions, will help council develop a new customer service strategy.

Customer Services and Democracy Manager, Janine Hawthorn, said much of the feedback stemmed from five specific questions that carried agree/disagree options and sought clarification if the respondent felt council's delivery of service could be further improved.

Mrs Hawthorn said one of the questions that drew the biggest response centred on council making people feel their issue was important and it was pleasing that there was a resounding number of "agrees" in that area.

"It also came through very clearly that people wanted to be communicated with and wanted to know what was happening," said Mrs Hawthorn, "and that the website and the weekly Bulletin page in the Feilding Herald were good ways of conveying that information."

She believed the feedback received had given council the grounding to be able to build the strategy.

Council would now analyse the survey results and hoped to have the new customer service strategy adopted by the end of May.




Council and Committee Meetings


Under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, notice is given that the following meetings are scheduled for March:

Tuesday, March 2
10.30am Community Wellbeing Subcommittee

Thursday, March 18
8.30am Council. Public forum prior to meeting available – contact Customer Services and Democracy Manager for arrangements
8.45am Strategic Planning and Policy Committee

Unless specified, the above meetings will be held in the District Council Building, 135 Manchester Street, Feilding, and are open to the public.

Lorraine Vincent
Chief Executive



Artistically Creative
Need Financial Help?
Creative Communities Scheme

Applications for the above are now being called for.

Applications for arts and culture purposes only can be made by groups or individuals within the MDC area.

Application forms and further information are available from:

Manawatu District Council
Private Bag 10-001
Feilding 4743
Telephone: (06) 323-0000

Manawatu District creative COMMUNITIES nz

Applications close 4pm, Friday, March 26, 2010

