BURKECOUNTY

Animal Services Departmental Update

BURKECOUNTY



FOCUS AREA 1: COMMUNITY ADVANCEMENT

To invest in cultural capital and advancement strategies that promote participative governance that elevates a community to live, work and play – while also positioning Burke County as a community of choice.



FOCUS AREA 2: ECONOMIC GROWTH & SUSTAINMENT

Promotion of Burke County as a business and economic center in the region through recruitment of new industry, creating a healthy business climate for existing businesses.



FOCUS AREA 3: PUBLIC SAFETY& WELL BEING

To ensure the safety of our residents through efficient and effective public safety agencies.



FOCUS AREA 4: FISCAL STEWARDSHIP

Pursuit of the high-performing organization model that ensures high quality, transparent and efficient use of public resources.



FOCUS AREA 5: EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

To promote a professional value-based employee centric workplace that promotes innovation, performance, and integrity, and differentiation.

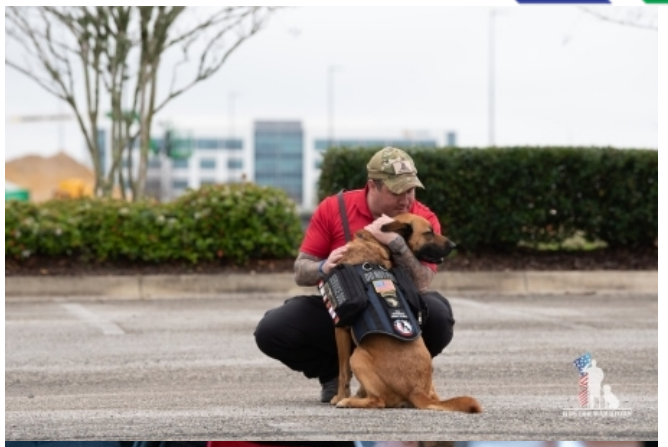
Why do we do what we do?



Our mission aligns directly with Burke County's vision of *improving lives in Burke County.*

Every program we offer — from reuniting lost pets and providing community resources, to supporting responsible ownership and public safety — strengthens the connection between people and animals.

By focusing on compassion, collaboration, and responsible stewardship, we're not just serving animals — we're improving the lives of the people who love them and the communities they live in.





Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

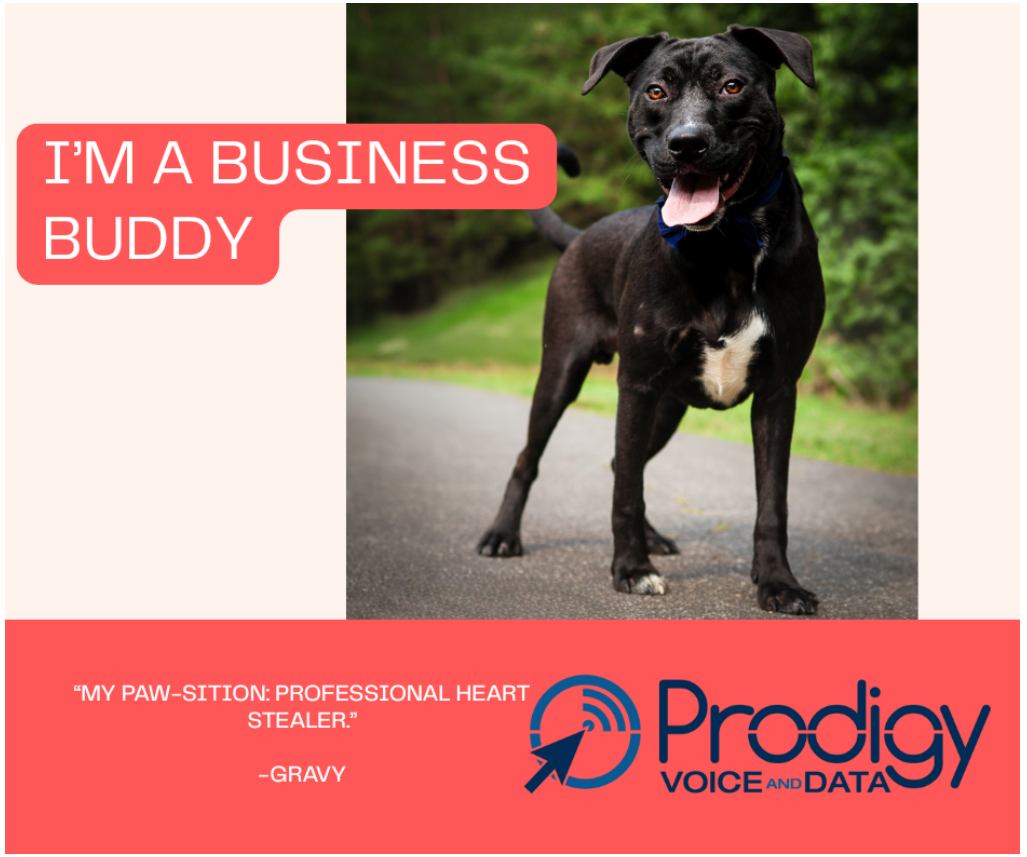
1. Field Return to owner (RTO)
   - Ability of animal control to mitigate shelter population
2. Community Support Service Utilization
   - Ability to reduce shelter intake through support services
3. Average Length of Stay
   - Shelter thruput and overall efficiency
4. Door Count
   - Community interest and support to meet departmental goals

Highlights and Accomplishments

- Business Buddies
- Community Outreach and Field Support
- Reunification Efforts

Business Buddies

- Reason for Implementation: Gap analysis performed for animals experiencing longer average length of stay and found that our large dogs (over 50#) were sitting longer than others.
- Strong participation from local businesses which resulted in new community partnerships and visibility. The business with the most adoptions received a brick at the new animal shelter.
- We adopted 12 long term residents during the month of September. We are actively recruiting for our next month-long competition.



Community Outreach and Field Support



•Worked proactively with several properties to address large groups of dogs and cats through outreach and support (vaccines, resources, spay/neuter).

•We have been piloting since September and so far, we have assisted 8 families and 108 animals.

•Focused on solutions that prevent intake rather than enforcement-only approaches.

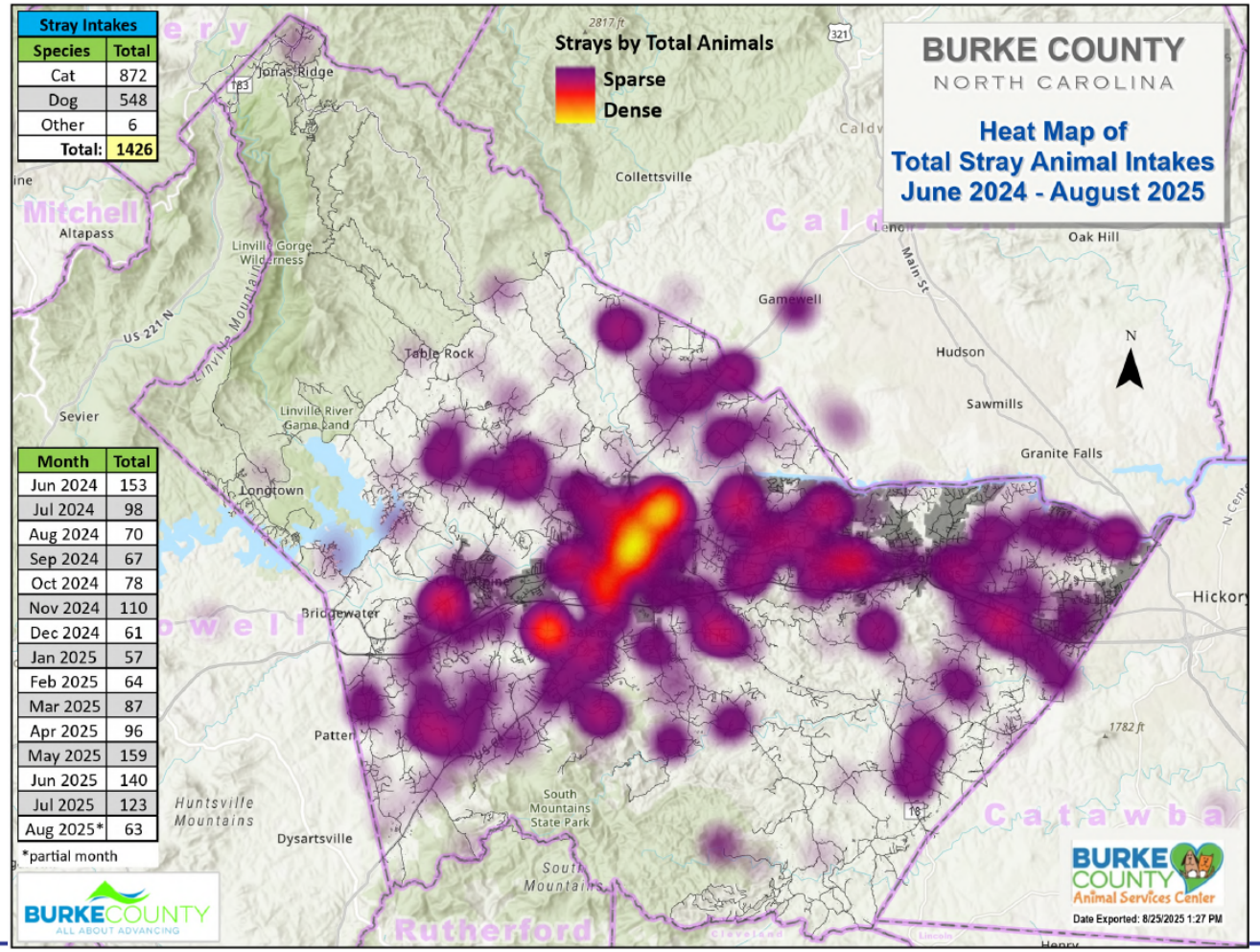
•Provided food, supplies, and education to help families keep pets safely at home.

BURKECOUNTY

Stray Intakes	
Species	Total
Cat	872
Dog	548
Other	6
Total:	1426

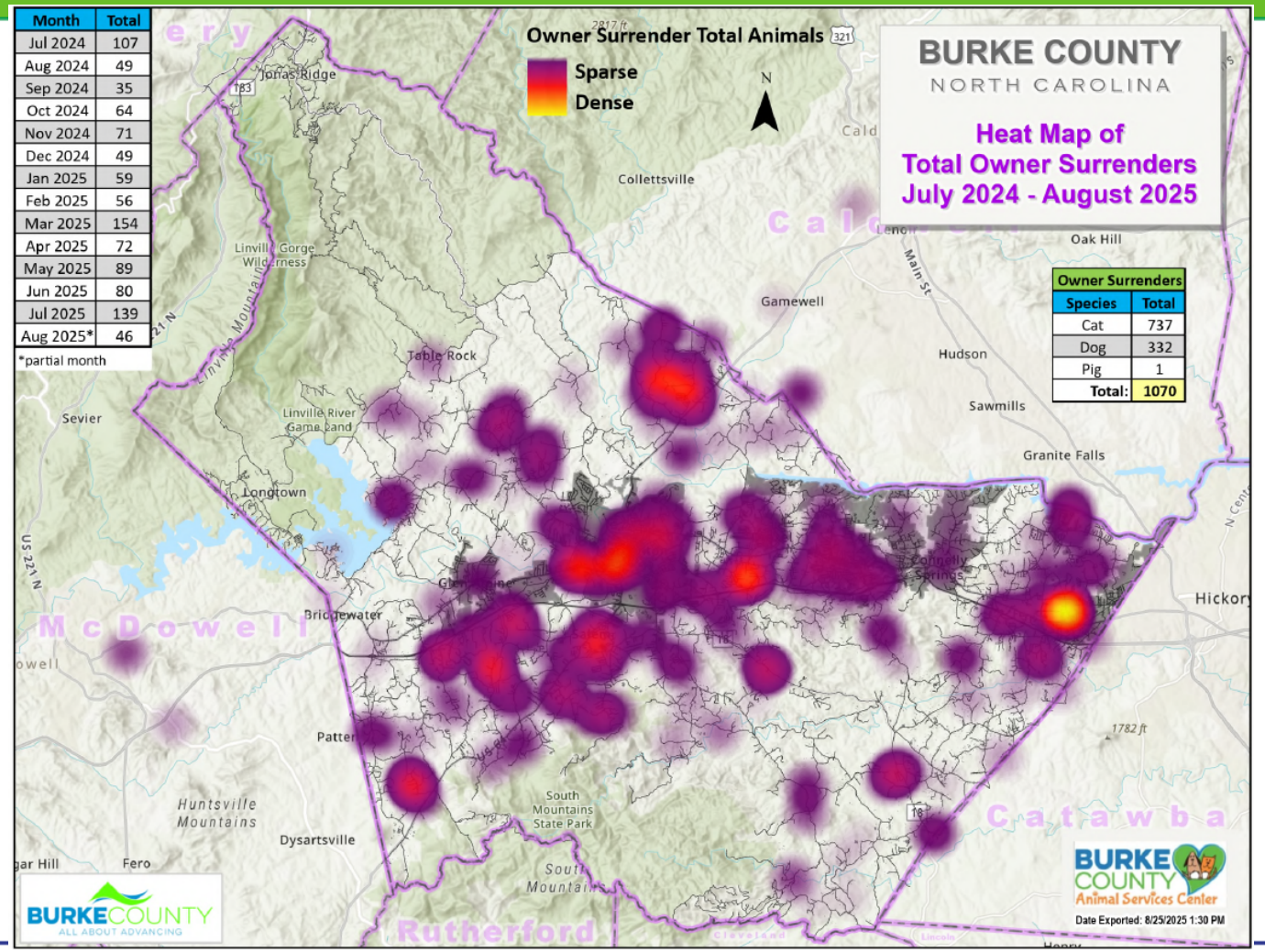
Month	Total
Jun 2024	153
Jul 2024	98
Aug 2024	70
Sep 2024	67
Oct 2024	78
Nov 2024	110
Dec 2024	61
Jan 2025	57
Feb 2025	64
Mar 2025	87
Apr 2025	96
May 2025	159
Jun 2025	140
Jul 2025	123
Aug 2025*	63

*partial month

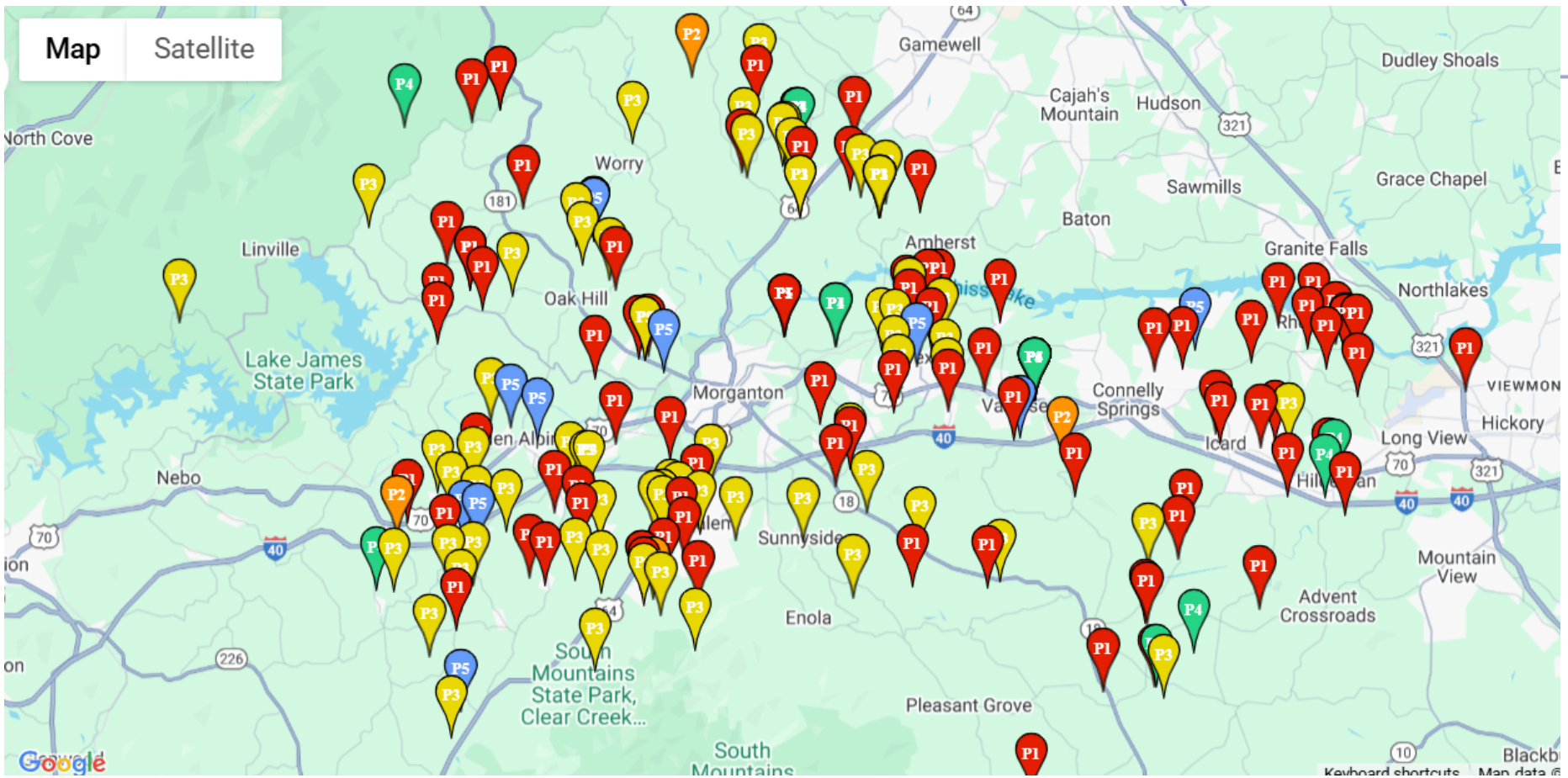


Month	Total
Jul 2024	107
Aug 2024	49
Sep 2024	35
Oct 2024	64
Nov 2024	71
Dec 2024	49
Jan 2025	59
Feb 2025	56
Mar 2025	154
Apr 2025	72
May 2025	89
Jun 2025	80
Jul 2025	139
Aug 2025*	46

*partial month



Animal Enforcement Mapping



Reunification Efforts

- Continued success with “Free Ride Home” and “Finder to Foster” programs.
- Increased Return-to-Owner rate by __% (if you have that number).
- Data analysis shows that we have the highest return to owner rate back to the City of Morganton.
- We will be installing a microchip scanning station and host a free microchip clinic to keep these animals out of the shelter.
- We are also working with GIS on an interactive citizen lost/found pet map.
- Reduced shelter crowding and stress for both staff and animals.



New Shelter Training and Transition Plan

- **Training today for the shelter of tomorrow.**
- Implementing new practices and procedures now to ensure a smooth “day one” in the new facility.
- Finalizing equipment and supply needs to fully support operations on opening day.

- **Cross-training staff** across all divisions for flexibility and consistency.

- **Leadership development** to prepare future supervisors and team leads.

- **Operational readiness:** refining SOPs, emergency procedures, and customer service standards.

- **Change management:** involving staff in the planning process to promote buy-in and confidence.

Photos of Shelter***

Current Challenges

- **Facility constraints** creating space challenges and not serving current operations most efficiently.
- **Veterinary care capacity** — difficulty recruiting veterinary staff.
- **Increased community need** for outreach and support with limited resources.
- **Managing large-scale intakes** while maintaining animal flow and quality of care.
- **Balancing enforcement and education** in complex community situations. We focus on long-term solutions for compliance.
- **Preparing for new facility operations and processes** while maintaining current service levels.

Call to Action

It takes a community to care.
Join us in keeping Burke County's pets — and people — safe, healthy, and loved.

