

# **WHITFIELD COUNTY USING GRANT FUNDS TO OFFER \$20 STERILIZATIONS FOR DOGS, CATS**

Whitfield County residents can have their dog or cat sterilized at a reduced cost of \$20, thanks to a \$3,000 grant recently awarded to the Whitfield County Animal Shelter.

The grant, issued by the Georgia Department of Agriculture, is part of \$711,000 awarded statewide from the sale of special Dog and Cat Sterilization License Plates and other sources.

"Often local communities have citizens that are burdened by the high costs of having their pets spayed or neutered," Agriculture Commissioner Gary W. Black said. "This grant will target and aid these communities across Georgia by keeping strays off the street and controlling the animal population in a humane manner."

Pet owners will be required to show proof of Whitfield County residency and must call Diane Franklin at the Animal Shelter at 706-278-2018 to register.

Due to the limited nature of the funding, officials are asking owners who can afford to pay the entire cost of spaying or neutering their pets to voluntarily refrain from taking part so that more animals can be sterilized.

Dr. Robyn O'Kane of My Kids Have Paws Veterinary Clinic secured the grant for Whitfield County, one of 97 state licensed animal shelters and animal rescue organizations in Georgia that will receive the funding.

This fifth set of grants to be issued in Georgia through the Dog and Cat Sterilization Program is funded by the purchase of the Dog and Cat Sterilization Auto Tag, income tax check-off, and direct contributions to the program. Since the inception of the program, the Dog and Cat Sterilization Program has been used to sexually alter more than 100,000 companion animals.