



Bryant Animal Control & Adoption Center
25700 Interstate 30 North, Bryant, Arkansas 72022

My Fellow NACA Members,

My name is Tricia Power and I am the Director of Bryant Animal Control & Adoption Center located in Bryant, Arkansas.

In my nearly 30 years as an Animal Control Officer, I have worked for 3 different agencies, and graduated from the police academy. I have also worked for a non-profit shelter, and currently volunteer with the local humane society's low-cost spay-neuter clinic as well as foster & socialize feral kittens.

Additionally, I serve as the Secretary of the Arkansas State Animal Control Association. I have presented courses at Animal Care Expo, and have also written articles published in City and Town Magazine, as well as the NACA News.

Although I am the leader of my department, I am also an ACO. As I write this, I have already been pooped on this morning, and carry pet hair on my uniform. I am working in the trenches, I have seen and experienced what you have seen, and believe that I understand your unique perspective.

When I began this journey as a young ACO in the early 90's, I had no idea that I would meet so many incredible, passionate, hard-working people. I have colleagues that I now call friends all over the country, and I have visited animal shelters, both large and small, across the United States and around the world which have all influenced my professional viewpoint.

J. Richard Clarke said, "Seek first to understand before being understood." It is a statement that has long been my personal philosophy, and in my current position, I have met many people who are fighting overwhelming odds in animal welfare here in the Southern United States.

When I first came to this region from the western U.S. where I grew up, I believed that I would encounter ignorant, uncaring people who viewed animals as nothing more than a commodity. What I found instead was a proud, conservative people who believe strongly in tradition, and don't like big government, and don't want to be forced into compliance. The populous does truly care about animals, and there are a large group of amazing, professional, but underfunded animal control officers and animal welfare advocates who are working for change. The social injustices that occupy the Southern US are enormous, with many rural communities which suffer from economic hardships, and thus, animal welfare tends to get pushed behind the needs of children and the elderly of these communities.

These are very small, 1 and 2 man operations. The ACOs there are overworked and underpaid. Some of them don't even get a real day off for months at a time and yet, they persevere.

Jay Sabatucci when he was with the Humane Society of the United States called my organization, "A small shelter doing big things." And in this region of the country, you could say the same thing about a lot of these shelters. Here, where the climate is warm and wet, dogs can have 2-3 litters of pups a year, and cats can have more than that! This, along with an overabundance of mosquitos which carry heartworm, has made our jobs terribly difficult. Many of these ACOs are suffering from a lack of training, not because they don't want it, but because they simply can't afford it. I hope to change that.

Myself, I am incredibly blessed, while I work in a small agency, taking in less than 1500 animals annually, I have a real shelter and an amazing community with support both from our citizens and our local leaders. But not all of my Southern colleagues are as lucky as I. I know some animal control agencies with a shelter that have an operating budget of less than \$10,000 a year, (I pay more than that in electricity!) and are still working out of chain-link outdoor kennels, and in a storage building that has been converted to office space.

This is why I have decided to ask for your vote to serve on the National Animal Control Association's board of directors. I feel that the hardworking men and women of our profession who work in these small, underserved communities, have not always been well-represented on a national level. I want to bring their voices to the forefront, and help them in any way that I can improve conditions both for the officers themselves and the shelters. Those of us in the smaller shelters understand our role in the ongoing process of improving the lives of animals not only in our neighborhoods, but beyond them.

I hope you will support me with your vote.

Thank you,

Tricia Power