



## Cats flood Humane Society

**By Robb Murray**  
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— Cedric was one of the lucky ones. A black cat with tons of personality, Cedric was adopted by college student Emily Fiske.

He'd been at the animal shelter since he was a kitten. Finally, a week ago, he got a home.

"I live alone," Fiske said. "It was really nice to have a kitty jump on me after work."

But like we said, Cedric was one of the lucky ones. The Blue Earth Nicollet County Humane Society is seeing a dramatic upsurge in the number of cats needing shelter. And at this point, there are a lot more Cedrics than there are Emilys.

"We're overflowing with cats. It's scary," said Katherine Nelson of BENCHS. "It seems like this year is worse than others. More people are surrendering cats, more people are not having the money to (get them spayed or neutered). Adoptions are slower this year, too."

The shelter has five litters of kittens, only two of which are at the shelter now. The others are either too young, and there's not room for them there, anyway. Beyond that, the shelter has eight pregnant cats in foster care.

As for dogs, Nelson said their numbers remain normal. But over in Brown County, the situation is reversed. Mike Diercks, of the Brown County Humane Society, said right now their cat numbers are down, but dog numbers are up. The shelter is set up to house nine dogs, but has 11. They've had as many as 15.

"We're finding a lot more strays, too," Diercks said.

Both Nelson and Diercks say the economy is probably contributing to their respective problems. Because having a dog or cat costs money — food, veterinarian care, replacement of chewed-up shoes, etc. — Nelson said people may be forgoing a spaying or neutering. They also may be surrendering animals, whether it be dropping it off at the shelter or on a gravel road out in the country.

Ken Ambrose, a veterinarian at Minnesota Valley Pet Hospital, said he has not seen fewer cats at the clinic for spaying or neutering.

Even if people were considering not getting their pet fixed, Ambrose said the costs associated with that can be steeper than the \$75 to \$100 spaying or neutering.

Fixing a pet also makes sense for the pet's health. In females, spaying "zeroes out" chances of ovarian and uterine cancer. It also eliminates the hassle associated with the female cat being in "heat." In males, neutering can eliminate irritating male-associated behaviors such as marking and humping, Ambrose said.

"There are already so many homeless cats in the world," Nelson said. "If we keep having more kittens, we will never find enough homes. A responsible pet owner should have their cat fixed. It will keep the cat from roaming and reduce the chances of being infected by deadly diseases like feline AIDS or feline leukemia."

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Photos



This litter of kittens was found somewhere in Mankato and brought to the impound. There are several litters and more to come for the Blue Earth Nicollet County Humane Society. John Cross



Emily Fiske adopted Cedric recently. She says it's nice to have someone greet her when she comes home. John Cross