

New East Texas spay/neuter clinic

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- [Dallas Pet Laws Examiner](#)

In late-2010, East Texas had the unfortunate distinction of being home to several serious [dog attacks making the news](#). In one fatal mauling of a two year-old boy, the dog owners were either [hoarders or well-intentioned rescuers](#) without the means to care for the 40-something dogs in their care.

When the status is known, in virtually every fatal or serious attack, the dog is not spayed or neutered. I don't believe that intact status is the sole reason for serious dog attacks. After all, show dogs and working dogs are intact, and I have never heard of a show or working dog mauling or killing anyone.

Since spaying and neutering can both eliminate possessiveness over a mate or puppies and the overcrowded conditions we sometimes see in serious dog (and cat) bites, spaying and neutering should be part of our toolbox to make children safer with pets. Mandatory spay/neuter is often proposed as a solution, but this has been shown to actually increase euthanasia rates. Karen Delise and [Brent Toellner](#) have both written extensively about this subject (for a short .pdf file about the right way to do spay/neuter, see: National Canine Research Council: [Cooperation, Education and Compassion, not Compulsion](#)).



Sundance was rescued from an animal cruelty case and is available for adoption at St. Francis Rescue.

A mandatory spay/neuter bill will surely come before the Texas Legislature this year, as it did in 2009. So, consider the consequences for non-compliance. Fining people who can't afford to alter their pets will just get the pet three days room and board at the shelter followed by a trip to a Dumpster. It's nice to imagine that these animals will be altered and re-homed, but there are no lines of people waiting to adopt adult, large-breed dogs and adult cats, especially in lower-income areas where spay/neuter rates are lowest.

Enter the solution: Low-cost voluntary spay and neuter. In Dallas, free or reduced-cost spay/neuter is widely available to low-income families through the City of Dallas (free for many) and the [Metroplex Animal Coalition](#). However, in rural communities, where headline-making attacks often occur in Texas, free or low-cost spay/neuter services are difficult to find.

A new East Texas clinic can serve as a model for other rural communities. It's a cooperative effort by the [Humane Society of Nacogdoches County](#) and the City of Nacogdoches (read more about it in the [Daily Sentinel](#)). The clinic has done a lot with very little, using a training room and trained volunteers working with a veterinarian to alter pets for free or a reduced-cost, depending on income level. "The rescue community is so thankful for the commitment of Dr. Wendy Blount, the veterinarian who performs the surgeries and also trained the volunteers," said Ann Doyle Anderson, from St. Francis Rescue in Nacogdoches.

In addition, [St. Francis Rescue](#), which specializes in pit bulls, will cover 80% of the out-of-pocket costs for eligible clients, allowing owners to neuter a pit bull for as little as \$8.

The program is open only to Nacogdoches County residents, and something like it is badly needed all over East Texas and other rural communities.

More low-cost services available in East Texas are:

- The [Kaufman County Animal Awareness Project](#), a low cost spay-neuter clinic, offers [shuttle service](#) to and from Mesquite, Canton, Waxahachie, Garland, Mineola, Tyler and more. This transportation aspect is important, because people in rural areas may be forced to take hours off from work and travel long distances to find a clinic.
- APET ([Animal Preservation of East Texas](#)) SPCA has a clinic in Winnsboro offering low cost spays and neuters with additional financial assistance available for those in need.

With so many wealthy Texans owning hunting leases or hobby ranches in East Texas, surely some dog lovers with means could fund more worthwhile efforts like these.