



# No-kill advocate encouraged by shelter

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VALPARAISO | Nathan Winograd pointed out the steady flow of visitors Saturday morning as he strolled through the Porter County Animal Shelter.

The author and no-kill shelter advocate said the large number of visitors is one of several encouraging signs for the publicly owned shelter as it undergoes some turbulent changes in staff and direction.

"I think the people of this county should be proud," Winograd said.

While admittedly in favor of the effort to reduce the need to euthanize cats and dogs at the shelter, Winograd said he saw no signs of the crowding, troubled animals or other poor conditions described by those opposing the changes under way.

He said he has toured more than 100 shelters across the United States and has become quite competent in picking up on attempts to cover up problems. The many caged cats were not anxious, he said, and few were suffering from ailments that would indicate problems.

"You can't hide the stereotypical behaviors," Winograd said.

Winograd, who wrote the book "Redemption -- The Myth of Pet Overpopulation and the No Kill Revolution in America," was brought in at the personal expense of Porter County Commissioner Bob Harper, who actively supports reducing euthanasia at the shelter.

Winograd was impressed Saturday by the relatively mild odor at the shelter, the number of volunteers, the outdoor dog runs and the amenities provided to the animals, such as bones, towels and clean water.

There are problems with the shelter, he said, not the least being the location south of U.S. 30 along Ind. 2, which is off the beaten path and not conducive to attracting passers-by. The location is typical of the thinking decades ago that strays are a problem and should be collected and terminated at the lowest possible cost.

Other problems he detected were the small size of the dog kennels, the lack of access to the outdoors from the kennels and the lack of Sunday hours, which would be convenient for families and working people.

Shelter Director Judy Bonaventura said talk is under way about opening for four hours on Sundays.

Winograd said he also would like to see shelter officials get some of the animals out to where people live, work and play. This would help keep the pet population down at the shelter and combat long stays.

"What you don't want to see are animals celebrating anniversaries," he said.

Winograd said it is not uncommon for there to be a backlash when shelters begin reducing the number of animals euthanized.

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