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# 'Helping them in the interim'

## Gratiot County in talks to help Montcalm County with animal services

**By Sean Bradley**

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Gratiot County may help neighboring Montcalm County with its animal services while the latter county is dealing with the closure

of its animal control operation.

An agreement is in the works for Gratiot County animal control to help with issues such as dog bites, according to Tom Clark, Gratiot County Animal Control Administrator.

"It's still definitely in its in-

fancy stage. Unfortunately, they had to shut their animal control down due to budget cuts but they need somebody to pick up in-pounds," Clark said.

Talks have taken place between Montcalm County and Gratiot County officials on the issue. ac-

cording to Gratiot County Administrator Tracey Cordes.

"We like to help, and they need the help," Cordes said. "These are points of agreement so it makes sense to talk about this."

Any agreement would have to come before the county commis-

sion for approval, she said.

Montcalm is working on its animal licensing procedures.

"Once licensing is approved, then we would be doing a direct drop off to the Montcalm County Humane Society," Clark said. "Until then, we would bring them over here and we would charge Montcalm County for X amount

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# Animals

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of days.”

Exact financial details have not yet been determined, and cats could also be helped with but dogs would be the main issue.

Gratiot County’s animals, complaints, records would come first, he said.

“We wouldn’t put Montcalm ahead of any service here in Gratiot County,” Clark

said.

“Once we got our complaints handled, then we would be able to go over there and assist them if they needed some help with something.”

Any service to Montcalm County would be done after hours, he said.

“If this does get up and running, I don’t expect to be that busy doing it but we’d be helping them in the interim,” Clark said.

There are approximately 5,500 dogs registered in Gra-

tiot County.

Montcalm County eliminated its animal shelter as part of recent budget cuts and is leasing the former animal shelter building to the Humane Society of Mid Michigan, which is led by Angela Hollinshead who was recently laid off as Montcalm County’s Animal Control director, according to the The Daily News in Montcalm County.

The Montcalm County Treasurer’s Office is conducting a dog license census.

but an animal control officer has not yet been hired by the county to respond to dog complaints, in part because the Humane Society was only recently approved as a licensed shelter by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Montcalm County will be the official holder of the Humane Society’s shelter license and the county will recognize the Humane Society as the official organization operating the shelter under the county’s license.