

# Humane Society takes spay/neuter act on road

By Eric Feber  
The Virginian-Pilot

Got a fuzzy, whiskered member of the family that needs to be “fixed?”

And we’re not talking about taking care of your ne’er-do-well cousin Elmo, rather, the Suffolk Humane Society has announced new dates for its Neuter Scooter, including another location at the Epps Farm Supply at 2170 Joshua Lane.

On Wednesday, the mobile spay/neuter facility, a partnership with the Virginia Beach SPCA, will stop at Epps and offer a special “barn cat discount” of \$10 off every spay or neuter procedure. The price list is \$60 for a cat spay and \$40 for a neuter; and \$75 and up (depending on the weight) for a dog spay, and \$70 and up for a neuter.

Not to worry, though, the discount is available to house cats, and dogs, too. The city’s humane society champions spaying and neutering as one of the most effective ways to cut down on unwanted, stray and homeless animals.

The society decided to call it a “barn cat” discount since Epps Farm Supply is housed in a barnlike struc-

ture, said Kay Hurley, a Suffolk Humane Society spokeswoman.

“We’re always trying out different locations throughout Suffolk, to branch out,” she said. “But any cat, or dog, can be an honorary ‘barn cat’ on that day. We just want people to come out and take advantage of the service. It’s important we keep this service up in Suffolk, and it needs support to keep it going.”

Besides being cheaper than a procedure at a vet’s office, the Neuter Scooter offers same-day service. Bring Fluffy or Fido in between 8 or 8:30 a.m. and you can pick up your precious pet somewhere between 3 and 3:30 p.m.

Other Neuter Scooter dates and locations are: Dec. 2, 3, and 30 at the Suffolk Humane office, 3118 Kings Hwy. in Driver; and Thursday as well as Dec. 16 and 17 at the Magnolia Ruritan Club, 1047 Nansmond Pkwy.

For more information about Suffolk Humane Society events, happenings or programs, call 934-1648 or visit [www.suffolklhumane.com](http://www.suffolklhumane.com).

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ROSS TAYLOR | THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

A truck rolls out of the International Paper mill in October shortly after the company announced it would be shut down and 1,100 workers laid off.

## MILL

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about it. But we were expecting about five years.”

They’ve heard rumors that some of the equipment is being shipped to Brazil, where a new paper mill is being constructed, where the company can pay lower wages and be under less stress from environmental concerns.

The talk for years has been that the county’s two biggest tax payers – International Pa-

per and Smithfield Foods – would be around forever, said Grace Keen, president of the Citizens Association. It’s not going to happen. Smithfield Foods has also announced that part of its operations will soon be shutting down.

“The big hit will be in 2012,” said Perry.

“We want to be delicate, so IP will take care of the employees,” said Al Casteen, a member of the county board of supervisors who attended the meeting. “The people are our first priority. IP will decide what to do with the pro-

erty. If they decide to sit on it, we don’t have any options.”

But it will be hard to find new jobs for approximately 1,100 people expected to lose their jobs at the mill, said Perry.

“This is going to be like going to war,” Perry said.

“We’re going to have a 10 cents real estate tax increase, and we’d better make our minds up to it,” said Tom Finderson, a Carrollton resident attending the meeting.

There were about 30 people at the Carrollton Library for the meeting. Most of

them owned homes in the area.

Taxes could go up by as much as 20 cents on each \$100 of estimated home value, Perry said.

“I want positive energy,” Perry said. “Failure is not an option. We’ve been fat and happy. It’s time to get over it.”

The next meeting of the Citizens Association will be on Jan. 11, 2010. There is no meeting in December.

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Allen Harper is the director of the Tidewater Agriculture Research and Extension Center in Holland.

## DIG IT!

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other kind of care.

Allen, as young as he was, was the Virginia Tech extension agent in Suffolk at the time. He was professional and compassionate. He did his best to keep my nose out of it. The matter was taken care of. The farmer eventually left town. I’ve often wondered what happened to him. I learned a really strong lesson. Sometimes, despite ev-

erything people try to do, things happen that they can’t control. Life simply becomes overwhelming.

Allen and I came out of that situation still talking, and I’ve followed his career with interest. He’s now director of the Tidewater Agriculture Research and Extension Center in Holland. It’s right on the – actually, it’s left on the side – of U.S. 58, directly before you cross the overpass.

It’s a place that a lot of local folks have never been. A lot more have no idea what is done there or what purpose it serves.

I’m here to tell you. And to tell you about Allen, the leader. Over the years, he has been educated and educated and educated. He’s actually a doctor. You can call him Pig Man. He’s considered the leading expert on swine in – at least – eastern Virginia. Maybe the entire state.

He tells me they have good programs and a talented faculty out there. Like other state entities, the Virginia Tech center is suffering somewhat from the economy. They are supposed to have seven faculty members – all with exper-

tise in bugs, soil, diseases – but right now they’re making do with six.

Allen tells me he was born in a place called Brookneal, in south central Virginia, about 35 miles south of Lynchburg. His dad was a tobacco buyer. His mom’s folks were in farming. And that’s where his heart guided him.

He first came to Suffolk in 1982, he said, because there was a job opening, and he needed to pay student loans. He was a local extension agent back then for seven years.

Allen has two grown

sons. His wife is a business banker at BB&T. He’d like for the local world to know what the ag center is all about. He’d like for others to think of using the center for something other than soil samples.

The folks who work out there are constantly searching for better answers, bigger bugs, safer chemicals. They now have a leader who is dedicated to farming, loyal to farmers and understands human beings, even nosy reporters.

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