


From the Ground Up: A Leadership Workshop for Rural Animal Welfare

Hosted by Cole Wakefield – Rural Humane

 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

8:00 – 8:45 AM | Arrival, Coffee & Introductions

- Quick participant intros (name, org, one big challenge)
 - Workshop overview and purpose
 - Setting the tone: why rural work matters right now
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8:45 – 9:30 AM | Session 1: How We Got Here – A Historical Lens on Animal Welfare

- From pounds to progress: Southern and rural shelter history
 - How systems thinking helps us see the full picture
 - The policies and myths we're still cleaning up
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9:30 – 10:15 AM | Session 2: Shelter as Public Service

- Reframing the shelter as essential infrastructure
- Why fees and fines often fail
- How to make the financial case to officials and the public
- *Interactive exercise:* Craft a public service pitch for your shelter

10:15 – 10:30 AM | Break & Stretch

10:30 – 11:30 AM | Session 3: Spay & Neuter – The Backbone of Sustainable Animal Welfare

- Why sterilization is still central to population control and public trust
 - Overcoming barriers: vet shortages, transport, cost
 - Building partnerships: local vets, mobile units, regional collabs
 - Creating a Vet of Record relationship to enable routine care
 - *Activity:* Draft a 6-month achievable spay/neuter action plan for your org
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11:30 AM – 12:15 PM | Session 4: Doing Your Best With Best Practices

- "Good Enough" vs. "Gold Standard" in housing, care, and operations
 - Where to start when everything feels urgent
 - Avoiding burnout through realistic planning
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12:15 – 1:45 PM | Lunch

1:45 – 2:30 PM | Session 5: Housing, Enrichment & Operations that Reduce Suffering

- Affordable improvements that improve outcomes
- Housing stress: how to identify and fix it

- Enrichment and daily routine upgrades
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2:30 – 2:45 PM | Break – Take a Walk, Make a Call

2:45 – 3:30 PM | Session 6: Building a Culture of Care & Community Trust

- Managing intake while maintaining compassion
 - Creating clear communication channels with the public
 - Training your staff and volunteers to speak with one voice
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3:30 – 3:45 PM | Break – Grab a Drink, Breathe Deep

3:45 – 4:30 PM | Ask Me Anything: Unfiltered Q&A with Cole

- Honest answers to real-world questions
 - Policy, politics, people, pets—whatever you need to ask
 - Bring it all. We'll unpack it together.
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4:30 – 5:00 PM | Closing & Commitments

- Share one commitment you'll take back to your organization
 - Optional email list sign-up for future resources
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