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FEATURED

Ivins unveils new tool to help runaway pets find their way home

Written by Nick Fiala
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Attendees at last week's regular Ivins City Council meeting took a short field trip to the Santa Clara-Ivins Police Department building on Thursday to watch the unveiling of a new tool meant to help lost pets.

Council members revealed a new microchip scanning station in front of the department, next to Ivins City Hall, which is intended to help locals keep track of runaway animals and return them to their owners in a timely manner.

Police Chief Jaron Studley said that if the scanning machine proves to be helpful, then others may be installed at Unity Park and Ivins City Park in the near future.

"And then we'll just let the public know where those things are located," Studley said. "And we should be able to help get pets back home where they belong instead of running off the leash."



Paw prints decorate the base of the new scanning station located at the Santa Clara-Ivins Police Department, Ivins, Utah, Jan. 16, 2024.

Photo by Nick Fiala, St. George News

This machine comes with an instruction panel that guides citizens on how to use a scanner to search for an ID chip that may be implanted under an animal's skin.

When the chip is scanned, a citizen can access information about the animal's owners so that they can be reunited with their four-legged friends instead of having them become lost or taken in by the Santa Clara-Ivins Animal Shelter.

Councilwoman Sharon Barton said that locals are "hearing more and more about people finding stray dogs running down the streets, or that type of thing." Studley added that the Santa Clara-Ivins shelter is full, so resources like this new machine are sorely needed.

The idea to put the machine in Ivins came from resident Julie Dean. She said she has connections to people involved with animal rescue initiatives, which informed her of a large operation on the East Coast that uses nine of them in one county with "great success."

"I brought the idea here and was very hopeful," she said. "And Chief Studley just knocked it out of the park."

Studley credited Dean with providing the list of things needed for the scanning machine to look nice and function properly, including an endearing set of paw prints at the bottom of the pole where the machine is posted.



Santa Clara-Ivins Police Officer Jesse Hall tests the new ID chip scanner on the department's new K9 Officer, Rosko, in Ivins, Utah, Jan. 16, 2024.

Photo by Nick Fiala, St. George News

"It was easy," Studley said. "I didn't have to do much other than gather the items that she had said would need to be implemented."



Ivins resident Julie Dean stands next to the scanning station she encouraged the city to install, Ivins, Utah, Jan. 16, 2024.

Photo by Nick Fiala, St. George News

While speaking to the crowd of council members and citizens gathered at the machine on Thursday, Dean said that locals can get ID chips for their pets by consulting with their local veterinarian.

"So it's actually a good thing for a pet to have a chip on its shoulder," Ivins Mayor Chris Hart said, earning laughs from the crowd.

Nick Fiala