

Lucedale animal shelter ends gas chamber practice

Lane, Emily . The Clarion Ledger ; Jackson, Miss. [Jackson, Miss]08 Apr 2013.

[ProQuest document link](#)

ABSTRACT

Veterinarian and Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine professor Dr. Phil Bushby, one of 15 authors of "Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters," said carbon monoxide chambers are now considered unacceptable as a form of euthanasia.

FULL TEXT

After a failed push by animal advocates to ban the practice statewide, the only known shelter in Mississippi to euthanize animals using a gas chamber decided last week to stop using the antiquated method.

The Lucedale Board of Aldermen voted unanimously Tuesday to instead perform euthanasia by injection, known as EBI, at the city's animal shelter rather than using a carbon monoxide chamber.

Mississippi, which is surrounded on all sides by states that already have outlawed gas chambers as a form of euthanasia, is now among the majority of states that no longer use the practice.

"I think it's a victory for animals, animal advocates, the city of Lucedale and the state of Mississippi," said Lydia Sattler, the Mississippi state director for The Humane Society of the United States.

"Nobody wants to be portrayed as a bad state that brutally kills their pets."

Veterinarian and Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine professor Dr. Phil Bushby, one of 15 authors of "Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters," said carbon monoxide chambers are now considered unacceptable as a form of euthanasia.

The most recent data show 73,000 homeless animals are euthanized each year in Mississippi. The most humane approach to euthanizing animals either completely eliminates or nearly eliminates any abnormal stress, Bushby said.

"When performing euthanasia, you need to treat each individual animal with respect, and any method for euthanasia should act very quickly and cause loss of consciousness first and then proceed to death," he said.

"Carbon monoxide chambers kind of violate all of that."

Gas chambers expose animals to stress when the animals are placed in a metal box, often with other unfamiliar

animals. The sound of the motor generating the carbon monoxide also causes stress. Carbon monoxide does cause unconsciousness before death, but the amount of time it takes to die varies greatly, Bushley said, depending on the particular shelter or the amount of gas used.

Kevin Carver was given the job of Lucedale shelter manager and animal control officer just three months ago.

Carver, a former corrections officer, said working with prisoners has never stirred him, but the few times he's had to operate the chamber to euthanize dogs who had Parvo, a contagious and often incurable disease, have given him nightmares.

"I couldn't stand it," he said.

Carver said he could hear the animals "yell and scream" during last 15 seconds of their life and was ready to refuse to continue operating the gas chamber or find another job.

The push to ban the practice didn't really begin to take off as widespread as it is now until around three years ago, when the Association of Shelter Veterinarians published its guidelines on euthanasia.

Lucedale began using a chamber a number of years ago when it was thought to be more humane than the previous practice -- shooting animals outside the shelter and burying them in a mass grave, Sattler said.

"At the time (Lucedale) thought the gas chamber was best option for them, (but) times changed," Sattler said.

Many shelters, like Lucedale, resisted changing the policy because it was inexpensive, efficient and viewed as an accepted practice not long ago.

This year, Sattler and other animal advocates lobbied the state Legislature for an amendment to a law that would make Mississippi join 20 other states in banning the gas chamber practice.

The House killed SB2256, which would have prohibited the use of carbon monoxide in the euthanasia of animals, in committee after it sailed easily through the Senate. The frustration Sattler said she felt as a result gave her a kick of determination to re-approach the Lucedale city board directly about the issue.

At Tuesday's meeting, Sattler, along with a couple of area veterinarians, presented a way EBI could be a less expensive option. Also, a representative from Southern Pines Animal Shelter in nearby Hattiesburg who attended the Lucedale meeting offered to advise the shelter on how to incorporate more volunteers into the operation.

Sattler said the Lucedale board's vote to switch the method from carbon monoxide to EBI was unanimous.

"Anytime we show advancement in humane methods it says that we're progressing and being responsible as a state," she said.

To contact Emily Lane, call (601) 961-7075. She is @emilymlane on Twitter.

ID_Code: D0-304080016

DETAILS

Subject:	Animal shelters; Carbon monoxide; Euthanasia; Veterinary medicine
Location:	Mississippi
Company / organization:	Name: Humane Society of the United States; NAICS: 813312
Publication title:	The Clarion Ledger; Jackson, Miss.
Publication year:	2013
Publication date:	Apr 8, 2013
column:	Lucedale
Section:	Metro-State
Publisher:	Gannett Co., Inc.
Place of publication:	Jackson, Miss.
Country of publication:	United States, Jackson, Miss.
Publication subject:	General Interest Periodicals--United States
ISSN:	07449526
Source type:	Newspapers
Language of publication:	English
Document type:	News
ProQuest document ID:	1324436511
Document URL:	https://login.ezproxy.lib.utah.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/lucedale-animal-shelter-ends-gas-chamber-practice/docview/1324436511/se-2?accountid=14677
Copyright:	Copyright 2013 - Clarion Ledger Jackson, MS - All Rights Reserved
Last updated:	2017-11-20
Database:	Global Newsstream

LINKS

Database copyright © 2021 ProQuest LLC. All rights reserved.

[Terms and Conditions](#) [Contact ProQuest](#)