

AVERY COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY INTRODUCES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Written by Catherine Morton
Sunday, 20 March 2011 17:14

“My friends are cheering because they are so excited to see me doing something I am passionate about,” said Laurie Vierheller about her new position as Executive Director of the Avery County Humane Society. “I think I can do good work for the Avery Humane Society. My background and experience are a good fit for the kind of opportunities ahead of this organization.”

Vierheller comes to Avery County from Lake City, Colorado, where for the last five years she has worked as county manager of a small, remote county in the San Juan Mountains. The challenge of managing a county where 96 percent of the property is public land helped Vierheller develop wide ranging and versatile administration and management skills.

A proponent of collaboration and partnership, she has a record of success in developing relationships and gathering community support for projects and causes that serve the greater good. She served on the school board for 13 years and faced the challenge of getting a middle school and high school for her community. Because the challenge required doubling the size of the existing school building, Vierheller ended up amassing thousands of hours of experience in project planning and development, fundraising, oversight and management.

“The first thing on my list is to get to know the staff and learn about shelter operations,” she said. “Next I look forward to meeting the members of the community and becoming a part of it.”

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Avery County Humane Society Board Chair Catherine Morton said, "It is a risk to hire someone from outside Avery County, but the folks here are going to really like Laurie. She works hard, she talks straight, she shares our values for family, community and creation. I like her because she is passionate about doing good work.

"And she has a great laugh," added Morton. "It is going to be fun to work beside her."

Vierheller, her 12-year-old daughter, Rachel, and their menagerie of two dogs, two cats and two ferrets are happily moved into a house on the Watauga River at the north end of the county. Soon to be joined by her aging parents, Vierheller actually chose Avery County because of the milder climate and is looking forward to having less snow to contend with. In Lake City, they have snow on the ground nine months of the year!

"I am so excited to be relocating to Avery County," said Vierheller. "My family and I like small-town country living and being close to nature. We think we'll really like it here."

The Avery County Humane Society is dedicated to helping our community respond humanely to the needs of animals. The Society operates a shelter for lost or abandoned cats and dogs on Stamey Branch Road and is constructing a new facility behind Ingles in Newland. The organization also sponsors rabies clinics, offers access to low-cost spay/neuter services, and

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partners with the local prison in the New Leash on Life obedience training program. For more information, phone the shelter at 828-733-6312 or visit on the web at www.averyhumane.org.