



Prairie States Animal Welfare Conference

Illinois Animal Welfare Federation

**JUNE 2-4,
2024**

New for 2024
Register by
4/1 for Early
Bird Pricing!

Join us for the 23rd annual Prairie States Animal Welfare Conference and see why we are the premiere conference designed just for animal welfare professionals from the Midwest! Prairie States attendees come from all walks of animal welfare, including executive staff, operations staff, animal control officers, rescue groups, veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and dog trainers.

3 tracks to
select from

More than 20
breakout
sessions

CEUs for CAWA
and NACA

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**Michelson
Found Animals**



KENNETH A. SCOTT
CHARITABLE TRUST



DETAILED CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Sunday, June 2

- 4:30-5:30 pm Conference Check-In
 7:30-8:30 pm Bags & Beverages on the Barrel House Patio

Monday, June 3

- 8:00-9:00 am **Conference Check-In and Breakfast**
 9:00-10:15 am **Welcome & Keynote:** *Grit: What it takes to succeed & be insanely great in animal sheltering and field services* with Gina Knepp, Michelson Found Animals
 10:15-10:30 am Break
 10:30-11:45 am Concurrent Sessions

Leadership <i>Sponsored by TrueSense Marketing</i>	Operations	Field Services <i>Sponsored by NACA</i>
<u>Taking the CRISIS Out of Crisis Communications</u>	<u>Testicle Talk – Customer Service in the Animal Space</u>	<u>Animal Cruelty Investigations: Part 1</u>

- 11:45-1:00 pm **Lunch**
 1:00-2:15 pm Concurrent Sessions

Leadership <i>Sponsored by TrueSense Marketing</i>	Operations	Field Services <i>Sponsored by NACA</i>
<u>Leveraging Data to Save More Animals</u>	<u>Supporting Long Term Dogs with Targeted Enrichment Plans</u>	<u>Animal Cruelty Investigations: Part 2</u>

- 2:15-2:30 pm Break
 2:30-3:45 pm **General Session:** Compassion Resilience with Dr. Janet Hoy-Gerlach, OneHealth People-Animal Wellness
 3:45-4:00 pm Break
 4:00-5:15 pm Concurrent Sessions

Leadership <i>Sponsored by TrueSense Marketing</i>	Operations	Field Services <i>Sponsored by NACA</i>
<u>How to Tame the Chaos: How to Think Like a Startup in the Shelter & Rescue Environment</u>	<u>People Power: Creating a Sustainable & Robust Volunteer Program</u>	<u>Letter of the Law and Spirit of the Law: Balancing Compliance and Compassion in Animal Control</u>

- 5:15-7:30 pm **Dinner & Fun**
 8:00 pm **Back by popular demand...PSC Dance Party!**

Conference sessions are approved for NACA CEUs as consistent with the NACA CEU Policy. Visit www.nacatraining.org to learn more.

DETAILED CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Tuesday, June 4

8:00-9:00 am **Conference Check-In and Breakfast**

9:00-10:15 am Concurrent Sessions

Leadership <i>Sponsored by TrueSense Marketing</i>	Operations	Field Services <i>Sponsored by NACA</i>
<u>The Evolution of the Love Bus: Assessing and Meeting Community Needs</u>	<u>How to Create a Well-Run Medical Program</u>	<u>Uncovering Bias in Animal Control: Promoting Fairness and Equity</u>

10:15-10:30 am Break

10:30-11:45 am **General Session:** When Pigs Fly with Kevin Pigg, ASPCA

11:45-1:00 pm **Lunch**

1:00-2:15 pm Concurrent Sessions

Leadership <i>Sponsored by TrueSense Marketing</i>	Operations	Field Services <i>Sponsored by NACA</i>
<u>Navigating the Bumpy Road of Supervision</u>	<u>One Size Does Not Fit All: Alternative Options for Unsocialized Cats</u>	<u>Animal Control and ADA</u>

2:15-2:30 pm Break

2:30-3:45 pm Concurrent Sessions

Leadership <i>Sponsored by TrueSense Marketing</i>	Operations	Field Services <i>Sponsored by NACA</i>
<u>We Are Better Together</u>	<u>The Data-Driven Guide to Pet Adoption Marketing</u>	<u>Customer eXperience in Animal Welfare</u>

3:45-4:00 pm Break

4:00-5:15 pm We will be giving away **\$50 Visa Gift Cards** during the last session in each track!

Leadership <i>Sponsored by TrueSense Marketing</i>	Operations	Field Services <i>Sponsored by NACA</i>
<u>Incorporating AI in Your Animal Welfare Work</u>	<u>Make A PACT With Your Community</u>	<u>Decoding Canine Communication</u>

Illinois Animal Welfare Federation is an approved provider of content which enhances professional competence and aligns with the 5 domains of the CAWA Exam specifications. Every hour of training equals 1 CE towards CAWA Recertification.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Grit: What it takes to succeed & be insanely great in animal sheltering and field services

Gina Knepp, National Shelter Engagement Director, Michelson Found Animals



**Michelson
Found Animals**

Speaker Bio: Gina Knepp is the National Shelter Engagement Director for the Michelson Found Animals Foundation. She is the pioneer of developing return to home programs and engaging animal sheltering organizations in finding innovative ways of reuniting lost animals with their families. Gina's background includes managing the Front Street Animal Shelter in Sacramento, California. Her experience leading a municipal, open intake, high volume shelter adds to her passion for helping lost animals get back home where they belong. Her current work with Michelson Philanthropies has offered the opportunity to work with shelters across the country, improving reunification efforts. Additionally, Gina offers training expertise in Customer Service for animal welfare professionals, along with creating vibrant volunteer programs, leadership and change management. Gina is currently on the Board of the Bitterroot Humane Association, the board of Animal Grant Makers and on the Executive Committee of Human Animal Support Services (HASS) with American Pets Alive, launching national animal shelter reform. Gina lives in Hamilton, Montana with her husband Chris, two dogs, Lucy & Rex, her cat, Kit, 18 deer and 80 turkeys.

Keynote Description: This is a hard job. No one ever said it wouldn't be. Also, none of us said (when we were 9 years old) that we were going to grow up and work for an animal shelter (well, mostly no one). So, what does it take to be a superstar in this industry? What does superstar even mean? The Prairie States keynote, presented by Gina Knepp with Michelson Found Animals, will inspire attendees to evaluate where they are in the industry, where they would like to be and how to get there. It is not just about life saving, there are two ends of the leash and focusing on the human side is the magic elixir to saving the furry side. Gina will share her personal story and highlight agencies (not the wealthy ones) that somehow manage to lead the pack. Introspection will be required. The audience will be asked a myriad of rhetorical questions that will force lots of thinking and hopefully, ideally, have everyone go back to their respective shelters imagining the possibilities and putting them into action.

*The Exhibit Hall gives you an opportunity to meet with our industry sponsors and partners.
Be sure to visit during the following times both Monday and Tuesday:*

8:00-9:00 am
2:15-2:30 pm

10:15-10:30 am
3:45-4:00 pm

11:45-1:00 pm
5:15-7:30 pm (Monday only)

MONDAY'S GENERAL SESSION

Strategies for Individual and Organization Compassion Resilience

Dr. Janet Hoy-Gerlach, OneHealth People-Animal Wellness (OHPAWS)

Speaker Bio: Dr. Janet Hoy-Gerlach is a clinical social worker, author, researcher, and human-animal interaction researcher. She is the Director of Veterinary Social Work at Open Door Veterinary Collective, a national non-profit that strives to increase access to veterinary care, and the Founder/CEO of OneHealth People-Animal Wellness (OHPAWS). Through OHPAWS, Dr. Hoy-Gerlach helps to advance practices, programs and policies that support human-animal relationships for mutual well-being. Dr. Hoy-Gerlach lead authored the book *Human-Animal Interaction: A Social Work Guide* (2017), published by the National Association of Social Work, and is an adjunct faculty member at Case Western Reserve University. She has extensive experience as a mental health practitioner, and has worked with humane societies and veterinary organizations on increasing staff well-being and compassion resilience. She is the Mental Health First Aid instructor for the National Animal Control Association's (NACA) Mental Health First Aid Certification Initiative. Her research on mental health benefits of animal companionship has been featured in media outlets such as *Discover Magazine*, *Business Insider*, *Medscape*, and *Psychology Today*. She serves as an expert witness on human-animal bond mental health benefits for the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division.



Session Description: Animal welfare work is demanding, and animal welfare professionals are at high risk of secondary trauma and compassion fatigue. In this session, we will examine evidence-based individual and organization compassion resilience building strategies that can be readily applied within the context of the stressors, demands, and rewards of animal welfare work. Recognizing, understanding, and navigating our human mammalian stress responses (fight/flight/freeze) are critical components of such strategies; "fear free primate" communication skills and self-calming and care strategies for "animal people" will be shared.

MONDAY'S LEADERSHIP SESSIONS

Taking the CRISIS Out of Crisis Communications

Stephanie Filer, Executive Director, Shelter Animals Count

How an organization responds during a potential (or full-blown) "PR nightmare" will determine how fast they can recover, yet many shelter staff and board members are inadequately trained or prepared to handle a media crisis. In this session we'll explore case studies of how both large corporations and animal welfare organizations have done it well, and also when they have fallen flat, so that you can prepare now for the inevitable PR challenges of your own.

Leveraging Data to Save More Animals

Stephanie Filer, Executive Director, Shelter Animals Count

Animal shelters and rescues in the United States are now in their 4th consecutive year of high intakes with adoption rates unable to keep pace. With nearly 1M more animals waiting in shelters since 2021, the resulting crisis is mounting, with organizations across the country over capacity and under stress. We will analyze key data insights, challenges, and successes and provide tips on how to leverage your own data to save more animals.

How to Tame the Chaos: How to Think Like a Startup in the Shelter & Rescue Environment

Elena Battles, President, Shelterluv

AWOs and startups may sound very different from the outside, but on the inside we look alike! We all have big goals and few resources to achieve them. We have impossibly long to-do lists. We operate in an environment where the only constant is change. From how we approach meetings, to prioritizing what work needs to be done now versus later, to staying focused on your goals in chaotic environments, this session will share practical startup techniques and strategies to help you achieve your lifesaving & fundraising goals.

MONDAY'S OPERATIONS SESSIONS

Testicle Talk – Customer Service in the Animal Space

Gina Knepp, National Shelter Engagement Director, Michelson Found Animals

Customer Service training in Animal Welfare has often been an afterthought. Seldom do we see curriculum on this topic at most conferences and when we do, it's nothing new. We all assume everyone knows how to be nice, but it's not about being nice, it's about being effective in our communication with one another, volunteers, customers, and anyone else we come into contact with through the course of our work. It's about legitimizing the feelings of others, finding words that impact the psyche and leave the other person feeling cared for, even when our answer might be no. This session will inspire attendees to really evaluate the training given to all staff/volunteers that interact with others (that would be everyone). Often, we presume customer service is something our parents should have taught us, but that is not always the case. This session will be unique in that we will walk through conversations that we have routinely, but often fall short in doing so. This session is intended to provoke conversation, thoughts, and action.

Supporting Long Term Dogs with Targeted Enrichment Plans

Stephanie Marquardt, Senior Behavior Manager, The Anti-Cruelty Society

In this session we will cover creative ways to support your long-term dogs with targeted enrichment, both in and out of the kennel. From play groups, group or solo training sessions to DIY toys, there are cost-effective ways even the busiest shelter can support their dogs without adding additional burden to their staff.

People Power: Creating a Sustainable & Robust Volunteer Program

Karen Patterson, VP of Volunteers and Humane Education, Humane Society of Huron Valley

People power is one of the most important aspects of being able to provide better care to animals and save more lives. But how do you leverage volunteer support in a way that is sustainable, has low turnover and is beneficial to your organization? This session will focus on designing a robust program that increases retention, supports your most critical areas and shares best practices in managing a diverse group of volunteers.

MONDAY'S FIELD SERVICES SESSIONS

Animal Cruelty Investigations: Part 1 and Part 2

Kevin Hearst, Instructor/Adjunct Professor, Law Enforcement Training Institute

How to structure case building methods by using fundamental techniques (Documentation: step by step checklist) to provide a consistent format for each case. How to process your crime scene, live evidence and requesting enhance penalties for repeat offenders. Educate the complainant and owner, use all your resources during investigation to provide best outcomes for all animals involved.

Letter of the Law and Spirit of the Law: Balancing Compliance and Compassion in Animal Control

Dr. Josh Fisher, President, National Animal Control Association

In the world of animal control, navigating the complex landscape of laws and regulations is essential to ensure the welfare and safety of both animals and communities. However, compliance alone does not guarantee the best outcomes for all involved. Understanding the importance of balancing the letter of the law with the spirit of the law is the key to fostering compassionate and effective practices in animal control. In this session, we will explore how to create a compassionate and compliant approach that prioritizes the well-being of animals and fosters positive community engagement. We will delve into the intricate relationship between compliance and compassion and explore the nuanced challenges faced by animal control officers and discuss strategies for finding a harmonious balance between legal requirements and the well-being of animals.

Through real-life case studies, interactive discussions, and practical examples, we will examine how to approach animal control situations with empathy, understanding, and a focus on positive outcomes. We will explore ways to interpret and apply the law in a manner that embraces flexibility, fairness, and the best interests of animals and the community at large.

TUESDAY'S LEADERSHIP SESSIONS

The Evolution of the Love Bus: Assessing and Meeting Community Needs

Karen Wolfe, Executive Director, and Kadra Hillis, Director of Operations, Kokomo Humane Society

After drastically improving live release numbers and medical care for shelter animals, the Kokomo Humane Society is finally able to offer help with some basic necessities for owned pets in the community. While there has always been a food bank at the shelter, The Pet Assistance Program truly began with the amazing Petco Love vaccine program. The Pet Assistance Program has grown to

include other free services such as microchipping, flea prevention, Pet Hub ID tags and when funds are available spay/neuter and medical assistance. When the opportunity arose to expand adoption accessibility with a mobile adoption vehicle, AKA the Love Bus, it made perfect sense to combine these two programs. Joining the two enables the Kokomo Humane Society to maximize positive impact for both adoptable and owned pets.

Navigating the Bumpy Road of Supervision

Danielle Case, Director of Shelter Services, The Anti-Cruelty Society

Did you land a new supervisory or leadership role? Are you struggling to communicate with your team or inspire your team or have authority over your team? Do you struggle to make changes stick? Are you floundering trying to manage people that used to be your peers? Do you question every decision you make? Are you starting to wonder why you decided to take this position? Welcome to being a supervisor! I don't have all the answers, but I can assure you that all those feelings are normal. I have also learned quite a few things along the way. I would love to share, and hopefully, make your life a little easier.

We Are Better Together

Emily Klehm, South Suburban Humane Society; Raissa Allaire, Tree House Humane Society; Lydia Krupinski, The Anti-Cruelty Society; Stacy Rogers, Best Friends Animal Society

The Chicagoland Humane Coalition is comprised of 18 organizations across Cook, Will and DuPage Counties. The Coalition is in its fifth year of dynamic, collaborative work. The first coalition chair, current chairs, and original facilitator will come together to discuss coalition building, engaging busy leaders, crisis management in a coalition, and the joys of working together.

Incorporating AI in Your Animal Welfare Work

Brian Rivera, Director, Technology & Administration, Tree House Humane Society

Discover the transformative power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the administrative realm of animal welfare work. This workshop aims to explore how AI can revolutionize and streamline various administrative tasks, enabling animal welfare organizations to operate with greater efficiency and make a more significant impact on animal care.

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this session for your
chance to win a
\$50 Visa Gift Card

TUESDAY'S OPERATIONS SESSIONS

How to Create a Well-Run Medical Program

Liz Stamper, Senior Strategist, Midwest Region, Best Friends Animal Society

Overseeing a medical department can seem like a daunting task. Between managing herd health, individual animal needs, and incoming animal emergencies, things can feel a bit overwhelming. However, with proper structure, organization, and time management, you will feel more prepared for the routine everyday tasks and surprise needs that come with overseeing this department. Attendees will learn tips, tricks, and resources to help them feel more organized and

empowered to take this department to new heights. Additionally, we will learn how you can make the most out of your intake exams to path plan for success.

One Size Does Not Fit All: Alternative Options for Unsocialized Cats

Cecilia Ocampo-Solis, Community Programs Manager, and Clara Dell, Community Cats Coordinator, Tree House Humane Society

Cat socialization is a continuum and community cats, that are domesticated but not socialized, often occupy a grey area with few welfare guidelines. Unsocialized cats who land in shelters are often quick candidates for humane euthanasia. Most community cats avoid humans and exhibit shy or frightened behavior, and we cannot assume that they will acclimate to indoor life. With food, shelter, and consistent monitoring from a caregiver, cats' quality of life can improve when placed outdoors. Through our Cats at Work program, our intention is not to socialize these cats, but to meet them where they are and let them live on their own terms. We place cats outdoors with designated caretakers and offer these cats a second chance at life.

Many of our Cats at Work program applicants mention their need for rodent control, but more so emphasize their desire to help cats in need. This program benefits both the animal and the caretaker and nurtures the human-animal bond through thoughtful placements and a community approach. This session will present anecdotal and quantitative data to show the positive outcomes of implementing an urban working cat program.

The Data-Driven Guide to Pet Adoption Marketing

April Huntsman, Senior Director, Animal Welfare, Adopt a Pet

Millions of people are searching for their furry soulmates online every month. With thousands of pets available through shelters and rescues (and private owners!), it can be tough to get your pet profiles to stand out. But don't worry, we're here to help! In this session, we'll share all the data we've been tracking and analyzing on online pet searches conducted on Adopt a Pet. We'll share what pet attributes potential adopters search for online. We'll also share what determines how frequently your pets are viewed, and how you can implement updates to your profiles to ultimately decrease your length of stay and increase adoption rates for all of your pets. This is your chance to peek into the minds of potential adopters and learn how to increase interest in the pets in your care! You'll walk away from this session with 5 simple changes that will take your adoption marketing to the next level, while also being mindful of the diversity of your audience. We'll also discuss how to use inclusive language and imagery in your pet profiles so that you can reach a wider audience and increase your chances of finding a loving home for every pet in your care.

Make a PACT with Your Community

Katherine Shenar, Executive Vice President, The Association of Animal Welfare Advancement

Compassion, transparency, leadership. These are the drivers of People and Animals in Community Together (PACT), a movement in animal sheltering that recognizes the power of community collaboration as outlined in nine shared beliefs. The Animal Welfare profession has made great strides in enhancing

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the lives of animals and people and improving communities. By articulating the ethics of how we do this important work, we can thoughtfully increase our impact and help others understand our “why.” Learn more about the nine tenets of PACT and the positive impact they can make on your community.

TUESDAY'S FIELD SERVICES SESSIONS

Uncovering Bias in Animal Control: Promoting Fairness and Equity

Mike Wheeler, Director of Community Services, City of Cabot, NACA Board Member

This session will shed light on the concept of bias within the realm of animal control and its potential impact on decision-making processes. Bias, whether conscious or unconscious, can influence decision-making, resource allocation, and interactions with both animals and the communities served. By shining a light on bias, we can develop a deeper understanding of how it affects animal welfare outcomes and community relationships. This session will share strategies for promoting fairness and equity and sharing best practices to counter bias and foster a more inclusive and compassionate animal control approach.

Animal Control and ADA

Mike Wheeler, Director of Community Services, City of Cabot, NACA Board Member

The Americans with Disabilities Act provides essential protection to many Americans. This session will take the very complicated and sometimes scary “Americans with Disabilities Act section on service animals/emotional support animals” and break it down into language that is very easy to understand, explain, and defend in court (both legal court and the court of public opinion). This session will provide the resources necessary to protect those that need protection while also not allowing individuals to use the ADA to skirt the laws and ordinances within your jurisdiction.

Customer eXperience in Animal Welfare

Dr. Josh Fisher, President, National Animal Control Association

For many years the field of animal welfare has focused on the field and shelter operation components of our operations, but we have a third aspect (as well as others) that we have neglected in the process. Most sheltering operations also have a retail component, you know the division of our operations the animals are adopted, returned, reclaimed, etc. This session will focus on how to set your organization and your team up to provide the optimal experience to your community members, which in turn can help to increase adoptions, donations, and the overall value the community sees in your operation.

Decoding Canine Communication: Mastering the Art of Understanding Body Language

Dr. Josh Fisher, President, National Animal Control Association and Mike Wheeler, Director of Community Services, City of Cabot, NACA Board Member

Uncover the secrets behind canine communication in this enlightening session dedicated to decoding the language of dogs through their body movements. Join our knowledgeable speakers as they guide you through the nuances of canine body language, helping you interpret signals, gestures, and postures that convey a wealth of information about a dog's emotional state and intentions.

Stay until the end of this session for your chance to win a \$50 Visa Gift Card

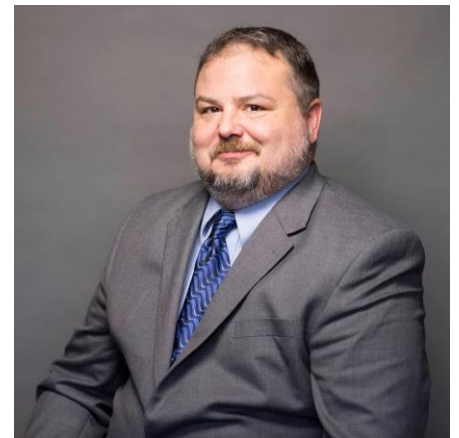
Explore the subtleties of tail wagging, ear positioning, facial expressions, and more, gaining valuable insights into what our canine companions are trying to tell us. This session equips attendees with essential knowledge to enhance your relationship with dogs and promote positive interactions. Unleash the power of understanding canine body language for a deeper connection with our four-legged friends.

TUESDAY'S GENERAL SESSION

When Pigs Fly: Using the Power of Partnerships to Address Animal Concerns in Disasters

Kevin Pigg, Manager, Disaster Response, ASPCA

Speaker Bio: Kevin is a career emergency manager who has dedicated over twenty years of service in the field. Kevin found his calling in college while attending the University of North Texas School of Emergency Management. Since that time, he has delved into numerous exciting roles within the field and has worked in Texas, California, Florida, DC and Louisiana. Kevin has worked at the local, State and Federal levels, as well as in the private sector before joining the ASPCA disaster response team. He is passionate about educating and training emergency managers and the public on how to deal with animal-related issues during a disaster. Kevin resides in Baton Rouge with his wife Kristie, two children Landon and Lily, and their two dogs Sadie and Chloe.



Session Description: When Pigs Fly: Using the Power of Partnerships to Address Animal Concerns in Disasters, is a working presentation presented by the ASPCA. The purpose of the workshop presentation is to discuss the four phases of emergency management and how it correlates with Animal Welfare before, during and after disasters. The discussion is meant to prepare the listener with the knowledge, skills and abilities for them to work within their community to better understand the nature of animals in disasters and the challenges they may face. The presentation discusses, local, state, federal and non-profit national partnerships and how it correlates their organization.

CONFERENCE DETAILS

CONFERENCE INFORMATION

Registration includes designated meals and breaks on Monday and Tuesday. A more detailed schedule is available at www.iawf.wildapricot.org/conferenceschedule. Single day registrations include meals for registered day only. All meals include vegetarian options. Vegan and other dietary restrictions cannot be guaranteed. Pets will not be allowed in the workshops.

HOTEL INFORMATION

Prairie States Animal Welfare Conference will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton, 10 Brickyard Drive, Bloomington, IL. Room rates for the conference begin at \$119 per night and include free parking. For reservations, call the hotel directly at (309) 664-6446 or central reservations at 1-800-222-TREE and request the Group Code PSC. Be sure to reserve your room by May 13, 2024 to guarantee the special conference rate. Or make a reservation online: www.iawf.wildapricot.org/Hotel-&-Travel.

WHY WAIT? REGISTER NOW!!

Registration Fees	Early Bird Before April 1 st	April 1 st and after
IAWF Member *	\$150 for 1 st person, \$125 each add'n	\$175 for 1 st person, \$150 each add'n
Non-Member	\$200	\$225
Single Day	\$100	\$100

** This applies to organizational members only.*

Register online or by mail. Visit www.iawf.wildapricot.org/prairiestatesconference.

FIRST TIME ATTENDEE?

Be sure to bring a sweater or jacket! Workshop rooms are bound to be too warm or too cold. Make sure you have a notebook and a few pens. You will want to take lots of notes. While the hotel is pet friendly, animals are not allowed in the conference areas. Also, bring plenty of business cards to share with colleagues and sponsors!

The Illinois Animal Welfare Federation provides these workshops for informational purposes only, and the views expressed in these workshops are not necessarily the views of the IAWF. The IAWF does not endorse nor recommend specific protocols or procedures provided during this conference. No audio or video recording of any Prairie States sessions allowed without prior approval of the Illinois Animal Welfare Federation.

CANCELLATION/REFUND POLICY

No refunds will be issued after May 24, 2024. Cancellations before then will be refunded less a \$25 processing fee.

HAVE QUESTIONS?

Contact Angie Wood, Prairie States Conference Coordinator, at prairiestates@iawf.net.