

A Smooth Transition for the New Addition

Summer is a popular time for welcoming pets into our families. This can be an exciting time for everyone in the household. With good care and management dogs can live to be in their mid-teens, or older, so bringing in a new family member is a major milestone, and great responsibility. In some cases the animal may be excited about its arrival into the new home, but often this is a stressful time for them. Understanding the pet's perspective and knowing how to help with the transition will result in a better relationship and fewer problem behaviors.

If possible, meet the dog at least one time before bringing him or her home. For especially shy or nervous dogs it can help to have them visit the new home at least once before permanently moving there. Often new owners are so excited about the dog they run all over the place to show off their adorable addition. They visit relatives and friends, then the pet store, the park, and maybe even a dog park. This is too much for most dogs on the first day in a new environment. It takes a few days for the typical dog to settle in. If the dog is highly anxious it could take a couple of weeks. Plan to keep things low-key for a few days while they get comfortable. In addition to transitioning to a new home many dogs are also receiving their name, or being renamed. A tip to help them learn their name is to say it every time they get a treat.

Keep the dog on a leash for the first day or two in the new home. This will help in knowing exactly where the dog is and what it's up to.

If the dog is doing something they shouldn't (like counter surfing or chewing a table leg) they can be immediately corrected. A fearful dog might try to hide under the furniture. The leash can make it much easier to get them out. When the dog is calm, listening and following the rules, then they can drag the leash around instead of someone holding it. Once they are completely settled in and listening well the leash can be removed.

Until dogs prove they can be trusted when not supervised or they need some down time, it really helps to have a crate. Crates should be large enough for dogs to stand comfortably with their heads up, turn around easily, and lay with their legs stretched out.

Most dogs will be eating, drinking, peeing, and pooping within 24 hours of arrival. However, sometimes dogs don't do some or any of these things right away. I've known a couple of extremely anxious dogs who did not pee the first time for 43 hours. If after a day dogs still aren't drinking, but they are eating, add extra water to the food. It is especially important to keep small breed dogs hydrated when they are stressed.

First impressions are very important in the dog world. Some dogs, especially females, have a hard time recovering from a bad first interaction. Bad impressions don't just happen from an aggressive incident, but can also happen if a person or another dog ignores personal boundaries. This could be someone playing too rough, or jumping or posturing on top of the dog (especially their head). Children can

the Canine Coach

by Valerie Broadway



be very excited about a new pet. There should be extra attention to manage their interactions to prevent stressing the new dog. Other inappropriate dog-to-dog interactions are nipping, running into the other dog very hard, or grabbing from behind the other dog's neck or legs. Some anxious dogs will hump other dogs. All of these rude actions should be stopped immediately by the humans. Letting dogs who just met handle these types of things on their own could end up in a serious dog fight.

If there is another dog already in the home it's best if the introduction takes place at a neutral location. Just a few doors down is neutral enough for most dogs. For dogs who aren't the happy-go-lucky anything-goes type, take it slow. Begin by going for a walk together. Start off side-by-side with the humans in control. As long as the dogs can't stop staring at each other, they are not ready to physically interact. When the dogs can look in other directions, turn their back to the other dog, and sit or lay down, they are ready to sniff each other and interact, as long as it stays appropriate.

Once the dogs have successfully walked together the next step is to introduce them together to the backyard. If there is any concern about a dog, hold their leash until they

calm down. Next, move to inside the house. Keep the new dog on the leash. If the current dog in the home is behaving with attitude or jealousy they should be on the leash, too.

An alternate method to introduce dogs is to bring the new dog in the house without the current dog present. Allow the new dog to sniff around a little then place them in a crate. Introduce the current dog into the room and let them meet and interact through the crate barrier for a few seconds at a time. Don't allow the current dog to stress out the new dog. They should be able to be in the room together peacefully. Until the dogs are comfortable together they can be rotated in the crate. That way each dog gets time out in the house and with the people. If the dog in the crate is barking or growling tell them firmly to, "Stop it!" If that doesn't work then cover the crate with a sheet for a short period of time. Blocking the visual stimuli will cause most dogs to calm down. Take the dogs on leash walks together will help them bond.

The day a new pet joins the family it is special and will forever be remembered. It is important to understand this is a stressful time for most new additions. With the knowledge of how to help them adjust, it won't be long before the new arrival is settled in and enjoying life and all the people, places, and experiences to come.

Valerie Broadway, the Canine Coach, is a dog trainer and behavioral specialist. For more information, call 919-542-4726 or visit www.caninecoachingservices.com.

Chatham County Government Goes Solar

by Jim Warren and Amanda Robertson

Chatham County is strong in community involvement. Perhaps one of the strongest in the state. We have consistently had the highest percentage of voter turnout in general elections for years, including the highest in 2016 at over 76 percent. We had the highest citizen participation in the Solarize North Carolina program a few years ago during a statewide push for solar energy – an effort led by Durham-based NC WARN. In the 2014-15 program the most residential solar installations were right here in Chatham County.

According to long-time Chatham resident, Jerry Markatos, this follows a pattern that dates back at least to when he and Cathy moved here in the early 1970's for how Chatham citizens "have that independent spirit you find in rural communities like ours, where we want to make responsible energy choices," so we seek solar solutions to heat and power our homes. He said that "it's nice when our homes can take care of us, instead of the other way around." One example he gave, from the early 1980's, was how St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Pittsboro worked with people of all ages to put solar heating window boxes on homes, "particularly for folks who could use help with home heating." The boxes would heat the air on its way into the house. Markatos said, chuckling, that the St. Bart's project was called "Energy from Heaven." He also said that while not many can live completely off grid, there's

been a steady increase of solar supplemented home electric installations for decades.

So, given our past and the people who call Chatham "home," it should come as no surprise that Chatham County will very likely be the first county in North Carolina to transition, almost entirely, to clean, affordable solar energy on county-owned facilities. Nor should it surprise you that this is just what a group of Chatham citizens asked of county commissioners this past June 18 at their monthly board meeting. But let's not jump ahead of ourselves.

HOW THIS CAME ABOUT...

In Spring 2015 a group of Chatham County citizens concerned about climate change started meeting to talk about how the county might support our community in a transition to clean, renewable energy and away from fossil fuels. On September 21, 2015 these citizens proposed, and Chatham County Commissioners by unanimous vote approved, the creation of a Climate Change Advisory Committee. The purpose of this committee is to make recommendations to the County Board of Commissioners and others regarding likely climate change impacts in Chatham County and ways to mitigate and adapt to these impacts.

Then in early 2017 Chatham County Commissioners were again asked by citizens to adopt a resolution supporting a county, state and national transition from a fossil fuel-based commercial electric grid to an energy system that is based 100 percent on renewable

or carbon-free sources by 2050 or sooner. Commissioners voted to adopt this resolution, by unanimous vote, on June 19, 2017.

A year later, just this past June 18, County Commissioners were asked by a citizen group, Chatham Clean Path, to put forward a Request For Proposal to solarize all county-owned facilities that can feasibly be supported by solar electricity. And again, by unanimous vote, commissioners supported county citizens' request and will be releasing an RFP this September 2018 to solarize county buildings.

CHATHAM CLEAN PATH

Chatham Clean Path is a citizen action team made up of Chatham volunteers who support a move to local, reliable, clean, sustainable – and cheaper – solar energy for homes, businesses, churches, farms, hospitals, schools, community centers – really, everywhere we use electricity in our county. It is part of a larger effort in our state, NC Clean Path 2025, led by the same organization back in 2014 who started the Solarize North Carolina program, NC WARN.

NC Clean Path 2025 is a plan for the entire state to move to clean, cheaper solar power. It is the only detailed clean energy plan in the entire country that outlines a strategy for an entire state to move to solar energy. The 100-page, peer-reviewed plan was created by San Diego engineer Bill Powers for NC WARN. It shows how solar energy, generated near where it's used, combined with batteries and energy-saving programs, is a far cheaper and more reliable path than the fracked natural gas future Duke Energy, and even most of the energy cooperatives in our state, have in mind for us all. And it shows that we can, in fact, quickly replace coal and gas in a way that's far cheaper and will include all customers. There is no reason to delay. The problem is, Duke Energy and the NC Utilities Commission aren't listening to citizens, and aren't paying attention to the cost savings solar would mean for all of us. The solar with storage path is now cheaper than kilowatts we're buying from the grid. And it would avoid the tens of billions of dollars in constant rate hikes Duke Energy plans to pay for all of the pipelines, fracked gas power plants, and grid upgrades in order to keep supporting dirty energy production.

Installing solar is one of the best investments most of us can make today, with returns of as much as 5 to even 12 percent and greater in most cases. If you pay a monthly power bill, it is an investment that can dramatically lower that bill. That money stays in your pocket every single month. Within a few years, the

investment pays for itself and then keeps saving you money for many years.

In part, this is because the price of solar and batteries has dropped significantly since the solar push in 2014 and 2015, and financing solar has also been streamlined, sometimes using only the solar equipment as collateral (rather than your home or business).

But on top of the drop in prices, there are also several great solar incentives! Right now, and through the end of 2019, there is a 30 percent federal tax credit on solar installations for home owners. The percentage of the credit is lower after 2019 and expires in 2022. The tax credit is also available for businesses and, while the percentage is lower in 2019, it isn't currently set to expire completely.

In addition, Duke Energy has a Solar Energy Rebate program for up to \$6,000 for residential customers, up to \$50,000 for commercial customers, and up to \$75,000 for nonprofit customers, depending on the size of each system. Nonprofit customers include local governments (like our county, and Pittsboro and Siler City), and also our public schools. This rebate can be used for each location that has a separate energy meter. While there are caps set by Duke, it means the county, or a school system like CCCC, can qualify for their solar rebate on all buildings that have their own energy meter. It makes sense for Chatham County because it is clean, reliable energy that's generally cheaper than current grid power, and because it is an investment in the community rather than just another expense.

The more solar we all invest in, the further it discredits Duke executives' case to keep building gas plants and pipelines. And with only 6 percent of their 2031 energy plan allocated to renewable energy, we cannot rely on them to be in the driver's seat of our energy future.

Learn more about Chatham Clean Path, about volunteering to help spread solar across our county, and get more information on the cost of solar and how YOU can get solar on your home, business or facility, at www.chathamcleanpath.org

Learn more about the NC Clean Path 2025 plan and how NC WARN – which was formed by Chatham and Lee residents 30 years ago – is working to help bring clean, reliable, cheaper, solar energy to all of North Carolina communities, at www.ncwarn.org

Jim Warren is Executive Director of NC WARN. Amanda Robertson is volunteer team lead for Chatham Clean Path and serves on the Executive Board for NC Climate Solutions Coalition



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