

## The 12 Dogs of Christmas

By MARK GILCHRIST  
Photographer

Fewer dogs await adoption at the Columbus County Animal Shelter than in years past, but there are always plenty who are looking for good homes.

Director Rossie Hayes, his assistant Loretta Shipman, and the volunteers who help improve the lives of stranded or abandoned animals around the county welcome visitors to the facility off Legion Drive in Whiteville.

Visitors may view dogs and cats that

are up for adoption anytime during business hours, and available animals may be viewed through the department's county website, or through Petfinder.com at any time.

Most animals arrive at the shelter after being reported as strays, and those must be held for 72 hours – with Saturday and Sunday excluded – before they can be adopted.

New this year is the requirement that all animals adopted out of the shelter must first be spayed or neutered. This

increased the adoption fees to \$85 for males and \$115 for females, with a \$20 surcharge for animals weighing more than 50 pounds.

The sharp increase in the fees did not dampen enthusiasm for adoption; in November, 142 animals were adopted out of 152 that were taken in.

We photographed 12 dogs that as of Monday afternoon were available for adoption. Call the shelter at 641-3945 or visit their website for more information.

