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## Billboards promote cat ordinance



Several Eastern Connecticut State University students designed billboards to publicize Windham's spay and neuter ordinance, including Malachi Maynard of Canterbury, above, and Ashley Elliott of Somers, below.



By DAVID HINCHEY  
Chronicle Staff Writer

WILLIMANTIC — To help spread the word on the town's cat ordinance, students at Eastern Connecticut State University have crafted billboards, T-shirts and posters to raise awareness.

They hope to drive home the point behind Windham's recently approved spay/neuter ordinance. Their work will be visible all over town this month and next.

Some of the posters have already gone up in town, while T-shirts will be sold to help CATS Northeast — a Mansfield-based nonprofit feline rescue group that frequently aids people with spaying and neutering cats.

The ordinance, which was passed in June and went into effect July 1, sought to get to the root of the feline overpopulation problem. The ordinance targets people who don't take responsibility for their own pets.

"I think the town has a terrific ordinance," said Joan Lamont of CATS Northeast.

"It's a good time to raise awareness," she said, adding she likes one of the images with four cats standing in front of Victorian buildings. Lamont said it gives it a real "city" look to it.

Lamont said she has continued to work with cats and is expanding her efforts by looking into starting their own spay/

neutering clinics.

Mansfield has a similar ordinance, which was adopted in 2006. Windham was the first city or urban community to pass an ordinance.

"Windham is unique in adopting the ordinance as an urban community where enforcement is an even greater challenge," Lamont said in a news release.

According to the release, Lamont contacted June Bisantz, professor of digital art and design at ECSU, and Bisantz's class, the ECSU Design Group, took on the project.

The slogan, which appears on the posters and billboards, is "Windham Takes Responsibility — for Spay & Neuter Assistance 860-942-9676 or CATSNortheast.org," the release said.

"This was a wonderful project for my students," said Bisantz. "They learned about Wil-

limantic and the character of it's people, they learned that the commitment and courage of an individual like Joan (Lamont) can affect real community change and most of all, that compassion is an important part of our humanity, ultimately defining who we are."

With the billboards, T-shirts and posters, officials hope it will deliver important information about the ordinance and give people a number to call for assistance.

According to the release, the students researched the topic and town regulations and became aware of the challenges the community faced dealing with animal overpopulation.

The ECSU design group has done other projects, including billboards for Windham's FrogFest, promotional items for Third Thursday Street Fests, interior banners for the Willimantic Juvenile Court and other seasonal street banners for downtown, the release said.

The ordinance seeks to reduce the number of unwanted animals, contribute to the welfare of cats, eliminate the unnecessary euthanasia of cats and kittens and require good and timely veterinary care, the ordinance states.

Violators of the ordinance can be fined \$90 and, after 30 days, the fine could double and additional citations could be issued for each day following as separate violations.

Also included in the ordinance is a proposed fund — administered by the town and fueled by donations and fines — to help with spay and neutering costs for those in need.

The ordinance also allows for extended time for someone in violation to respond. Those feeding, but not owning stray or feral cats, are not to be fined under the ordinance.

For more information or to order T-shirts, visit [www.catsnortheast.org](http://www.catsnortheast.org) or call 942-9676 or [www.junebisantz.com](http://www.junebisantz.com).