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NORFOLK DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

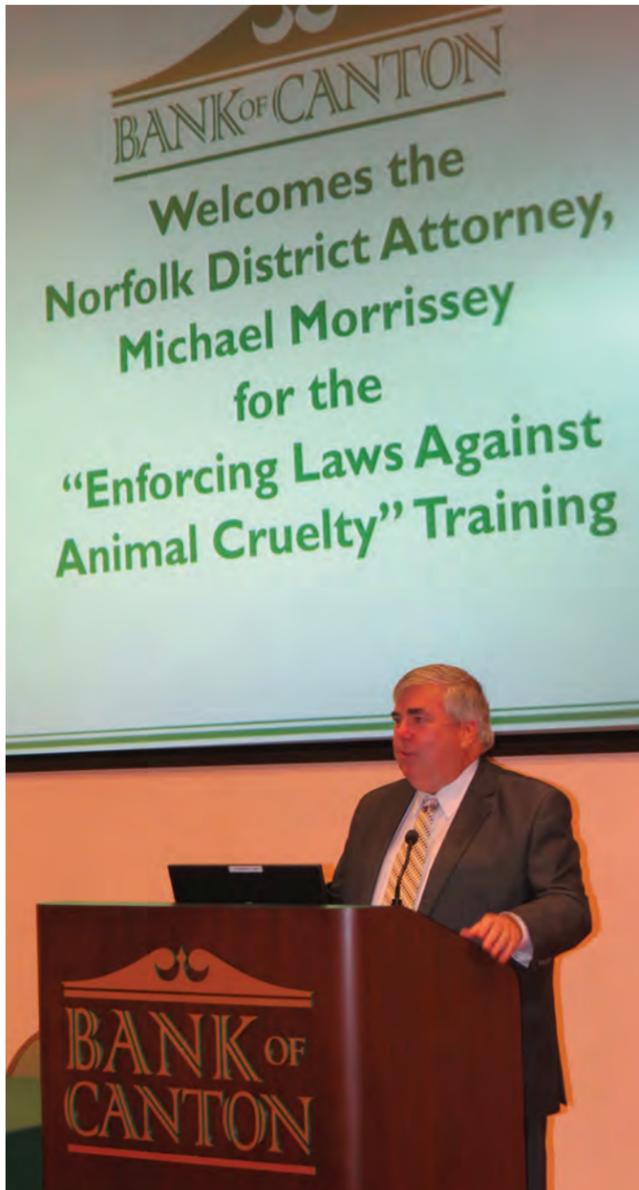
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Press Release

DA Michael Morrissey Hosts Animal Protection Seminar

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Laws governing animal protection changed in 2014, and Norfolk District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey hosted more than 120 animal control officers, police, veterinarians and prosecutors from across the state last week for a seminar on what is new, and how to effectively prosecute cases involving animals.

Animal Control Officers, Police Officers and others from eighteen Norfolk County communities joined DA Morrissey and another hundred colleagues from across the state at the all-day event, held in the seminar space at the Bank of Canton headquarters on January 22.

"It is now easier for authorities to understand when they have authority to intervene and enter private property to save an animal in an emergency situation," District Attorney Morrissey said. "Assistant Essex District Attorney Lynsey Legier, the trial attorney whose case went to the Supreme Judicial Court clarifying those rules opened the seminar."

Assistant Norfolk District Attorney Tracey Cusick presented an overview of prosecuting animal cruelty cases. Cusick also discussed mandatory reporting to police by veterinarians who find signs of abuse and enhanced penalties for cruelty which were signed into law on August 20, 2014. That legislation grew out of public sentiment on an animal cruelty case Cusick is prosecuting in Norfolk Superior Court – the so-called "Puppy Doe" case.

"We also had experts in gathering and preserving physical evidence of abuse, computer evidence, and the process for obtaining and executing search warrants in animal cases," District Attorney Morrissey said. Retired Chief Judge of the Juvenile Court Martha Grace, who now works in child and animal welfare, also presented.

"We tried to address the entirety of the process, from making animals safe at initial contact to the trial process," Morrissey said. "Many in the room had their own expertise in specific portions of that continuum, but it is helpful to know the larger picture and how it all fits together."

Morrissey said it is hard to measure the ancillary benefit of having more than 120 dedicated animal protection advocates together for an entire day learning, talking and networking. "We had representatives from the Cape and South Coast, the New Hampshire line, and out to Western Mass. Hopefully this bolsters our ability to work together toward the common goal, as ADA Legier put it, of saving the animals and punishing the abusers."

