South Central Bell warned its customers against leaving pets in closed cars during the summer in BELL NOTES, a short publication sent with telephone bills. Over the last year, the illustrated message reached 700,000 customers in Mississippi, 1,300,000 in Louisiana and 1,302,000 in Tennessee.

Companies that publish employee newsletters or other items such as BELL NOTES generally are looking for interesting and informative material. Why not take your messages about pet care and responsible pet ownership to a company in your area and suggest that it be included in their publications? Your first item can warn readers about the difficulties involved in bringing home a pet from the shelter for Christmas. Explain that the hustle and bustle of the season is too hard on puppies and kittens, and that a gift pet is better selected and brought home after the holiday season.

The BELL NOTES item was brought to the attention of SHELTER SENSE by Louise Jennings, Chairman of the Jefferson Parish (LA) Animal Shelter Advisory Board.

Impounded dogs should be provided with resting boards, such as the plastic platform shown here. The boards can also be hinged to a wall so they can be raised for cleaning. Resting boards are available from such animal product suppliers as Mason Kennel Systems (PO Box 1350, Leesburg, OH 45135), Bob Long Kennel Systems (Gambrills, MD 21054), Fabri-Form (Byesville, OH 43723) and Dentin Mfg. Co. (1490 Lampson Ave., Garden Grove, CA 92641). (Please note that mention of these companies does not constitute an endorsement by HSUS.) The plastic pads used under air conditioning compressors are also suitable and generally inexpensive.

A sensible gift idea

If you know of a humane society, animal control agency or concerned individual who isn't receiving SHELTER SENSE, but should -- give them a gift subscription.

Send in your check or money order with the recipient's name and address to SHELTER SENSE, HSUS, 2100 L Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20037. We will inform the recipient of your gift.

Subscription rates are $5 for one year (6 issues) -- $4 per subscription if five or more are sent to the same address.

The late beloved Morris turned finickiness into the international image for cats in the well-known cat food television commercials.

But all fun aside, cats are sensitive creatures, and the strange environment of the animal shelter can reduce their resistance to disease.

When a cat comes into the shelter, check for these signs of disease:

-- pus-like discharge or crusty, hardened matter around the eyes or nose;
-- drooling, rawness or offensive odor in the mouth;
-- scabs or sores on the skin, or thin, dull hair;
-- pale or irritated gums;
-- discharge or black and crusty wax in the ears;
-- listlessness or lameness, vomiting or diarrhea, coughing or sneezing.

If any of these signs are present, have your veterinarian examine the cat and recommend action.

Here are some important measures to reduce cat disease at your shelter:

-- Litter trays must be disposable or cleaned daily; they are a major point of disease transmission.
-- Use dishes that are disposable or stainless steel; do not use dishes that can crack or chip.
-- Hose cleaning is not enough; follow it with hand cleaning and disinfecting.
-- It is better for cages to be back to back than facing each other. Air should be exhausted and not recirculated. A dirt floor in a shelter invites disease, since it cannot be disinfected.
-- Isolation areas should be completely isolated from the rest of the shelter.
-- Disinfect the inside of cage doors where cats press their noses.
-- Because of the stress on an animal from confinement in a shelter, cat health can be jeopardized by holding them for excessively long periods of time.