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An Animal Control Officer holds on to Taz' leash. This is the photo that was used to confirm that this was Taz, Billy King's faithful pet who got lost in Walmart's parking lot and ended up somewhere in Colorado. Courtesy photo

## **Trucker's dog lost at Liberal's Walmart, rescued from certain death in Colorado**

By GISEELLE ARREDONDO

• Leader & Times

He was in the Liberal Walmart parking lot when he last saw his faithful pet.

Billy King, a truck driver for National Carriers, lost his beloved dog, Taz, at Walmart's parking lot Sept. 27.

"I drive a semi, and I was parked at Walmart.," King said. "I woke up in the morning, and Taz needed to go outside. I let him out on his leash and then got back in the truck and got dressed.

"I went to let him back in again and he had slipped out of his holster. I saw him running around out there so I hurried up and got out there and called for him.

"He ran up to me and nabbed at my legs, playing and took off again. He wanted me to chase him, so I kinda ran around trying to find him around Walmart. He went around the corner and that was the last I saw him," King said.



He checked with the shelter in town, but they didn't have Taz.

"I called them that same day and they said that if they found him they would call me," he said. "A couple of days later, I got a load out of Liberal so I had to leave."

When King finally arrived home a week later, he started using the Internet and got on Facebook and started spreading the word.

His Facebook status read, "Taz was seen on Tucker Road out by the lake near Liberal, Kansas a few hours ago. I'm in Hastings Nebr. Could someone please check out there to see if he is still

around. He is a good dog and wouldn't hurt a flea .... Please call Bill at 402-705-4459."

Friends of friends on Facebook who were also animal lovers themselves shared King's post and joined in the search for Taz.

"I got a couple of calls from people saying that they'd be riding around trying to find him," King said.

After Susan Savely saw the Facebook post that Billy King had made – it had been shared by friends of friends – she drove around and looked for the dog, too.

Savely saw the post on Facebook with the attached picture around 10:30 a.m. on Oct. 3.

"Bill had received a phone call stating that the dog had been seen up by Windridge Pointe Lake earlier that morning," Savely said. "Over my lunch hour, I drove the area and looked with no sign. Jacque Rice also drove around and looked and did not see Taz.

"(I) stopped by the Liberal Animal Shelter and asked them with picture in hand that I had printed off and was told that they did not have Taz and had not seen Taz, but they did have a picture and the information," she said.

"I had reposted on Facebook on several different pages, including Talk Liberal where Debra Huddleston seen the post among others," Savely continued. "She thought to check with Louise Collins – both are with Great Plains Angels for Animals – to see if there was a chance that Taz had been in the last transport to Colorado."

Debra Huddleston, who is with Cimarron Pathology and volunteers with Great Plains Angels for Animals, then emailed the picture to Louise Collins, who is also with Angels for Animals.

“The dog had very distinctive markings on its front legs,” Huddleston said.

Savely continued, “After checking, Louise sent Debra a picture of a dog that was transported to L.O.L.A in Littleton, Colo., asking if this was the dog.

“Debra emailed the picture to me, and Debra and I both agreed that this was the dog,” Collins said.

“Debra sent the picture to Bill by email, and Bill confirmed that it was Taz, at which point I believe that Debra was able to give the foster home Bill’s information so that they could contact him,” she said.

Huddleston said when King heard the good news, “There was yelling and cheering in the background.”

“I believe that Bill went and picked up Taz around Oct. 4 in Colorado,” Savely said.

Come to find out, Liberal Animal Control had picked up Taz on Sept. 27.

Through Facebook and several caring animal lovers, Bill and Taz were reunited.

“Bill had tried to do all the right things as he had contacted Liberal Animal Shelter/Control, Liberal Police Department and Seward County Sheriff’s Department when Taz went missing, I think there are several of us that are wanting and waiting to meet both of them,” Savely said.

Huddleston agreed that there were so many things that could have gone wrong.

“It didn’t get run over, picked up by the shelter, put down or adopted out. It all fell into place with the right people,” Huddleston said. “It’s a miracle.”

A moment later she added, “The dog hadn’t been adopted, but it was neutered.”

“He’s lucky,” King said of his dog.

King also said that he was pleased that his dog was neutered, because Taz was supposed to have been neutered when he first got him but didn’t due to miscommunication.

King said that maybe that way, Taz will “settle down.”

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