

Kentucky Store Harbors Pets in Wake of Ice Storm

Store owner housing more than 100 pets while state struggles to restore power.

By Stephanie Brown

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E'town Pet Center, a pet store in Elizabethtown, Ky., is providing free boarding for pets after a deadly ice storm ravaged the state last week, knocking out power for hundreds of thousands of households.

Store owner Caterina Finley said the store is taking in small animals, reptiles, birds and fish for pet owners without power. Limited space is available for small dogs and cats. Finley said the store will continue to accept animals until it runs out of space or power is restored.

"We're here for the customers and their pets and will do anything in our power to satisfy their needs," she said.

The ice storm, which began in the Midwest, hit Kentucky on Jan. 27. The heavy ice caused tree branches to snap and downed power lines. As of Feb. 2, more than a quarter-million Kentucky residents were still without power, according to reports.

Many residents have sought the refuge of emergency shelters, but Finley said most shelters do not allow pets. She said she and her staff were fortunate enough to be able to take their pets to the store, which did not lose power, and they wanted to provide the same relief to others.

"Making it easier for these families that are already devastated was the right thing to do," she said.

The 3,500-square-foot store is currently housing 13 dogs — seven of which belong to Finley, whose house is among those without power — and more than 100 other animals ranging from fish to birds.

Finley said she and her staff have been working around the clock to care for the pets.

"Everybody's pulled together and it's just been great," she said, adding that some customers have donated pet food and supplies.

Finley said the storm has convinced her to purchase a generator for the store to be better prepared in future.