

Shelters Begin Devising Disaster Prep Plans

Mississippi animal facilities are deciding what to do when a calamity strikes.

A handful of Mississippi animal shelter representatives will meet in Hinds County next week to recruit volunteers and discuss handling an influx of cats and other animals in natural-disaster situations.

Last year, many pets stayed at the Mississippi Fairgrounds when Hurricane Katrina hit, but area shelter representatives and volunteers said they hope area shelters will be more prepared this year for emergencies.

Some area shelters, such as the Mississippi Animal Rescue League, have begun to prepare for emergency situations already.

League executive director Debra Boswell said the shelter has obtained a disaster trailer to use in emergencies. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) donated the trailer.

In addition, the Community Animal Rescue and Adoption has been looking into buying a cargo van, because during and after Hurricane Katrina last year, the shelter had to transport many animals to out-of-state shelters, then in some cases, pick them up again.

Also, the Jackson Friends of the Animal Shelter is planning to post on its website whom to contact if an evacuee needs help managing an animal, said volunteer coordinator Amy Brunson.

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