

Before Disaster Strikes

Last year on this date we reported that “Florida had recently seen some of the worst that nature can do to our daily lives” from the series of hurricanes that hit the state. The devastation Katrina has wrought has proven that to be wrong.

We cannot prevent disaster from happening but we can attempt to prepare for the worst. In Valencia County our biggest concerns are; drought, Bosque fires, outages from high winds, lowland flooding, and on this date, in the backs of our minds, are terrorist attacks.

It is difficult enough to plan security for our families and homes, but what about our pets and livestock? The number and variety of pets and livestock companions makes evacuation or preservation much more complex.

In addition to planning for catastrophic events it is important to prepare for personal disasters. What will happen to your animals if you are in a car accident? Have a serious illness? Or, are unable to get home when planned?

Many of us procrastinate making plans because it is painful to think about the possible, probable, and the inevitable. But we must consider the hard fact - our pets rely completely upon us for their comfort and safety.

Last year I said I had done preliminary planning - thought about it and that is about all. However, I had decided that on September 11th of each year I will review my plans for disaster preparedness and replenish my supplies. Today is the day.

I have placed small plastic port-a-kennels, with a water bowl and food dish in each, for the foster dogs in my rescue kennel. There is another one in the closet for the two small dogs that share our bedroom. Two other dogs sleep in the laundry room and have a kennel ready outside the door in the garage. If we have only a short time to evacuate we can grab the dogs and fit them all in the SUV.

We have a two horse trailer, however, we also have four horses. Evacuation would require multiple trips or moving two by vehicle and two by hoof. Of course, a barn fire would not

The animals pictured below are only available for three days, but there are plenty of other choices! Visit the Valencia County Shelter, 1209 NM 314, one mile south of Main Street in Los Lunas. Open 8:00 am - 4:00 pm Tues - Sat. 866-2479



Preassembled first aid kits for companion animals are available at most pet shops and feed stores. They are convenient but can be expensive. You can put together a custom kit for less and you will be more familiar with its contents. Be sure to check for any out-dated items and replace at them least once a year.

necessarily affect the dogs at the house and vice-versa. In the event we have to leave the property for a long period of time, we need to think through more detailed plans.

Water is a precious commodity in New Mexico on a normal day, disaster could mean none available at all. I don't usually keep bottled water on hand, but think that needs to be included in my plans. We do keep several (partially filled) bottles in the freezer now. I have also been thinking that I need to stock up on simple emergency medical needs: disinfectant, Telfa pads, self-stick “Vet-wrap”, ace bandage, duct tape, sterile eye wash, and Neosporin or other antibiotic ointment, tweezers, scissors, etc. and make a kit. On the other hand, there are some pre-made first aid kits available at feed stores and pet shops that are already stocked with the basics. If you have any pets with medical problems you need to have extra medications, and the means to keep them viable, on hand.

Katrina has reminded us of how vulnerable we are. Our pets have no concept of “disaster”. They trust us to plan for them as we plan for the rest of our family. Will you be ready?

HURRICANE KATRINA Funds to assist rescued animals

The human suffering and loss from this disaster is overwhelming. There are literally hundreds of agencies offering assistance to help rescue, care for and comfort the survivors. If you have donated to and supported some of those organizations, but are still able to give more to help the animals, the following are some groups you may consider making a donation to:

Louisiana Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals www.la-spca.org for on-line donations. Animals have been moved to a temporary shelter. Shelter will have to be rebuilt. Hands-on care for animal victims in New Orleans.

American Kennel Club (www.akc.org) AKC CAR Canine Support Relief Fund-Katrina. 260 Madison Ave. 4th floor, New York, NY 10016-2401

Best Friends Animal Society (www.bestfriends.com) 5001 Angel Canyon Rd, Kanab, Utah 84741 Staff on location and taking in animals to their Utah adoption facility.

Code 3 Associates (www.code3associates.org) P.O. Box 1128 Erie, Co, 80516. Disaster Response and Training.

Noah's Wish (www.noahswish.com) P.O. Box 997, Placerville, CA 95667 Disaster Response and Training.

Humane Society of the United States (www.hsus.org) 2100 L Street NW, Washington, DC 20037. Fund to assist in disasters.

Petco (www.petco.com) on-line & two ABQ in-store donation sites, or 7262 North Rosemead Blvd, San Gabriel, CA 91775

PetSmart Charities (www.petsmart.com) on-line and two ABQ in-store donation sites, or 196001 N 27th Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85027

United Animal Nations (www.uan.org) P.O. Box 188890, Sacramento, CA 95818. Disaster Response and Funds.

Please be careful in making your donations. There are always scams to take advantage of the emotions and out pouring of kindness in the aftermath of disaster. Only donate to those you know and trust.

Article and Photos by Judy Babcock, Quixote Humane, Inc.