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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate use

**SPOKANIMAL AIDES SPOKANE HUMANE EVACUATION ANIMAL RESCUE TEAM (HEART)
IN PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR PETS DISPLACED BY AREA FIRES**

Spokane, Wash., July 19, 2023 – SpokAnimal is helping Spokane Humane Evacuation Animal Rescue Team (HEART) provide emergency care services for pets impacted by area fires. Efforts began on Friday, as the two agencies transported dozens of pets to safety. Under HEART’s direction, emergency sheltering operations were established, and later relocated as the fire spread. Now, from a new base at Spokane Falls Community College, SpokAnimal’s staff and HEART are providing 24-hour pet care for over 40 cats, two dozen dogs, and a couple hamsters. HEART is also assisting with over 20 equines boarded at the Fairgrounds. These numbers are fluid as the fires continue to rage and additional care needs arise. SpokAnimal and HEART are also in contact with the Red Cross and those aiding pets in Newport, and will provide support as needed.

SpokAnimal executive director, Dori Peck stated, “The importance of community is everything in a situation like this. We’re honored to work alongside HEART. They are an amazing group of people that come to the community’s aid in situations like this. We are also acutely aware of the devastation this has caused to humans since two of our own staff have homes in the Medical Lake evacuation area. We had two other employees at a work function in Elk at the time evacuation notices took effect. It’s a bit humbling that even under that duress, they are at work and in rotation to provide 24/7 pet support at the emergency pet shelters..”

Those interested in donating supplies or making monetary donations to help care for displaced pets are encouraged to drop off cat litter and pet food at SpokAnimal’s Resource Center located at 715 N. Crestline Ave., or visit <https://spokanimal.org/make-a-donation/>. SpokAnimal will distribute donations to emergency shelter sites. This will help ensure staffing at these locations can remain focused on animal care.

HEART, which is a FEMA-trained, volunteer-run, non-profit, was deployed under a Memorandum of Understanding with Spokane County Emergency Management. Those interested in joining the group, or in financially supporting the group, can learn more at <https://www.heartofspokane.org/>.

SpokAnimal encourages community members who have lost or have found a pet to use the Petco Love Lost website, www.lost.petcolove.org in addition to community lost and found pet pages on Facebook. Facebook pages provide a quick and easy way to exchange info, however it can be daunting sorting through a running stream of posts. Love Lost is a database that uses artificial intelligence data recognition. That helps users quickly see potential matches that are entered in the system, without the need to view all other posts. It has the added advantage of being able to notify users when new potential matches are entered into the system. Petco Love is integrated with most national animal shelter databases, including SpokAnimal and SCRAPS, so once the shelter uploads photos of intakes, users can determine if the pet is at a facility without having to call.

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About SpokAnimal

SpokAnimal was founded in 1983 and has become Eastern Washington's largest humane society for pet adoptions. Last year, it found homes for 4,031 animals. Over 60 percent of the shelter's intake was from owner-surrendered animals and transfers from the local municipal shelter, SCRAPS. The other portion of animals arrives through its vibrant transport program, which allows it to save pets from areas where overcrowding and euthanizing for space are still unfortunate realities. SpokAnimal's foster program helps it care for fragile and vulnerable animals. Its vet clinic supports both shelter and public pets with spay/neuter services, microchips, vaccines and dentals. Ad hoc care for pets, such wound care, pregnancy complications, and digestive issues, is provided for public pets as staffing and finances allow. The Guardian Angel emergency boarding service and Pet Food Bank are other programs that support the local community. To further enhance animal welfare in the community, partnerships with organizations such as Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington, Meals on Wheels Spokane, The Salvation Army (TRAC shelter), The Red Cross, Family Promise and Best Friends are core to SpokAnimal's outreach. Those interested in supporting our nonprofit's work can contribute online at www.spokanimal.org.