

HURRICANE KATRINA

ONE YEAR LATER

PAWS plans return**Spay-neuter clinic planned in Miss.**

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Almost a year after coordinating two rescue missions to Saline County, Ark., and retrieving more than 200 homeless pets lost in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Alexis Fasseas, a co-founder of PAWS Chicago, still remembers the ticks on the dogs and cats pulled from the toxic flood waters in New Orleans.

"They were the size of grapes," Fasseas recalled. "A lot of them had skin rashes and other storm-related injuries, and a third of the dogs were heartworm positive."

With resources stretched thin in dozens of animal humane agencies working to save terrified pets clinging to rooftops in the affected hurricane area, PAWS Chicago assembled a five-van convoy with just six hours notice, and drove all night to an animal shelter outside of Little Rock that was housing the first wave of surrendered animals. Many families in the hurricane-stricken area were forced to relinquish their beloved pets to no-kill shelters, rather than risk having them starve or be euthanized by authorities.

The first rescue mission brought back 55 dogs and cats to PAWS Chicago's Lurie Spay/Neuter Clinic in Little Village. That following week, more than 500 potential adopters lined the street around the clinic. All of the pets in the first group were adopted within hours, and

PAWS Chicago when back to Arkansas a second time to bring more Katrina pets back to Chicago.

Next month, PAWS Chicago will return to the south to conduct a three-day, free spay and neuter clinic for residents of Hancock County, Mississippi. The area, about 45 minutes from New Orleans, was devastated by Hurricane Katrina one year ago, and the local shelter has had significant problems since.

Today, more than half of the county's residents are residing in FEMA trailers, homeless cats and dogs are having litters on the streets, and people are bringing in their own litters of puppies and kittens. Many people are so frustrated at their situation, they are giving up their own pets.

**For more on
rescued pets
see Currents page 49**

PAWS Chicago will be providing vaccinations and other services, assisted by volunteers from the veterinary school at the University of Illinois. In addition, the Lincoln Park animal rescue group will be transporting more homeless animals to Chicago.

During the coming year, PAWS Chicago is planning more free, spay/neuter clinics in Mississippi to help reduce the pet overpopulation problem.

For more information about PAWS Chicago's spay-neuter Katrina project, visit the organization's web site at www.pawschicago.org, or contact Alexis Fasseas at alexis@pawschicago.org.