



Parish of Ascension

OFFICE OF THE PARISH PRESIDENT

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CARA, LSART and ASPCA Applaud Ascension Parish Government for Resources at Lamar Dixon

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GONZALES – Area animal advocacy groups applauded Ascension Parish Government for its proactive and responsive posture during the flood disaster that recently befell Ascension Parish.

“I was here 11 years ago after Hurricane Katrina working to shelter animals for 47 days. Frankly, federal, state and local responsiveness was lacking then. But now, I cannot praise Ascension Parish enough for its timely mobilization of any and all resources we needed,” said Dick Green, Senior Director for Disaster Response with the ASPCA.

“During this event, we have sheltered companion animals, show animals, livestock and even exotic birds at Lamar Dixon,” said Ascension Parish President Kenny Matassa. “I am very proud of my employees with Animal Control and Lamar Dixon who worked tirelessly to set up and house God’s creatures—both human and animal.”

“We have five barn managers, eight pin leaders, dozens of veterinary personnel and volunteers assisting in this effort,” said Renee Porrier, Incident Commander with LSART (Louisiana State Animal Response Team). “This site has run so smoothly because when we asked for resources, parish government responded with a quick ‘yes!’”

Porrier recounted the establishment of a joint operation between the human shelter and the animal shelter. Parish government provided a shuttle that ran between the two shelters each hour so that pet owners could reunify and take care of their animals.

“We are grateful to the community, especially PetSmart Charities, and to parish government for the support and rapid response. When we asked for something, they delivered within the hour,” said Virginia Smith, President of CARA (Companion Animal Rescue of Ascension).

Matassa added: “This is not just a human tragedy; this is also a story of our pets and animals in crisis. Thankfully our Lamar Dixon Expo Center was able to fully accommodate 800 people and 1,400 animals safely and securely.”

Additional partners in operating the animal shelter include the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine.



PICTURE CUTLINE 1 – Emergency animal shelter personnel are shown Sunday, Aug. 21 in Lamar-Dixon’s Arena D at one of the caging areas.



PICTURE CUTLINE 2 – Voluntary veterinary personnel have been busy caring for about 1,400 animals this past week at Lamar-Dixon.