

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Mass Power Outages Leads to Activation of Berks County Animal Response Team by Berks Emergency Management Agency

The Humane Society of Berks County, Berks County's leader in animal welfare, announced today that the Berks County Animal Response Team (Berks CART) has been activated by the Berks Emergency Management Agency. The activation occurred because of the massive power outages associated with last night's ice and rain storm and because of the likelihood of extended outages due to extremely high winds. Berks CART will be coordinating with Berks EMS and the Red Cross to provide safe haven for the pets of those forced out of their homes due to power outages. "We know that some people will not leave pets behind if emergency shelters cannot be provided for pets, too," said Humane Society executive director and Berks CART County Coordinator, Karel I. Minor. "Providing safe shelter for pets helps people get to safety and helps first responders and humane aid agencies help people in need."

Berks CART volunteers will be stationed at Red Cross emergency shelters at Tulpehocken High School, Bern Township; Wilson Southern Junior High School, Sinking Spring; and Oley Middle School, Oley. The pets of those seeking emergency shelter will be safely transported to the Humane Society of Berks County 11th Street, Reading, facility and other emergency animal shelter locations. The Humane Society will also be mobilizing its Ani-Meals on Wheels program and staff veterinarians to provide emergency animal food deliveries and medical care for those impacted by the power outages. "Whether it is shelter, food, or medical care, Berks CART and the Humane Society will be there to help," said Minor. Those requiring assistance should contact the Humane Society at 610-921-2348, ext. 26.

Berks CART is a local extension of the State Animal Response Team for Pennsylvania (PA SART). These Animal Response Teams are public/private/non-profit partnerships

intended to provide the volunteers, resources, organization, and financial commitment needed to plan for and respond to disaster of all types and sizes impacting animals in our state and county. The Humane Society of Berks County was named lead agency and coordinates Berks CART activity. “The Humane Society was glad to be able to bring Berks CART into action to help in this emergency situation,” said Minor. “We greatly appreciate all of the Berks CART volunteers who are helping in the transfer, treatment, and care of the animals. We also thank all those who have supported Berks CART financially and made this service possible.”

Berks CART is an entirely unfunded service. The costs of Berks CART are covered almost exclusively by the Humane Society of Berks County and by PA SART. No direct funding is received from State or local government. Minor says that an emergency like this shines a light on the lack of resources provided to programs and services like this. “We saw in Katrina that people would die, and place first responders at risk, rather than leave their pets,” he said. “Berks CART lacks proper facilities and equipment, placing our staff, volunteers and animals at risk while saving County and local government money by relieving them of this first responder burden. It is time that government picks up its fair share of the expense of protecting our fellow citizens.” Donations to support Berks CART can be made to the Humane Society of Berks County (www.berkshumane.org) or through the Pennsylvania State Animal Response Team website (www.pasart.org).

The Humane Society of Berks County serves all of Berks County and surrounding communities. It is a private, non-profit organization funded through donations and service fees. In addition to enforcing Pennsylvania’s animal cruelty laws, the Humane Society offers adoption services, spay and neuter services, humane education, pet behavioral counseling, and helps stray, injured and mistreated animals. The Humane Society of Berks County is located at 1801 N. 11th Street, Reading.

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