



Indian River County
Board of County Commissioners
Department of Emergency Services

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pet-Friendly Hurricane Shelter to Open in Indian River County

Indian River County plans to open its first "Pet-Friendly" hurricane shelter, just in time for the start of the official 2010 hurricane season.

Liberty Magnet School (6850 81st Street) in Vero Beach is the site of a new shelter where pet owners can safely be sheltered in the same facility with their pets during declared emergencies. The shelter is specifically designated for pet owners who live in the county's evacuation areas. While all Indian River County residents should be prepared for a disaster, residents of the following areas are most likely to be subjected to mandatory evacuation orders: the barrier island, manufactured homes, areas subject to flooding, and areas east of U.S. #1.

Our goal is to provide safe emergency sheltering for people **and** their pets. This initiative is a cooperative effort between Indian River County Emergency Management, Indian River County Animal Control, the School District of Indian River County, the Humane Society of Vero Beach & Indian River County and the American Red Cross North Treasure Coast Chapter. Liberty Magnet School principal Dale Klaus has been especially supportive of this community project.

Under the program, residents of the designated emergency evacuation area and their pets will be sheltered in separate designated areas of the facility. The Humane Society of Vero Beach & Indian River County and Indian River County Animal Control staff will jointly be responsible for monitoring the pet area of the shelter while the American Red Cross will be managing the area of the shelter designated for people.

Because of space limitations, those who want to use the shelter during declared emergencies are encouraged to pre-register. Owners will be required to show proof that they reside in the county evacuation area and that their pets have up-to-date vaccinations and rabies shots.

"The Pet-Friendly shelter concept is a very good idea because we know of instances where people with pets have elected to stay in their homes in the evacuation area during declared emergencies because they had no place that would take their pets," said John King, Indian River County Emergency Services Director.

Despite the existence of this new shelter, people who live in the emergency evacuation areas are strongly urged to make prior arrangements to go to the homes of friends or relatives who reside outside the area during declared emergencies. This is usually a more comfortable alternative for both people and pets than an evacuation shelter.

Residents in the emergency evacuation area who would like to pre-register for the new "Pet-Friendly" shelter can obtain an application on-line at www.irces.com or www.hsvb.org. Registration forms or additional information can also be obtained by calling the Humane Society of Vero Beach & Indian River County at 388-3331, Ext. 10.

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