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For Immediate Release

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PET TRAILER ARRIVES IN ARLINGTON

Arlington, VA, February 16 - **Today the Animal Welfare League of Arlington (the League) unveiled Arlington County's new disaster preparedness trailer. The trailer, purchased by the Arlington County Government with funds provided by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, is designed to help local residents' pets in the event of an emergency.** The 20-foot long trailer will remain stocked with everything needed to set up a temporary pet-friendly shelter in the event of an emergency, including animal crates, food and water dishes, litter pans, identification bands, pet food, and cleaning supplies.

The Arlington County Office of Emergency Management applied for a grant from the Department of Homeland Security in 2005 for emergency sheltering funds. Part of the grant proposal included shelter for residents' pets. When the grant was approved, the county began working with the Animal Welfare League to plan for the necessary supplies and operation for a pet shelter.

"After hurricane Katrina it became clear to everyone that the residents of Arlington County needed a place to shelter their pets in the event of a disaster. The League learned about the trailer idea at a national conference on disaster planning held by the Humane Society of the United States and decided it was just what the County needed," said Kay Speerstra, Executive Director of the League. "Over 60% of American households have at least one pet, so it's important to have a plan that includes them," added Speerstra.

In the event of an emergency, the Office of Emergency Management will call upon the League to set up a temporary shelter at a selected location. The League will tow the trailer to the chosen site and League staff and volunteers will set up and operate the shelter. Residents who need to evacuate will not have to leave their pets behind.

"We were pleased to work with Arlington County emergency planners to solve the problem of emergency pet sheltering," said Speerstra.

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Since 1944, the Animal Welfare League of Arlington has been committed to the humane treatment of animals and to the promotion of animal welfare. The League provides temporary care and refuge for homeless and suffering animals, places animals in suitable homes, provides animal control services to Arlington County, educates the public, and provides a wide variety of community services.

For further information, visit the League, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, noon to 7:00 p.m. or Saturday and Sunday, noon to 4:00 p.m. at 2650 S. Arlington Mill Drive; visit our Web site at www.awla.org.

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