

# COMMUNITY



## Cash crisis could impair Humane Society's work

Winter brings most cases of animal neglect, abuse.

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The winter months are the busiest time for Jefferson County Humane Society volunteers who respond to after-hours calls of animal neglect and abuse.

But Jean Woolery, the group's founder and director, has more to worry about than a busier schedule. Her group has only about \$80 to pay for veterinarian care and other supplies, and she worries what will happen without more money.

The Jefferson County Animal Control Department responds to calls of animal neglect during the day, but Woolery's group goes with sheriff's deputies on nights and weekends.

Animals need to be seen by a veterinarian, who must write a report that is necessary to seek charges against animal abusers.

### TO DONATE

Donations to the Jefferson County Humane Society can be mailed to PO Box 475, Fenton, Mo. 63026. If you see an abused or neglected animal, call society director Jean Woolery at 314-952-6413.

"Without that money for a vet report, then we're pretty much doomed," Woolery said.

About 15 people volunteer for her group, and they've responded to about 60 calls since last winter, she said. One of those cases concerned a Chihuahua whose owners moved from their mobile home and left the dog tied to

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## ABUSE • FROM B1

Humane Society faces its biggest demands for service during winter months

a dog house last winter. The dog survived and was adopted.

Volunteers also foster the abused animals and place them for adoption after they gain custody in court proceedings.

The Jefferson County situation is not unusual. Local governments have become more reliant on nonprofit animal rescue groups to help care for homeless animals at a time when increased numbers of animals need homes because families lose their homes or can no longer afford to care for the pets.

When the rundown pound on Gasconade Street in St. Louis closed last year, shelter duties were transferred to two nonprofits, Stray Rescue and Animal House.

The relationship has been rocky at times and has sparked dissent about how best to manage the city's stray-animal population.

But the city appears poised to open its own shel-

ter, possibly by February. Officials on Nov. 16 approved a new dog shelter, and cleared the way to use \$170,000 to retrofit a building on West Florissant Avenue and \$234,000 to hire a full-time veterinarian and three vet technicians.

The no-kill rescue Partners for Pets Humane Society, based in Troy, Ill., cared for homeless animals at the city's Warren Billhartz Animal Shelter. But the nonprofit ended its contract with the city this summer because "we couldn't keep our heads above water with the amount of animals coming in," said Nev Wellinghoff, the group's adoption coordinator.

The group doesn't accept animals from people who no longer want them and instead gets animals about to be euthanized at shelters.

But it has seen an uptick in recent months of people who adopt a pet, only to return it when they can no longer afford it.

"God knows, there's never a shortage of animals to rescue," Wellinghoff said.