



An effort of the  
Animal Shelter Committee  
of Rensselaer County, New York.

**PawsInShelters.com**

PRESS RELEASE

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## **ANIMALS ARE SUFFERING AS MAKE-SHIFT FACILITIES ARE STRUGGLING TO TAKE ON TOWNS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Rensselaer, NY, March 27, 2024** – As the demand for animal welfare services continues to surge in Rensselaer County, facility operators find themselves struggling with providing safe and animal-appropriate shelters for dogs that are found stray, abandoned or are in need of removal from harmful conditions. The facility operators are well intentioned, while municipalities are in a quandary as they try to comply with existing law requiring them to provide such facilities.

Currently, dogs that are picked up by animal control officers are brought to various locations inside and outside of the county. This is occurring despite the fact that there is a law in the State of New York requiring municipalities to provide shelter facilities for dogs. No such requirement for cats exists in New York State, yet let us not forget cats by law are domesticated, companion animals.

“Since January 2023 – more than a year ago – stray, abandoned, abused, and dangerous dogs have had only limited facilities in Rensselaer County available to them as they were picked up,” said Dr. Valerie Lang Waldin, a leading volunteer for Paws in Shelters. “ We commend the municipalities for trying to accommodate the influx of stray, abandoned and unwanted dogs in their respective towns, yet the facilities are often not animal-appropriate and certainly temporary. Many facility operators are also not equipped with the appropriate

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infrastructure, nor trained to deal with the animals' needs. Add to that the unexpectedly high costs for food, waste removal, and veterinary care, and you've got a dire situation for everyone."

Amy Stahlman, another lead volunteer, added, "If you are a dog owner, and your dog were to become lost and be picked up, you wouldn't even know where your pet was being brought, and in what conditions the animal were being held!" She continued, "It's becoming increasingly clear that appropriate facilities are desperately needed, and we are here to support the towns that choose to abide by the existing law that requires they establish such facilities or collaborate with other municipalities to do so."

The current situation was exacerbated by the surge in pet ownership during the pandemic, made worse by economic strains and societal changes and has led to a steep increase in the numbers of abandoned and abused animals and strays. This is compounded by the fact that traditionally available resources, namely the facilities of the Mohawk-Hudson Humane Society in Menands, NY, (a long-standing region-wide and well-run animal shelter) are no longer available to the residents and animals of Rensselaer County. Thus, Paws in Shelters is calling on town and county officials to abide by the law and work together to establish a central county wide animal shelter for dogs and cats in Rensselaer County.

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Paws in Shelters is an effort of the Animal Shelter Committee of Rensselaer County, New York, a loosely organized group of citizens concerned with animal welfare. Additional information and resources can be found at [PawsInShelters.com](http://PawsInShelters.com)