

For Immediate Release
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Dutchess County SPCA overwhelmed with cats

HYDE PARK, NY – The population of homeless felines at the Dutchess County SPCA has doubled in recent weeks. The shelter is housing over 450 homeless cats and kittens and is seeking donations of cat litter and food to help meet the overwhelming need. People wishing to make donations or those interested in adopting a cat should contact the shelter at 845.457.7722.

In July 2009 the shelter took in 121 cats. This is nearly double the 66 cats accepted the same month last year. Shelter officials note that the economy is the chief reason for the sudden population explosion. Requests to relinquish pets are up compared to last year while adoptions are down. Owners are more likely to report it was the cost of pet care or a change in living situation that prompted them to seek an appointment to relinquish a pet. In previous years, death of an owner topped the list.

Due to the large number of cats already at the shelter, the next open appointments to relinquish a pet are now two months away. Shelter staff are working with callers to find alternatives to relinquishment.

There is also an increase in the number of cats coming to the shelter needing spay/neuter surgeries and other medical care. Owners worried about the cost of medical care for their pets may be opting not to have pets altered. The shelter has added hours to its feline spay/neuter clinic to meet the increased demand.

“We are overwhelmed with cats and very much need the community’s support to handle the large number of animals being left in our care. We have not seen anything like this in years,” stated Joyce Garrity, Executive Director. She added, “we have worked very hard for the past decade to offer low cost spay and neuter programs for cats and to help address feral cat colonies before they spiral out of control. That is why we haven’t seen this kind of population explosion for a while. This could take years to resolve.”

The DCSPCA plans to break ground on a new, larger shelter facility in 2009. Donations can be made at the shelter in Hyde Park or through the website at www.dcsPCA.org.

The Dutchess County SPCA, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, is the lead agency for animal rescue and adoption in Dutchess County. The DCSPCA is a no-kill shelter with a 138-year history of concern, caring and providing shelter for unwanted, abused, abandoned and neglected animals. Central to the mission of the DCSPCA is the securing of caring, responsible, permanent homes for the adoptable animals in its care.