

PRESS RELEASE

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HUMANE SOCIETY MOVES DOGS TEMPORARILY DUE TO KENNEL DAMAGE

Missoula, MT – The staff of the Humane Society of Western Montana (HSWM) moved several dogs from the shelter this week to three alternate locations, after damage to the floor of the dog kennel wing raised concerns about the safety of its inhabitants.

Safety concerns came to light when a Humane Society employee was moving dogs from the outside of the building, and a small portion of the flooring near the doorway gave way. No animals or employees were injured; however, to ensure the safety of staff, animals, visitors, and volunteers, the dog kennel wing of the building has been temporarily closed while the HSWM investigates the integrity of the kennel flooring.

The shelter's staff and board of directors are consulting with construction experts to evaluate the kennel area. "Our first priority is to ensure the safety of everyone who serves and benefits from our mission of bringing people and pets together," said Marta Pierpoint, chair of the HSWM board. "Now that we have relocated the dogs to other places, we can move swiftly to investigate and repair the damage."

While the temporary closure affects the dog housing area, it's business as usual for the rest of the shelter. That includes the shelter's surgery facility, education room, offices, and its cat housing area, which shelters 60-plus cats at any given time.

"We are fortunate that friends of the shelter stepped up, in typical Missoula fashion, to provide alternate locations for us to temporarily to house our large dogs," Pierpoint noted. The larger dogs have been taken in by Quick Paws Hiking Company and its Dog Den boarding facility, the Dogs' Inn, and Animal Blessings Pet Hospital. Smaller dogs awaiting adoption are being housed in crates at the shelter.

Even while they are being housed elsewhere, the larger dogs are available for adoption. Shelter staff will be available to facilitate adoptions of dogs located at both the shelter and alternate sites. Missoula City-County Animal Control will continue to take in stray dogs. Owners considering bringing their dogs to the shelter should call to schedule an appointment, so staff can arrange the best foster care environment for them.

"We want to thank Quick Paws, the Dogs' Inn and Animal Blessings for opening their doors to help us at this time," said shelter director Lora O'Connor. "We remain committed to taking all companion animals, and to guaranteeing that all adoptable animals are placed in new homes," she added.

In addition to sheltering animals in need of homes, HSWM also offers services that can help pet owners keep their pets. These include a free behavior helpline, a pet food and supply bank, and low-cost dog training. To learn more about dogs, cats, or other companion animals available for adoption, call HSWM, or visit them online at www.myhswm.org.

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The Mission of the Humane Society of Western Montana is to bring people and animals together to enrich each other's lives. The HSWM building is located west of Missoula at 5930 Highway 93 South. It is the largest open-admission shelter in Western Montana and takes in approximately 1200 animals a year. HSWM also provides many programs and services to help people keep their pets, such as low-cost dog training, a free behavior helpline, lost/found services, microchipping, low-income spay/neuter clinics and trap-neuter-return for feral cats.

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