

Petsmarts California Rescue Waggin Makes Inaugural Journey

To help save the lives of adoptable animals, Petsmart Charities launched a California Rescue Waggin yesterday.

More than half a million animals are euthanized every year in California shelters, partly due to overcrowding in animal shelters, said Susana Della Maddalena, executive director of Petsmart Charities. Yet, there are a number of shelters in need of adoptable animals, she said.

To help save the lives of adoptable animals, Petsmart Charities launched a California Rescue Waggin yesterday. The Waggin transports dogs from areas of high pet overpopulation where they face almost certain euthanasia to shelters that are in need of adoptable animals.

The program also helps fund spay/neuter and capacity-building initiatives at participating animal welfare organizations.

Thirty dogs will make the waggins inaugural trip, traveling 400 miles north from the Southeast Area Animal Control Authority in Downey, Calif., to the Sacramento Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Malcom David Kelly, who plays Walt on ABCs Lost, was on hand to support the launch of the program. As many of you know, I'm adopted, he said. And it is important to me to support adoption, whether it be for people or animals.

The West Coast waggin will travel as far south as San Diego, Calif., and as far north as Santa Rosa, Calif.

The custom-made truck holds 48 cages, and is equipped with seven on-board cameras, which allow the drivers to monitor the dogs while on the road. During the journey, the truck is stopped every four hours so that the drivers can check on the dogs and take them for walks.

The California truck is the second in Petsmart Charities fleet of Rescue Waggins. The first waggin launched February 2005 in the Midwest. So far, it has transported more than 4,000 animals.

Officials said they expect the California Rescue Waggin to transport 7,000 dogs annually.

An East Coast Rescue Waggin, which will focus initially on West Virginia, Virginia and Pennsylvania, will launch in 2006, said Maddalena. Posted: October 28, 2005, 5 p.m. PST