

Petco Aids Dog Victims in California Fires

San Diego County Petco stores donate pet supplies to evacuees.

Posted: October 24, 2007, 5 a.m. EST

As fires continue to burn in Southern California, fanned by the annual Santa Ana winds and unrelenting sun, hundreds of thousands of residents are evacuating to shelters or the homes of friends and relatives, carrying only the bare essentials – and often their pets.

San Diego-based Petco is coming to their aid with food, leashes, kennels, collars and other supplies, Don Cowan, a media spokesperson, said from the Del Mar fairgrounds where he was helping to unload the second Petco truck to supply the evacuees with pet items.

“There are a large number of pets there,” he said. “People are sleeping with their pets in their cars; they’re doing whatever they can to keep the family together.”

In addition to the two truckloads, which made stops to other animal and people shelters, including Qualcomm Stadium, Petco’s individual stores donated directly to pet groups, Cowan said.

“We basically told them to come in, and pick up what you need,” Cowan said.

Pet product suppliers didn’t hesitate to lend a hand, Cowan said. “Before we even started thinking about this effort, they were calling us,” he said. “There’s just been a tremendous outpouring of support.”

Although Petco’s 20 stores in San Diego County remained open, the donations were taking a toll on its supplies and the company is working to restock its shelves for customers, Cowan said.

Petco reported that it and its vendors have donated \$200,000 to evacuation centers and animal welfare groups throughout San Diego County.

“This is not just going away in a couple of days,” he said. “This will be a longtime effort.”

Petco’s nonprofit foundation also set up a 10-day emergency fundraiser to aid animals affected by the fires. The fundraiser encourages customers to “round up” to the next whole dollar amount on their purchase price with the additional money going to the recovery efforts.

“Since the fires started Sunday afternoon, our associates have worked together to coordinate a rapid, thoughtful response to the crisis,” said Jim Myers, Petco’s CEO. “Many continue to work tirelessly around the clock.”

For more updates on how the California wildfires are affecting dogs and their owners, [click here](#).