

## Print Version

Print Page

Last modified: Wednesday, March 11, 2009 5:44 PM EDT

### Foreclosure crisis has led to spike in pets left behind

By Jenny Amaral / The Daily Item

SALEM - With foreclosures forcing many families out of their homes and into temporary housing, the household pet is increasingly lost in the transition.

More pets are being abandoned by owners who simply can't afford to care for them anymore, or feel their pet would be more of a burden than a blessing when hunting for a new place to live.

Laurie McCannon of the Northeast Animal Shelter in Salem, however, says there are many alternatives out there that would allow owners to hang on to their furry friends, despite the tough economy.

"The public needs to realize that there are a lot of low cost options out there," she said. "They don't have to give up their pets."

Many of the animals, particularly dogs, brought into the no-kill Highland Avenue shelter are from families moving out of their homes and into a housing development that won't allow them, said McCannon. Cats, more often than any other pets, she said, are left behind to fend for themselves.

"These problems have always existed, but probably more so now," said McCannon.

If moving on without your pet isn't an option, there are many resources available to help make the process easier, but it's better to act sooner than later, said McCannon.

"Some people don't want to face the reality that they are coming down to a hard time," she said. "People choose to wait until the last second and that does make it harder."

There are various websites geared toward finding places that allow pets of all kinds, you just have to get on-line and search them. One such site is [PeoplewithPets.com](http://PeoplewithPets.com). The site allows users to start with a broader search, then narrow it down to a specific town or city, and organize their results based on price. The Humane Society also provides an extensive pet-friendly apartment search on their site.

McCannon recommends pet owners to prepare themselves with updated medical records and references from past landlords or kennels.

"Sometimes you can convince a landlord who is on the fence with a letter," she said. "There are all different ways,



ITEM PHOTOS / OWEN O'ROURKE A cat a Northeast Animal Shelter is all packed and ready to move in with a new owner.

rather than having to give up the pet."

And although medical bills can quickly become expensive, McCannon said there are resources to help ease the burden on that end, too. Stores like PetSmart and PETCO offer lost cost vaccines and pet health care. The internationally known Friends of Animals nonprofit organization offers discounted spay and neutering services. Cat Mobile, sponsored by the Merrimack River Feline Rescue, spays, vaccinates, and places microchips in cats all for roughly \$75.

"We want to get the bug in everyone's ear that even though we're in hard times, a cat or dog makes a great companion to those who aren't going out every night," said McCannon. "They're nice to have at home, nice to enjoy."

The Northeast Animal Shelter currently has about 20 cats and 20 dogs ready for adoption. There are several others in foster care that aren't available yet, but will be with time. Those interested in taking in a pet should contact the shelter at 978-745-9888.

---

-- CLOSE WINDOW--