

Joshua Animal Services Rises Above the Freeze to Protect Its Animals

When Joshua Animal Services Director **Tommy Miller** stepped out of his driveway to care for the animals one frigid morning, his car thermometer read just **one degree**.

Icy roads and dangerous conditions threatened travel across the city, but the Joshua Animal Services team never hesitated. They knew the animals were counting on them.

Despite the extreme cold, staff arrived at the shelter to feed their “happy little residents,” refresh warm bedding, and provide comforting reassurance that they would return soon. But when they came back just a few hours later to allow the animals a brief “cool winter break,” they were met with an unexpected crisis.

An overhead pipe had burst, flooding the shelter. Water poured through kennels and hallways, soaking floors, supplies, and even some of the animals themselves.

There was no time to hesitate.

The priority was clear: **get every animal dry, safe, and warm, immediately.**

Wading through mid-calf-deep water, staff and volunteers worked together to dry and relocate each affected animal to temporary dry areas within the facility. Outside, they shoveled through ice to locate the main water shutoff and forced open frozen doors so floodwater could escape.

Although the City of Joshua was officially closed due to weather conditions, Miller made one critical call to City Manager Mike Peacock, who answered without hesitation. Within minutes, Public Works was on site. What followed was a true all-hands-on-deck response, with city staff working side by side to protect the shelter and the animals inside.

With water shut off and extensive damage throughout the facility, Miller knew continued animal care could not safely continue on site. Drawing on experience from past hurricane deployments, including Hurricane Katrina, he immediately reached out to trusted regional partners.

The response was instant.

Tri-Cities Animal Shelter answered without hesitation: **“YES, GET THEM OVER HERE.”**

Their team prepared kennels stocked with beds, toys, and fresh water, ready to welcome Joshua’s displaced animals. For each cold day that followed, someone from the Joshua Animal Services team made the trip to continue caring for the animals while the shelter’s small but mighty, three-person staff focused on cleanup and repairs.

Joshua Animal Services credits its emergency preparedness planning for the successful response and expressed deep gratitude for the city administration’s swift action and unwavering support. Volunteers and donors also stepped up, helping replace supplies damaged beyond repair.

While the winter storm brought unexpected challenges, it also revealed the very best of a community that always thinks and plans **big**.

The animals were safe.

The team stood strong.

And the community showed exactly what care and compassion looked like.

Special thanks to Tri-Cities Animal Shelter for emergency housing, Friends of Tri-Cities for ongoing care, and Operation Kindness for adoption assistance and additional services for the displaced pets.

Mayor Kimble, City Council, and administration are immensely proud of their staff, whose dedication, calm leadership, and compassion never wavered in the face of dangerous conditions and an unfolding emergency. In freezing temperatures, standing water, and mounting pressure, the team focused on what mattered most: the safety and comfort of every animal in their care. Their professionalism, preparedness, and heart exemplify the very best of public service and reflect a level of commitment that goes far beyond a job description.

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