

news release

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MOVING VAN OPERATORS: UNLIKELY ANIMAL RESCUERS

St. Louis-based United Van Lines operator unites abandoned dog with foster family

ST. LOUIS – Animal rescue organizations have found unusual allies in moving van operators. Non-profits like Echo Dogs White Shepherd Rescue – an organization that rescues neglected or abused dogs and dogs from death row in shelters, rehabilitates them in foster care, and then places them in new, loving homes – often have transportation needs to get dogs from one location to another. Moving van operators, like Mike Lowery of United Van Lines' agent A-Mrazek, often become involved in programs such as Echo and offer transportation assistance.

Since becoming involved in the Echo program a year ago, Lowery has already transported four White Shepard dogs to new homes. On a recent trip, Lowery picked up a White Shepard named Snow in Knoxville, Tenn., made stops in Atlanta and Dallas, and delivered him to a pre-arranged foster family in O'Fallon, Mo. At the time, Lowery was transporting a trade show's lighting system used at the Grand Ole Opry.

"At first Snow was uncertain about riding in my moving van," said Lowery. "I wrapped a moving blanket around him, so I could pick him up and lay him in the cab. He rode upfront with me the entire way on a bed made out of moving blankets."

Echo took on Snow's case when he was abandoned at a shelter after being struck by a car. Suffering a severely-injured hind leg, Snow received immediate corrective surgery and learned to walk again with the support of a brace. He is now fully recovered and thriving in the foster family environment. Snow, renamed Kabo, is currently available for permanent adoption. Inquires can be made to info@echodogs.org or by visiting www.echodogs.org/adoptions.htm.

"When I heard that the dogs would be euthanized if they could not reach their foster family within a few days, I was happy to transport them," said Lowery. "I'm already traveling to these places; I might as well save a dog's life and make a family happy."

Although this connection may seem unusual, moving van operators are often faced with animal rescue situations. While some van operators purposefully get involved with animal rescue organizations, others inadvertently become heroes by handling situations where a family pet or stray animal accidentally finds its way into a moving van.

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Tips for Moving with Pets

- **Routines** – Your regular routines are likely to be disrupted as you plan for and execute a move. But it's important to minimize the disruption in the routine of your pet as much as possible to avoid problems down the road. Try to stick with the pet's regular schedule of feeding, exercise and playtime.
- **New People** – If you're selling a home, there are going to be lots of strangers around in the coming months – realtors, potential buyers, inspectors. Make plans for your pet for during these times. Perhaps your pet should be confined to a familiar crate so that he/she feels safe when there are newcomers in the house. Or, a particularly sensitive animal might do better staying with a neighbor or boarding at a kennel.
- **State/Municipal Laws and Regulations** – Most states have laws pertaining to the entry of pets, and many municipalities enforce specific pet regulations. Contact the state veterinarian in the capitol of your new home state to learn about the laws, and get in touch with the city clerk or town hall in your new city to learn about license fees, leash laws, fences, and other pet restrictions.
- **Inoculations** – At the beginning of your moving process, make an appointment with your vet to get all of your pet's inoculations up to date. Many states require a health certificate for pets and verification that the animal is disease free. If you plan to board your pet at any time, or will be transporting the animal in an airplane, you'll need this paperwork as well.
- **Pet Identification and Paperwork** – Make sure your pet has proper identification with your name and emergency contact information. In addition to the animal's permanent ID and rabies tag, make a temporary ID tag with your cell phone number and the number of a friend or relative who would be easy to reach while you're traveling to your new home. You might also consider chip identification for your pet, since you'll be living in unfamiliar surroundings.
- **Airline Transportation** – Contact the airlines for rules and regulations, transportation charges and container/carrier requirements. Make your reservations well in advance because pet approval is granted on a first-come, first-served basis. Feed your pet no less than five or six hours before flight time. Give him water two hours before take-off.
- **Auto Transportation** – Make a list of items you'll need for a "pet travel kit," including a carrier, collapsible dishes, favorite toys, water, food and treats. If your pet isn't used to car travel, start practicing with short trips. If necessary, ask your vet about tranquilizers to relax the animal. It's also a good idea to have a "clean-up kit" in the car for motion sickness situations. Don't forget to take a few exercise, water and bathroom breaks, and remember, you won't be able to stop for leisurely meals if you have an animal in the car.
- **Tips for Dogs** – After moving into a new house, immediately walk your dog around the neighborhood so that he/she becomes familiar with the new area. Establish boundaries in the yard for your dog to roam, and help him/her become accustomed to the new environment by maintaining a regular feeding and walking schedule.
- **Tips for Cats** – Try not to expose your cat to your new living arrangements all at once. It's a good idea to limit the number of rooms the cat is allowed in and gradually let him/her explore. Surround the cat with familiar items during the move to reduce emotional stress. Once you're in your new home, don't let your cat outside until he/she is familiar with the new living environment to reduce the risk of running away.
- **Familiar Surroundings** – Because you're in a "new" home, often with new décor and furniture, you may be tempted to replace your pet's old favorites too. It's better to use your pet's familiar food and water dishes, bed and toys to make him/her feel "at home."

Moving Van Operators as Animal Rescuers – Add Two

About A-Mrazek

Founded in 1904, A-Mrazek Moving Systems, Inc., offers a full range of moving and storage services throughout the country and the world. The company has more than 45 employees, 25 household goods drivers, 13 special services drivers and five local performance crews. More information about A-Mrazek and its services can be found at www.a-mrazek.com.

About United Van Lines

United Van Lines, with headquarters in suburban St. Louis, maintains a network of 1,000 affiliated agencies throughout the world. As the nation's largest mover, United holds more than 30 percent of the market, which is nearly double the market share of the second largest carrier. More information about United and its services is available at www.unitedvanlines.com.