



From Left, Marie Joyner, Our Companions Chief Operating Officer, 96.5 TIC FM's Damon Scott (dog), Representative Diana Urban, Congressman Rob Simmons, Representative Pam Sawyer, WFSB Channel 3's Scot Haney (cat), Susan Linker, Our Companions Chief Executive Officer.

Canine Construction Crew Breaks Ground on CT's First Pet Resource Center and Sanctuary for Pets

ASHFORD - Wednesday, August 23, 2006 - 11am - Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary announced the beginning of the first phase of construction to create a pet resource center and domestic animal sanctuary on 43 acres of donated land in Ashford. The event, held in Ashford, was hosted by the hilarious Damon Scott from 96.5 WTIC-FM. The announcement included a real-life canine construction crew along with a group of committed volunteers and donors.

At the event, CEO and Co-founder Susan Linker announced details about the project including the unveiling of architectural renderings and site plan. The Honorable Congressman Rob Simmons made a brief presentation along with Representative Diana Urban and Representative Pam Sawyer. To top it off, a secret celebrity spokes-cat, which was unveiled to be WFSB's Scot Haney, lead the crowd in a delectable toast of Dog Drool Soda while chanting: "Cats rule! Dogs drool!"

In January of 2006, Our Companions launched a 10-year, capital campaign called Home for Good - A Place for Our Companions. This campaign will create New England's first large-scale pet resource center and domestic animal sanctuary.

Thanks to the generosity of donors to the Groundbreaking Campaign, the first

phase of construction (a two-year, 2 million dollar phase) will begin in September with the demolition of the biggest buildings in the Town of Ashford - factory style chicken coops which remain from the land's previous use as an industrial egg farm.

After demolition the outdoor recreational center will be constructed. This will include a dog park, reflection gardens, interpretative hiking trails, nature preserve, bird observation area, and pond-side picnicking. Also included in

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Phase One is the construction of a Pet Resource Center. This multi-use facility will offer life-saving services including low-cost dog training and behavioral modifica-

tion programs, high-volume free sterilization for feral cats and an education center that can seat up to 500 people. The Resource Center will also be the site of regular events that include Adopt-A-Thons and other community educational programs.

"The goal is to create a destination for pets and animal lovers," says Gail Perkins, a Board member of Our Companions and donor to the Capital Campaign. "Beyond its function of saving animals, sanctuaries attract people who want to become involved in animal welfare, but find the high-stress environment of traditional shelters too depressing. The sanctuary will be a

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beautiful place that will mobilize pet-minded people and save countless animals."

Congressman Rob Simmons added, "As a proud pet-parent of four beautiful dogs, I am so happy to see animal welfare improving in Connecticut. This project will certainly be a wonderful resource for people and animals - what a more perfect location than the beautiful northeast corner."

Phases Two and Three will include the animal housing components where homeless pets at risk of being destroyed will be transferred to the sanctuary for rehabilitation and adoption. The sanctuary housing will be constructed to resemble a quaint New England-style village. Each animal species will have several small houses built specifically to suit their needs. This method of housing

animals greatly differs from traditional caged-based shelters by providing a cage-free, comfortable environment that is suitable for long-term care.

"The sanctuary is just one part of our comprehensive plan to end the unnecessary euthanasia of pets in Connecticut," says Linker. "We recognize that no one organization can solve all the problems facing pets in our state. That's why Our Companions is committed to working with other animal welfare agencies, not only to assist in the rescue effort, but to lead a collaborative statewide campaign to target the root causes of pet homelessness."

Our Companions is a non-profit organization that is a leader in the movement to end euthanasia of healthy pets. For more information or to make a donation, visit www.ourcompanions.org or call 860-242-9999. ■