

NONPAREIL *online*

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A safe haven for animals

Emily Kesten , Staff Writer



Reba when she arrived at the shelter.

"We currently have about 23-25 cases we're working on," said Stoops. "That means people have called and need help placing animals. We are getting calls from as far away as Georgia ... it is just crazy."

One of the most heartbreaking cases recently involved "Reba," a blind, 25-year-old mare and her six pasture mates. According to Stoops, the owners had to decide between their house and their horses and chose the house. "Reba" (each horse receives a new name after rescue) was about 400 pounds underweight, said Stoops, and full of parasites.

The rescue was full, but Genea found a little room for "Reba" and worked to find homes for the six other horses.

But it's not just the horses suffering. On Feb. 17, Stoops received word about a St. Bernard being tossed out of a car on Highway 34 near Glenwood. The person who witnessed the act said she did not want to get involved because she had children in the car.

The Stoops searched but have yet to locate the dog.

On Feb. 22, another dog arrived at Stoops' home. According to Stoops, the 10-year-old mix breed's family is moving and cannot take the dog with them.

"We are hoping to place her with a family that does not expect too much from her other than her love," said Stoops.

Information about abused animals and their owners remains confidential, said Stoops, because she is concerned only for the animals' safety.

The winter has been particularly hard on the rescue.

"We've been having a really hard time finding good hay," said Stoops. "We have to have good quality hay because most of our (forever) horses are old or sick and anything moldy will make them colic." Small bales are the best, she said, for hauling and distributing around the center and are less likely turn moldy before consumed.

Not all 61 horses and dogs live on the rescue property, but Stoops ensures the foster animals' welfare by helping with the vet and feed bills. Hooves and Paws is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit, so donations, whether monetary, corporate sponsorship, services, feed, halters or fencing are tax deductible.

More information on Hooves and Paws or donating can be found at www.hoovespaws.org. Although she receives a

Rising fuel and food costs can make it difficult to pay the mortgage, but try having 61 mouths to feed. Home foreclosures and increasing bills are forcing otherwise caring horse and large-breed dog owners to abandon or neglect their four-legged family members.

"The calls are coming in at such a high rate that we can't keep up," said Genea Stoops, owner and president of Hooves and Paws Rescue. "Right now we just keep getting calls each day, and people are telling us things like, 'I can't afford to feed my family and my animals.' 'I am running out of hay, and I have no more money for hay.' 'I lost my job, and I need to get rid of my animals.'"

Hooves and Paws provides rehabilitation and forever homes for unwanted or abused horses and large-breed dogs. The rescue center, where the worst cases live, has been continually at maximum capacity all winter. Stoops and her husband, Bill, work every day to find safe foster homes for those they can't house.

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large number of calls every day, Stoops still wants owners to know that if they have an animal that needs placement, they should contact her at (712) 527-3721. Anyone interested in adopting, fostering or sponsoring a rescued animal is encouraged to call.



The advertisement consists of two parts. On the left, a blue banner contains the text: "Try **PHONE TOOLS** from Cox Digital Telephone! Manage all your calls from any location. For **FREE!**". On the right, a graphic features the text "YOU'LL FALL IN LOVE!" in large, bold, blue letters, with the "COX" logo below it. To the right of the text is a cartoon man in a blue shirt holding a large red heart that says "CHECK IT OUT!".

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