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HOUSTON PETSET AND CITY OF HOUSTON MAYOR JOHN WHITMIRE DELIVER
STATE OF ANIMAL WELFARE ADDRESS AND PRESS CONFERENCE
How far we have come, where we are now, and what needs to happen next #ForTheAnimals.

(HOUSTON, Texas) – Houston PetSet, a local nonprofit organization working to end Houston's homeless animal crisis, hosted The State of Animal Welfare Address with special remarks from City of Houston Mayor John Whitmire on Thursday, Feb. 22, 2024. Houston PetSet Co-Presidents Tama Lundquist and Tena Lundquist Faust gave an overview of the current state of animal welfare in Houston, providing context for what actions need to be taken in order to solve the animal homelessness crisis. Their remarks were bookends to Mayor John Whitmire who spoke about how his new administration plans to make Houston a leader in the animal welfare community by dedicating resources and implementing consistent standards for all Houston-area animal shelters.

The conference was live-streamed to the public on YouTube (www.youtube.com/@houstonpetset).
Photos and video from the event can be found here.

Crime Stoppers CEO Rania Mankorious kicked off the 30-minute address and generously hosted Houston PetSet and their partners for this important conversation. In attendance were City Council Members Sallie Alcorn (At Large Position 5) and Mario Castillo (District H), Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez, Harris County District Attorney Kim Ogg, and representatives from the Houston Police Department. After the remarks, the floor was opened to questions from the press, as well as members of the animal welfare community in attendance.

The general consensus was that BARC needs more support and funding to be able to tackle the animal welfare crisis in the City of Houston, and collaboration is the key to solving it. Mayor Whitmire expressed the desire to work closely with City Council and Harris County Commissioners to pool resources and avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts across city and county jurisdictions. Members of law enforcement also committed to making animal welfare a priority in the name of public safety, and making sure that access to these safety resources is equitable across all Houston communities.

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"We are grateful that our new Mayor comes into this role with a long history of prioritizing animal welfare during his many years in the state legislature," said Tena Lundquist Faust, co-president of Houston PetSet. "His very presence here today shows how committed he is to ending this crisis."

"Obviously, you can't solve a problem until you admit you have one," said Mayor John Whitmire. "The press conference this morning established that we have an animal welfare crisis in the City of Houston… we took a giant step today with all the stakeholders – law enforcement, service assemblies – to say stray animals [is] a problem, animal welfare is underfunded in the City of Houston."

"Recently, we have been saying that the crisis is worse than it's ever been, but we are more hopeful than we've ever been," said Tama Lundquist, co-president of Houston PetSet. "That's because we have a Mayor who believes this crisis is solvable, and will work to solve it. We have shelter directors who are committed to serving their communities and caring for the animals within their walls and on the streets. And we have supporters who will continue to call for change until the crisis abates."

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ABOUT HOUSTON PETSET: Houston PetSet gives, connects, and advocates for lasting solutions in Houston to alleviate suffering and end companion animal homelessness. The 501c3 nonprofit umbrella organization does this through their own local programming and by supporting groups that have demonstrated accountability and are making an impact "in the trenches" in our community for the animals.