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ADOG donates oxygen kits to save animals' lives

Fountain Hills and Rio Verde Fire Departments are hoping that some new equipment will help save lives — furred and feathered lives of all shapes and sizes.

Thanks to a donation from Fountain Hills ADOG, Inc., both Fountain Hills and Rio Verde fire and rescue stations will be equipped with SurgiVet Animal Oxygen Recovery Masks.

The reusable masks come in three sizes per set and can fit a pet as large as a Saint Bernard dog or as tiny as a hamster.

The masks feature a rubber ring that creates a snug seal around the animal's muzzle or beak. The mask is then connected to an oxygen tank or breathing bag.

The resuscitation kits are a major step forward in providing local fire and rescue units with the professional equipment needed to help resuscitate an animal in crisis. In the past, firefighters were forced to manipulate human masks to fit a dog or cat, or they would create a tiny mask by poking a hole in the bottom of a paper cup.

"We're excited to provide

these kits to our local fire departments," said Jerry Wise, president of ADOG.

"Companion animals are increasingly viewed as 'part of the family,' and equipping our emergency personnel to help animals as well as people is a positive step forward for our community."

ADOG decided to pursue donation of pet oxygen masks after contacting local fire departments and learning that resuscitation kits had been donated to Scottsdale and other Valley fire and rescue units.

The Fountain Hills Fire Department had several of the kits in stock, but they needed one additional kit to outfit all units.

This will be the first time Rio Verde has had animal oxygen masks available.

ADOG purchased the masks through HELP Animals, a non-profit organization located in Orange City, Fla. The group buys the mask sets from SurgiVet, which offers them at a special rate so long as they are not resold to retail businesses.

Nancy Wachter, president



Fountain Hills Assistant Fire Chief Randy Roberts accepts the pet oxygen mask kits donated by ADOG President C. Jerry Wise.

of HELP Animals, started the oxygen mask service in 2003 after her mother saw the masks being used on the cable channel program, Animal Planet. The organization has distributed approximately 4,000 mask sets throughout 49 states. It has also donated sets to the NASA Kennedy Space Center Fire and Rescue, EMS and K-9 units.

Most animals die from lack of oxygen in a fire, but with proper treatment, a very high percentage of them can still survive.

ADOG recommends that in case of fire, owners can protect pets by picking up special window stickers advising emergency personnel that pets are in the home.

For more information about ADOG, visit www.adog.org.