

Old Fella Rescue goes national

By Elizabeth Billips Associate Editor



Old Fella and Richard Daniels

The Old Fella Rescue effort is now organized and "STARStudde

Thirty-eight residents turned out for the group's first official meeting last Tuesday night, according to Richard

Daniels, president of the newly formed organization which is committed to rescuing stray animals in Burke County.

Daniels began spearheading the cause last spring after rescuing, and later adopting, an old starving stray from an RV campground. His newly fattened friend, Old Fella, has since become a national poster-dog for animal adoption and the namesake for the local mission.

Collectively, 22 stray dogs and cats have been adopted through the Old Fella Burke County Animal Rescue.

Three local families provide foster homes for abandoned animals, and six dogs are currently in their care awaiting new families.

Beyond local support, the group is getting a big boost from STARS

(Save the Animals Rescue Society) - a national organization that operates an adoption service through www.petfinder.com. Willene Colvin spoke to the local group on behalf of STARS, pledging full support to the Old Fella Rescue. According to Daniels, information and photographs of Burke County strays are posted on the site, making the animals adoptable to virtually anyone in the United States.

"When someone adopts a pet, Pet Finder then arranges for its transportation to the state for which it is bound by using people who travel in RVs," Daniels said. "The transportation is donated by people who are either vacationing or full-timers in their RVs."

Four Burke County animals have already been adopted through the service.

Ultimately, Old Fella Rescue members hope for a larger, fully staffed county shelter from which they could offer better medical assistance and make adoption services more accessible to the public.

"If we could acquire some land and a building somewhere close to the jail, we could have trustees come and help with animal care and with socializing some animals that have been abused," Daniels said. "That would be a tremendous help in giving inmates a sense of responsibility and a spirit of community service, along with helping us to get animals ready to find homes."

The group's next meeting will be Nov. 9, at First Liberty Market in downtown Waynesboro. Local residents and leaders are encouraged to attend.

To learn more about volunteering or making a donation to the Old Fella Rescue, email Daniels at claudedaniels@msn.com.