

Fortunately (again) the storm held off till we got all the dogs inside the steel building, each inside his or her own crate. There was fear in the eyes of every dog. They were all very nervous about this sudden change in their living accommodations. Most behaved well, but some had a lot of trouble adjusting, and with so many dogs crammed into this one building you can only imagine how loud the barking and crying and whining was!

Then came the potty breaks. Our caregivers (including me) had to walk each of the 71 dogs out in the pouring rain and high, gusting winds every few hours. Then came the feeding--same kind of gigantic challenge--plus another walk after the meal!

Then a few of the dogs were so frightened by the situation that they began to have diarrhea, and you can imagine the problems this caused.

We were all soaking wet (and cold--the temperatures must have dropped into the 60s), and we were scared, and we were tired.

Fortunately again (for us at Straydog, which is located about 50 miles west of Tyler, Texas) the eye of the storm made landfall much farther east than the experts had originally predicted, and as the storm moved inland, it began turning little by little to the east. The result of this shift in the direction of the storm was that Straydog caught only the outer band of the western side of Tropical Storm Rita, which was much weaker than the eastern side. At our location sustained winds were probably 35 miles per hour with some gusts up to 45 or 50 miles per hour. We suffered only a little damage to our dog kennels, and no one was injured.

By about 6:30 Saturday evening the storm had begun to die down, and the center was well into Louisiana moving away from us, so we made the decision to move the dogs back to Straydog. The rain and winds continued for several hours but were no longer dangerous. We finally got all 71 dogs from the steel building back to their kennels by midnight, and my goodness were they happy to be back home! It was still raining slowly and it was still windy, but later on our overnight man, Randy Hopkins, reported that the sky finally cleared and the stars came out. When I got up at four a.m., the weather was beautiful.

Sunday (the 25th) we called Morton Small Animal Clinic and made arrangements with the man who comes in to feed and walk their boarded dogs and cats (on the weekends) to pick up our 24 dogs and one cat so the animals wouldn't have to spend anymore time there than necessary. And they were sure glad to see us too! Total boarding bill: \$743.61.

All and all it was a very successful evacuation and return home. It just cost us a lot of time, effort, mental and physical stress, and money.

We desperately need your help!

Straydog Inc.
P.O. Box 1465
Gun Barrel City, Texas 75147