

## David Crawford

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### NON-COMPETITIVE DIVISION

#### Animal Evacuation: Saving Our Pets Means Getting to Know Our Neighbors

The Marshall Fire (Boulder County, CO, December 2021) claimed the lives of an estimated one thousand dogs, cats and other pets. This tragedy showed once again that when disasters strike and we are not home, our trusted neighbors who are home represent our best chance for having our pets evacuated. This is the premise of the new Pet Help & Rescue app (PHaR), developed in the aftermath of the fire. By design, PHaR evacuation communications are separate and distinct from the chaos of calls, texts, and social media notifications that occur when evacuations are underway. PHaR represents a revolutionary upgrade to the 'Give your neighbor a key' approach to pet evacuation and gives pets and other dependent animals their best chance yet of surviving when disasters strike. The app was designed with guidance from experts in the animal disaster management field by the nonprofit Animal Help Now, which has a successful 13-year history of app development in the emergency space. PHaR launched in July 2024.

**Presentation Theme:** Hurricane Katrina brought into sharp focus the need for dogs, cats and other companion animals to be included in disaster preparedness, response and recovery. Studies of this and subsequent

events demonstrated the importance of neighbors in the evacuation of animals when disasters threaten and strike. When the tech nonprofit Animal Help Now lost its headquarters in the Marshall Fire (Boulder County, CO, December 2021), the organization experienced this dynamic firsthand.

**Collaborators, Advisor(s) and Department(s) that assisted with this research:**

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