



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 24 2017

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Doug Bolnick, Public Information Officer, 636-949-7408

SPAYING/NEUTERING HELP CONTROL CAT POPULATION IN ST. CHARLES COUNTY

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO – If left unaltered, it is possible for one female cat and her offspring to generate more than 400,000 kittens in just a few years — a great deal more than could ever be placed in loving homes. By spaying or neutering animals, responsible owners and caregivers do their part to control overpopulation.

“A cat will reach sexual maturity at around 6 months of age, and a female cat can produce up to three litters of kittens each year,” says Katie Willis, Director of St. Charles County’s Division of Humane Services. “While spaying and neutering are major surgeries, the commonly performed procedures have a low incidence of complications, and animals usually heal within a few days. Studies also show that this alteration has a positive impact on the animal’s behavior, health and quality of life.”

Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Service for Pets

All animals adopted through the St. Charles County Pet Adoption Center are spayed or neutered. This service can be performed on other unaltered pets by local veterinarians. To help qualifying families in need of the service on their pet, the division offers a **Low-Cost Spay/Neuter** program on the first Thursday of each month from Feb. 2 through Nov. 2 (by appointment only). The program includes a rabies vaccination and costs \$30 per cat or \$55 per dog.

To qualify for the **Low-Cost Spay/Neuter** program, pet owners must:

- Make an advanced appointment on one of the program dates by calling 636-949-7387.
- Show proof of residency in St. Charles County (government-issued identification or utility bill).
- Show proof of need.
- Show proof of current rabies vaccination for each animal covered or update the animal’s shot record at the time of registration. Rabies tags are provided for an additional \$5 charge.

Operation Sterile Feral for Wild or Barn Cats

In addition to pets, feral cats that live in large colonies and breed rapidly have become a problem in many communities. While these wild cats are not socialized to humans and therefore, are not adoptable, they do play an important role in vermin control.

“Physically removing feral cats from these colonies or euthanizing animals only offers a temporary solution,” Willis notes. “Eventually, new cats will return to the area and start breeding again. However, studies have shown that spaying and neutering is the most effective method for controlling the existing population.”

(MORE)

(SPAY/NEUTER SERVICES – continued on p.2)

Introduced in 2003, St. Charles County's *Operation Sterile Feral* program stopped the breeding cycle through the treatment of thousands of feral cats. The program is operated by the County's Pet Adoption Center and a team of volunteers from Metro Animal and is limited to St. Charles County residents. One Sunday each month, homeowners can bring feral/barn cats (no pets) from their property to take advantage of the \$20 service. The fee includes the alteration, vaccination for rabies, and treatment for parasites. Appointments are required for participation and can be arranged by calling 314-995-9266.

2017 Program Dates (services provided by appointment only):

Feb. 19	March 19	April 23	May 21
June 11	July 16	Aug. 20	Sept. 17
Oct. 15	Nov. 12	Dec. 3	

Metro Animal, a volunteer organization that deals with cat and dog rescue, adoptions and sheltering, also operates an associated program for feral cats that cannot return to their home territory. In coordination with a care-giver, the organization places them in warehouses, barns, plant nurseries, breweries and other areas as vermin control. If you operate one of these facilities, are interested in obtaining one or more of these animals and are willing to commit to their well-being, please contact Metro Animal at 314-995-9266.

The Division of Humane Services protects and enhances the quality of life for people and animals in St. Charles County through the adoption of dogs, cats and other pets; education pet owners on positive behavior; providing animal control services; enforcing County ordinances; and investigating incidents of animal cruelty or neglect. Adopting a pet through the Division of Humane Services' Pet Adoption Center offers an outstanding value, as the \$60 adoption fee includes a thorough health examination, initial vaccinations, spay or neuter service, microchipping and owner education. To view pets now available for adoption, please visit www.sccmo.org/pets or stop by the Pet Adoption Center. For more information about services offered by the division, please call (636) 949-7387 or visit www.sccmo.org/humane.

-end-