



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ST. CHARLES COUNTY DIVISION OF HUMANE SERVICES REMINDS RESIDENTS TO VACCINATE PETS, REPORT CONCERNS TO PREVENT RABIES

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO – As spring draws closer and warmer weather returns, outdoor activity for pets and people will increase. This increased activity brings a greater opportunity for contact with wild animals and a threat for exposure to rabies infection. As a reminder, [St. Charles County Animal Control Ordinance Section 205.110](#) requires all dogs and cats to be vaccinated against the rabies virus and that this vaccination be registered with the Division of Humane Services.

Rabies is a dangerous virus found in the saliva of mammals that infects the nervous system. Most commonly spread by bats and skunks in Missouri, pets and humans can become exposed through bites or scratches by infected animals. In both pets and humans, common symptoms of rabies infection include fever, body ache/difficulty moving, neck stiffness, brain swelling, and paralysis. In animals, unusual or atypical behavior and foaming at the mouth are also common. If these symptoms develop, the result is rarely survivable — although human deaths in the United States are rare because of effective treatment procedures.

“With increased outdoor activity, it’s important to keep your pet up-to-date on their annual vaccinations,” Katie Willis, Director for St. Charles County’s Division of Humane Services says. “Not only is annual vaccination required by County Ordinance for all St. Charles County pets, it’s also the best way to prevent rabies infection. You never know when or where your pet could encounter an infected creature.”

All St. Charles County veterinarians can provide rabies vaccination and the accompanying rabies registration for their clients. This registration comes with an annual rabies tag that must be displayed on the animal’s collar according to the County Ordinance. Individuals needing financial assistance to obtain the vaccination and registration tag should contact the St. Charles County Pet Adoption Center at 636-949-7387.

Along with vaccination, reporting of animal bites and stray or potentially rabid animals will help to prevent the spread of the disease:

- If a family member or pet is bitten or scratched by another animal, cleanse the wound immediately with soap and water, seek any necessary medical care and alert the Division of Humane Services or your local law enforcement agency. When possible, obtain photographs or note identifying marks for the animal and get information about the animal’s owner. Humans who are exposed to a potentially rabid animal should seek immediate medical attention; they may require a series of preventative vaccinations to prevent the development of the disease. Any unvaccinated dog or cat bitten or scratched by a wild animal may need to be euthanized or kept monitored in isolation for up to six months at the owner’s expense.

(MORE)

(Rabies Prevention – continued p.2)

- Because rabies illness requires mandatory preventative actions and extensive treatment, it's best for people and pets to avoid contact with live or dead wild animals, unfamiliar dogs or cats, and any animals displaying unusual behaviors. St. Charles County residents concerned about the presence of stray or potentially rabid animals on their property should call St. Charles County Animal Control at 636-949-7347 for domesticated animals or the Missouri Department of Conservation's St. Charles County regional office at 636-441-4554 for wild animals.
- Stray or recovered animals picked up by St. Charles County Animal Control are taken to the Division of Humane Services, located at 4850 Mid Rivers Mall Drive in St. Peters. An effort is made to find the animal's owner. Any animals found within the City of St. Charles should be reported to the city's Animal Control office at 636-949-3395. Animals collected by the Division of Humane Services are held for five business days and then available for adoption by others. If the animal is microchipped or tagged, an attempt to contact the owner is made, and the animal will be held for at least 10 days prior to adoption availability.

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About St. Charles County's Division of Humane Services

The Division of Humane Services protects and enhances the quality of life for St. Charles County residents and animals. The division shelters and adopts animals through St. Charles County's Pet Adoption Center, educates pet owners, provides animal control services, and investigates incidents involving animal cruelty and neglect. To learn more about services provided, to view pets available for adoption or to inquire about volunteer or donation opportunities, please call 636-949-7387 or visit sccmo.org/humane.

About the St. Charles County Department of Public Health

Through the efforts of its three divisions — Environmental Health and Protection, Health Services and Humane Services — the St. Charles County Department of Public Health provides a wide range of services that enhance the well-being of the community. To learn how the department assists this region or to find out about volunteer opportunities with any of the divisions, visit sccmo.org/PublicHealth or call 636-949-7400.

About St. Charles County

Founded in 1812, St. Charles County is one of the fastest growing counties in Missouri, and the state's third largest county in both population and economic share. It is home to 15 scenic county parks, encompassing more than 3,643 acres with additional land under development and more in reserve for future development.

With a population of 395,504, St. Charles County is home to large employers including General Motors, Citi, MasterCard Worldwide and Boeing. It is ranked among the top 25 counties in the nation in high-tech job growth by the Progressive Policy Institute and consistently has the lowest unemployment rate in the Metropolitan St. Louis area.

St. Charles County employs more than 1,100 in more than 30 departments and offices, who work to make the county an excellent place to live, work and shop. For more information, please visit sccmo.org.