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News Release

For Immediate Release

Animal adoption fee campaign hits goal; donations continue

The Springfield Animal Shelter has met its goal of raising \$5,600 for animal rescue "pull fees" by the end of the year – in just five weeks' time.

The Shelter's rescue partners are required to pay an \$8 fee to "pull" unclaimed animals from the shelter and place them for public adoption. The fee is an attempt to recover some of the \$25 cost for services provided to animals that come into the shelter, while also keeping the financial barrier as low as possible for rescue agencies.

Last year, the Health Department's Animal Control Program announced a new way that the public could help save the lives of animals in the shelter by donating money to help offset these fees for the rescue groups.

"The 'Get Em Out' campaign was an attempt to help fund the estimated amount that rescues would need through the end of this year, and provide at least a little more certainty for groups that run on tight budgets and volunteer hours," said Karen Prescott, who oversees Animal Control as the department's Environmental Health Administrator. "We're really happy to see this response. Our community always finds a way to step up when it comes to animal welfare."

The Springfield Animal Shelter is an outdated facility that does not have the space necessary for proper public adoptions, so rescue agencies have stepped up to fill the void in recent years. Rescues pay pull fees to take an animal from the shelter and place it for adoption. The fees help offset the cost of a number of services provided that not only make the animals healthier, but also more adoptable. The fees help pay for:

- Microchipping
- Rabies vaccination
- Bordetella ("kennel cough") vaccination
- A "five way" vaccination for five additional common diseases
- Worm treatments and prevention
- Grooming and other care

The partnership between Animal Control and rescue agencies – primarily Halfway Home, CARE and Kristy Ritter – is the main reason why Animal Control's euthanasia rates have dropped dramatically over the last several years, especially for dogs. In fact, Springfield Animal Control has not had to put down an adoptable dog for nearly two years running. The number of dogs put down has dropped from about 1,400 in 2006 to 235 last year. The dog euthanasia rate itself has dropped from more than 55 percent in 2006 to less than 12 percent last year.

"This donated amount is wonderful, but the animals won't stop coming into the shelter," Prescott said. "We are continuing to take donations because the job never ends."

Donations can be made online at <http://health.springfieldmo.gov/helpanimals> or by sending a check to City of Springfield, attn: Pull Fee Donation, 320 E. Central St., Springfield MO, 65802. Any amount of money can be donated. The money is set aside in a fund that is used **only** for the purpose of paying for animal pull fees. The public can donate other items as well, including food, towels, collars and even beds. More information about those items can also be found at the link above.

For more information, contact: Karen Prescott, Environmental Health Administrator, (417) 864-1664; or Mike Brothers, Public Information Administrator, (417) 874-1205.