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News Release

*For Immediate Release*

### **Online form helps connect owners with lost pets**

Springfield residents who have either lost or found a pet now have yet another avenue to help re-connect the animal with its rightful owner. Springfield Animal Control has made available an online reporting system for pets found and lost within the city limits of Springfield.

"Connecting lost animals with their rightful home – or new forever home – is a booming activity online, and we think this could be another tool for the army of passionate people who do this kind of work," said Environmental Health Administrator Karen Prescott, who oversees the Animal Control program. "And it's simply more convenient for citizens than calling our City Shelter during business hours."

The City Animal Shelter staff fields many of these calls daily, and is not able to make matches over the phone. With the online form, citizens can fill out the information on a lost or found pet at their convenience, and attach photos if available, so that it will be easier to match the report with an animal entering the shelter. If Animal Control staff believes they have a match between a lost report and one of the animals at the shelter, they will notify the contact person on the report. It is the responsibility of the pet owner to come to the shelter to identify their pet in person.

This program is being run with the help of a small staff of volunteers. When volunteers find a potential match between a "found" report and a "lost" report, both parties will be notified so that they can make arrangements to determine if there is a match.

It is not healthy for any animal to spend time in a shelter. Springfield Animal Control is trying to increase the return-to-owner rates of our animals and get them home quickly. About 90 percent of the dogs coming into the shelter are picked up as strays. Sadly, only about 1 in 5 dogs are reclaimed by their owner.

"Some communities in other parts of the country have return to owner rates over 90 percent," said Prescott. "That really takes the burden off the rescue groups to come forward and find new homes for the animals. We think we can do better in Springfield."

Pet owners should always attach proper identification to their pets. A collar with a tag or an implanted microchip that has been registered greatly increases the chance your pet will be found quickly if lost.

To file a lost or found report please go to: <http://health.springfieldmo.gov/animals> and click on "Online Lost & Found Form" in the left-hand column.

If you don't have access to a computer you may call a voice mailbox at (417) 874-1201 and when prompted enter 44162# followed by a message with your name and contact information after the tone. A volunteer will contact you to gather all the information for the report.

For more information, contact: Mike Brothers, Public Information Administrator, (417) 874-1205.