

August 22, 2013

News Release

For Immediate Release

"Get 'Em Out" campaign to aid animal shelter rescues

Springfield and the Ozarks are home to countless animal lovers. The generosity and kindness of those in our area for dogs and cats, especially, runs deep. In 2012, the Health Department's Animal Control Program announced a new way that the public could help unclaimed dogs and cats from the city's animal shelter get to a rescue agency and be put up for public adoption – an \$8 donation for a "pull fee."

Now the Springfield-Greene County Health Department and Animal Control are launching a renewed "Get 'Em Out" campaign that aims to help pay for hundreds of lives to be saved. The goal is 700 pull fees, or \$5,600, by the end of the year. That is the estimated number of animals that will likely go to rescue the rest of the year. This is a chance for the public to help the animals at the shelter, even if they are unable to adopt.

The Springfield Animal Shelter is an outdated facility that does not have the space necessary for proper public adoptions, so rescue agencies have stepped up to fill the void in recent years.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 common diseases
- Worm treatments and prevention
- Grooming and other care

The cost of these services far exceeds \$8 per animal, and pull fees are intended only to help offset the cost while keeping the barriers for rescue as minimal as possible.

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 22 months in a row. 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.

"We continue to be amazed by the boundless energy and compassion of our rescue partners," said Karen Prescott, who oversees Animal Control as the department's Environment Health

Administrator. "We love working with them, and we hope the public can help make their job a little easier with this campaign."

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.

Media contact: Mike Brothers, (417) 874-1205.

Interview opportunity: Latichia Duffey, director of Halfway Home, will be at the Shelter retrieving animals for rescue on Monday morning, Aug. 26, at about 9 a.m., and will be available for interviews. Shelter and Animal Control staff will also be available. The shelter is located at 4002 N. Farmer Road. Call 833-3592 for directions if needed.