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News Release

For Immediate Release

Animal Shelter, Rescue Partners Hit Adoption Milestone

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department's Animal Control program and its community partners have reached a milestone worth celebrating this week.

As of today, the shelter has gone 16 weeks – four full months – sending all potentially adoptable dogs to one of more than a dozen "no-kill" rescue partners for public adoption. This is the longest such "streak" that anyone associated with the shelter and its partners can recall. As the streak has progressed, all of those involved in these efforts have worked harder and harder to keep it going. A total of 417 dogs and 70 cats have been sent to rescue groups during those 16 weeks.

"By focusing on collaborating with the community, we've been able to change our whole model during the last few years, and the result has been much better outcomes for our animal population," said Clay Goddard, Assistant Director of Health. "The key to that success has been tapping into the passion and dedication of our rescue partners both locally and around the country."

Dogs are considered potentially adoptable if they are healthy and non-vicious. The overwhelming majority dog taken into the shelter in the last four months has been considered adoptable. Every effort is made to bring the dogs up to healthy status while at the shelter. These efforts include administering a vaccination for five common diseases and working with veterinarians in case of injuries. Dogs are also treated for worms and fleas, and groomed if necessary. Animals cannot be adopted from the shelter directly – only owners may claim animals there. If animals are not claimed, they are then made available to rescue agencies.

It should be noted that the current streak does not include pit bulls. Following changes to the city code regarding pit bull registration and intake in 2006, the shelter was prohibited from allowing pit bull adoption. Additionally, although more cats than ever before are being sent out for adoption from the shelter, the streak does not include cats, either. The stray and feral cat population in Springfield is simply too great for the rescue partnership model to keep pace.

"We're extremely proud of what we've been able to accomplish working with our partners, and want to celebrate this milestone," said Karen Prescott, Administrator of Environment Compliance, who oversees animal control efforts. "But at the same time, we also want to be open about the fact that we still have some ways to go before Springfield arrives at a point where euthanizing animals is no longer an issue."

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department will continue to update the public on status of this "streak" as it progresses. Follow the department on Facebook and Twitter for continued updates: www.facebook.com/SGCHD and www.twitter.com/sgchd.

For more information, contact: Mike Brothers, Public Information Administrator, Office: (417) 874-1205 Cell: (417) 894-9064, mbrothers@springfieldmo.gov