Celebration to Highlight Animal Shelter's 6-Month Adoption Streak

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department's Animal Control program and its community partners have today reached the six-month milestone of stray dog adoptions.

Beginning in late October, all potentially adoptable dogs impounded at the Springfield city animal shelter have been sent to one of more than a dozen "no-kill" rescue partners for public adoption. More than 650 dogs have been sent to rescue groups during those six months.

To mark this milestone, the Springfield-Greene County Health Department will hold a **partner recognition celebration from 3 to 5 p.m. on Friday, May 4, at Phelps Grove Park pavilion.** The public is invited to attend and bring their pet dogs – especially if the dog was adopted from a rescue partner such as C.A.R.E. or Half-Way Home Rescue. Live music and treats for both dogs and people will round out the celebration. The health department will also announce a way for the public to help with the adoption process. More information about the event can be found on the department's website at: health.springfieldmo.gov.

"This is a great accomplishment, not only for our rescue partners and animal control staff, but for the whole community," said Kevin Gipson, Director of Health. "The rescues do incredible work facilitating the adoptions, and the public continues to step up to adopt."

The number of dogs rescued from the shelter has more than doubled in the past five years, from 600 in 2006 to more than 1,300 in 2011. Meanwhile, the number of dogs euthanized has dropped by nearly 80 percent during that same time period, from 1,421 in 2006 to 305 last year.

Dogs are considered potentially adoptable if they are healthy and non-vicious. The overwhelming majority of dogs taken into the shelter in the last six months have 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 a contract veterinarian. Dogs are also treated for worms and fleas, and groomed if necessary. Space constraints at the shelter do not allow for adoptions directly from the facility – only owners may claim animals there. If animals are not claimed, they are then made available to rescue agencies.

The current adoption milestone does not include pit bulls or cats. 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 cat population remains very large.
"Animal euthanasia does occur across our community," Gipson said. "We strongly encourage pet owners to spay and neuter their animals. It's affordable, it's the responsible thing to do, and it is the only way we can truly deal with the issue of the ever-expanding pet population."

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