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News Release

*For Immediate Release*

## **County Budget Cuts Impact Animal Control**

Following last week's Greene County Commission budget decisions – and pending final approval of the County's 2012 budget that includes more than \$1.4 million in cuts – the Springfield-Greene County Health Department is providing the following information to help citizens clearly understand the impact of the cuts on Animal Control services.

In 2007, Greene County approached the Health Department about expanding animal control services into the unincorporated but urbanized areas of the county that surround the city of Springfield. These services included impounding loose dogs (but not cats), investigating animal bites and quarantining biting animals. The goal was to provide the same level of service to developed areas of the county, particularly residential neighborhoods, which had long been available within the adjacent city limits.

The addition of animal control services in what is referred to as the Urban Animal Control Area has become a very popular service and it has been widely used. This area contains an estimated 23,000 households with a population of more than 50,000 people. There were more than 1,000 calls for service throughout this area in 2010, with more than 300 dogs impounded and 22 bite investigations. In 2010, there were 50 animal bite investigations there.

It is often the case that the city limits runs along a neighborhood street, meaning citizens who live on one side of the street will be able to receive services from Animal Control, while their neighbors on the other side will not. There are examples of this situation on all sides of the city of Springfield. Animal Control staff can pinpoint several such locations for media upon request. (A map of the Urban Animal Control Area is online at: [www.springfieldmo.gov/health/pdf/UrbanAnimalMap.pdf](http://www.springfieldmo.gov/health/pdf/UrbanAnimalMap.pdf) (pdf).)

Here is what will change, pending final approval, with Animal Control services beginning on Jan. 1:

- Citizens living in unincorporated Greene County may call the County Planning & Zoning Office at 868-4005 to report an animal bite only. The county is not able to respond to reports of loose or vicious dogs.
- Citizens living within Springfield city limits may call Animal Control for services that include picking up loose animals; dealing with vicious dogs and animal bites (any animal); trapping nuisance wildlife; and responding to reports of sick or injured animals, cruelty to animals, and the number of animals at a single residence. A current city limit boundary map can be viewed online at: <http://gismaps.springfieldmo.gov/councilzone>
- Greene County staff will now be responsible for ensuring that biting animals are properly quarantined when such incidents occur, and for completing the associated paperwork.

Quarantine facilities at the city's animal shelter will no longer be available. The county is currently making arrangements for the quarantine of biting animals picked up in the county.

- The city animal shelter will no longer accept drop-offs of animals from the county. Arrangements should instead be made with local animal rescue organizations.

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