

County Pet Licensing Program Changes Approved by BOCC

Fort Myers, Florida, 8/5/09—On August 4, 2009, the Lee County Board of County Commissioners approved a revision to the County's Pet Licensing Program. The revision is not an increase but changes the requirements to qualify for reduced license fees. All dogs, cats and ferrets now must be microchipped, in addition to the previous requirement of being sterilized, to receive the reduced license fee. **A grace period until January 1, 2010 will be permitted for owners to become compliant with microchipping their pets to receive the discounted license fee.**

The change was prompted by the vast number of pets entering Lee County Domestic Animal Services (LCDAS) that have no identification. Microchip IDs, unlike tags, cannot be removed. In 2008 only 13% of stray pets at LCDAS were claimed by their owners. The intention is to reduce the time stray pets spend at the shelter waiting to be claimed. The Microchip ID will provide LCDAS with the owner's information immediately and also will reduce the costs to taxpayers for sheltering stray pets. Microchipped pets can also be identified in the field when picked up by Animal Services' Officers who can contact the owner and return the pet without it ever entering the shelter; another life-saving and cost-saving benefit.

License fees effective August 4, 2009 are:

Juvenile license (pets under 12 months of age) - \$8

One-year license for sterilized & microchipped pets - \$8

Three-year license for sterilized & microchipped pets - \$15

One-year license for unsterilized pets or sterilized pets without a microchip - \$35

Three-year license for unsterilized pets or sterilized pets without a microchip - \$65

Pet owners should consult with their veterinarian to schedule an appointment for microchip implantation or visit Lee County Domestic Animal Services on the following dates to attend a microchip clinic:

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| Saturday, | October 24, 2009 | 12 to 2 PM |
| Saturday, | November 21, 2009 | 12 to 2 PM |
| Saturday, | January 9, 2010 | 12 to 2 PM |
| Saturday, | February 6, 2010 | 12 to 2 PM |
| Saturday, | March 13, 2010 | 12 to 2 PM |
| Saturday, | April 10, 2010 | 12 to 2 PM |

The fee for microchips at Lee County Domestic Animal Services' clinics listed above is \$15.00.

If you have any questions regarding the changes to the Lee County Pet Licensing Program, please contact Lee County Domestic Animal Services' Licensing Department at (239) 533-9234 or (239) 533-9236. For low-cost spay/neuter information please visit www.leelostpets.com for a list of providers.