

Microchip IDs Reunite Long Lost Pets with Owners Lee County to Hold Pet Microchip ID Clinics

Fort Myers, Florida, 9/24/09—Two Lee County families were recently reunited with long-lost pets thanks to pet microchip identification. The Williams family was reunited with “Smoke” who had been missing for 13 months. She had been found by another nearby family where she lived until August 2009 when she strayed again. This time “Smoke” was found by Lee County Domestic Animal Services (LCDAS) who scanned her for a microchip Id which identified the Williams as her owners. The family was overjoyed! They had never forgotten about the special little puppy but didn’t believe they would ever see her again.

“Hopefully, this story will also show how important it is to bring found pets to the shelter to be scanned,” says Donna Ward, LCDAS Director. “Microchips can prevent a lot of grieving by pet owners who may never find their pets again without permanent identification,” adds Ward.

The Ditty family would also agree. In August they were reunited with their 18 year old cat that had been missing for three years when it was found and brought to the LCDAS shelter. Thanks to a microchip Id another happy ending resulted. LCDAS hopes news of these cases and others will encourage more pet owners to have their pets microchipped and more finders of lost pets to have them scanned at shelters.

Lee County will hold the first of six Pet Microchip Id Clinics over the next seven months on October 24, 2009 from noon to 2:00 pm at the agency’s animal shelter, 5600 Banner Drive, in Fort Myers. For just \$15 owners may have their pets implanted with a small microchip Id that will identify the owner should the pet become lost. Owners providing proof of public assistance may have their pets microchipped for \$5 each. Cash will be the only method of payment at the clinics.

In August the Lee County Board of County Commissioners approved a revision to pet license fees. Previously to receive a reduced license fee pets had to be sterilized. Now pets will have to be microchipped and sterilized to qualify for the discounted fee. The fee change will not go into effect until January of 2010, so pet owners who wish to have their pets microchipped will have ample time before their current license expires.

Owners should check with their regular veterinarian about getting a microchip for their pet or attend one of the six clinics offered by LCDAS.

While microchips and sterilization are not required for pets, the county hopes to encourage more pet owners to do both by offering a discounted license fee for pets who are. Just like sterilization reduces the number of pets that enter shelters, microchips reduce the amount of time pets spend in shelters because their owners can be immediately identified. Only 13% of pets entering Lee County's shelter are claimed by owners due to lack of identification. Microchips cannot only save lives but also taxpayer dollars that would be spent caring for these pets during their stay.

For more information about pet license fees and dates for additional Microchip Clinics scheduled through April 2010 call Lee County Domestic Animal Services at (239) 533-7387 (LEE-PETS) or visit the agency's website at www.LeeLostPets.com.

- Attachments: 1) The Williams family reunited with Smoke
2) The Ditty family reunited with their lost cat

