Media Contact:
Lee County Library System
Margie Byers, APR, Library Development Specialist
239- 533-4826 or mbyers@leegov.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PugFest VII –PugOlympics a Triathlon of Contests and Fun!

Fort Myers, Fla., Jan 5, 2012 - The Lee County Library System announced PugFest VII: PugOlympics will be held from 12:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. Sunday, January 29 at the Bell Tower Shops, corner U.S. 41 and Daniels Parkway, in Fort Myers, Florida. PugFest, now in its seventh year, is a fun dog-friendly fundraiser for the Library System's annual Southwest Florida Reading Festival.

This year's theme is PugOlympics! There will be three, or a triathlon of contests open to any dog breed including Best Sport Costume Contest, Synchronized Squat, and the Return the Torch Relay contest. Additionally there will be a dog fashion show, a chance auction with dog- gone good prizes and a large variety of pet products to browse or buy. More than 1,500 animal lovers and 500 dogs attended the event last year. "It is always so entertaining and fun to watch all the dogs in their costumes strutting their stuff," says Event Organizer, Margie Byers. "I am always amazed how creative these dog owners are!" Admission is free, but a $5 donation per family is suggested. All funds raised benefit the Southwest Florida Reading Festival, a free community event to showcase the library's programs and resources, and to promote reading and literacy.

Lee County PugFest organizers are grateful to their sponsors: the Bell Tower Shops, LITE 93.7, Morningstar Dog Training as well as Master of Ceremonies John Hulbert III whose fun commentaries and music soundtracks make the contests and fashion show so enjoyable.

The Lee County PugFest started when Dan Yaccarino, author and illustrator of the book "Unlovable" about a Pug, was scheduled to attend the Southwest Florida Reading Festival in 2005. Festival coordinators asked Dan to stay an extra day for PugFest which would be modeled after the original PugFest event in Cincinnati, Ohio. Since 2005, the event has taken off and attracts about 1,200 people and 500 dogs and has raised more than $11,000. For more information about PugFest or the Southwest Florida Reading Festival, call 239-337-READ (7323) or visit www.readfest.org/pugfest2012.aspx.

About the Lee County Library System:

The Lee County Library System serves Lee County with free books, downloadable ebooks, digital content, books-by-mail, bookmobile, electronic resources, music and movies, programs and meeting space. The Lee County Library System: strengthens the community by informing and enriching individuals; ensures equal and open access; defends intellectual freedom and the right to privacy; ensures that an individual's economic status does

not deter library use; commits to meeting customers' needs; fosters a climate of mutual respect and trust; values and supports individual initiative; promotes cooperation, collaboration and connections; promotes lifelong reading; practices financial accountability and supports Lee County's vision, mission and values.

All programs are free and open to the public. A sign language interpreter is available with 5 business days notice to library staff. Assistive listening system available; request at desk. Information about Lee County Library System is available for your convenience 24 hours-a-day at www.lee-county.com/library where you can find out about library services, programs, locations, view an online events calendar or place a hold on library items. Telephone Reference is available at 239-479-INFO (4636).

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