

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rabid fox: First confirmed rabies case of the year in Pickens County

Jasper (GA) May 11, 2009 – Jan Stephens of the Pickens County Environmental Health Department has reported the first case of confirmed rabies in Pickens County this year.

“A fox came out of the woods off Old Jones Mountain Road in Talking Rock last Thursday [May 7] morning at about 9:30 and tried to attack two small dogs in the presence of their owner,” Ms. Stephens said. “The dogs killed the fox and the owner reported the incident right away. We immediately shipped off the fox’s head to the state lab for rabies testing and received the positive results late on Friday. Fortunately, both dogs involved were current on their rabies vaccinations.”

Since the dogs were up to date on their shots, they pose no threat to the public and will only need a booster rabies vaccination.

“One of the most essential precautions animal owners can take is to maintain rabies vaccinations in their pets and livestock,” stressed Ms. Stephens. “Though this is the first case we’ve seen so far this year in Pickens County, there were some cases reported earlier in the year just next to us in Gilmer County, and chances are we will see more rabies cases here, as well.”

The opportunity for Pickens County residents to have their dogs and cats vaccinated for rabies at a reduced rate will take place this Saturday, May 16 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. when the Wayside Animal Clinic will conduct a Rabies Shot Clinic at Jasper Middle School (the old high school). The school is located at 339 West Church Street (Hwy 53) in Jasper. The clinic will offer rabies shots for both dogs and cats for ten dollars, each, and dogs can receive a parvovirus (parvo) shot for ten dollars, as well. The clinic is a fundraiser benefiting the Jasper Lions Club. For more information about the Rabies Shot Clinic, please call 706-692-2210.

Health officials advise that if a person or animal is bitten or scratched by a wild animal or by an unfamiliar domestic animal, the wound should be washed with soap and water and rinsed for several minutes. Seek medical attention immediately and report the event to the Pickens County Environmental Health Department at 706-253-0900 with the following details:

- The geographic location of the incident
- The type of animal that was involved

Cherokee: Canton (770) 345-7371 / Woodstock (770) 928-0133 Gilmer (706) 635-4363 Pickens (706) 253-2821

Fannin (706) 632-3023 Murray (706) 695-4585 Whitfield (706) 279-9600

- How the exposure occurred (provoked or unprovoked)
- The vaccination status of any pets involved
- Whether the aggressive animal can be safely captured and tested for rabies

For more information about rabies, call the Pickens County Environmental Health Department or log onto the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at www.cdc.gov.

Persons who may be exposed to rabies may also call Georgia Poison Control at 1-800 - 222-1222 if other local resources cannot be reached.

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