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#120809-SPAYPRGM

Contact: Joy Tsubooka  
Public Information Officer  
(850) 983-5254, (850) 393-8304 Cell  
joyt@santarosa.fl.gov

### ***Low Cost Spay & Neuter Program for Pets Starts September 5***

Thanks to a one-time grant of \$22,250 from the “Florida Animal Friend, Inc.” license plate program, Santa Rosa County Animal Services will offer a discount spay and neuter program for income-eligible residents beginning Wednesday, September 5. Over 80 percent of animals that come to the county’s shelter each year face an early death due to an over abundance of animals. By offering this program, Santa Rosa County hopes to make the sterilization of animals more affordable and decrease the number of unwanted animals born each year. Santa Rosa County is one of only 17 non-profit or governmental organizations selected to receive a grant for 2012. This is the third time in six years Santa Rosa County has been awarded the grant.

As part of the grant, approved applicants are assigned to a participating veterinarian to have their pets spayed or neutered. Applicants must provide proof of current rabies vaccinations, residency, and income in order to qualify. Animals must be at least six months of age or older with a limit of two animals per household and does not include animals adopted from the shelter. For more information, call Santa Rosa County Animal Services at (850) 983-4680 or visit the shelter at 4451 Pine Forest Road, Milton between 8a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The application can also be found online at [www.santarosa.fl.gov/animals](http://www.santarosa.fl.gov/animals).

This year is the third year Santa Rosa County was selected as a Florida Animal Friend, Inc. grant recipient. In 2007, the county received \$18,000 which facilitated the altering of 306 animals. In 2010, a grant of \$17,500 was awarded to the county helping to spay and neuter 260 animals. With one fertile cat averaging three litters of four to six kittens and a fertile dog averaging two litters of six to ten puppies yearly, the 566 animals spayed and neutered has a marked difference in the animal population of Santa Rosa County, potentially saving thousands of animals from being euthanized. To learn more about the animal friend license plate program, visit: [www.floridaanimalfriend.org](http://www.floridaanimalfriend.org).

#### **Why Spay or Neuter?**

According to the Humane Society of the United States, spaying or neutering is good for your pet, for you and for the community.

#### *Spaying or Neutering Is Good for Your Pet*

- Spaying and neutering helps dogs and cats live longer, healthier lives.
- Spaying and neutering can eliminate or reduce the incidence of a number of health problems that can be very difficult or expensive to treat.
- Spaying eliminates the possibility of uterine or ovarian cancer and greatly reduces the incidence of breast cancer, particularly when your pet is spayed before her first estrous cycle.
- Neutering eliminates testicular cancer and decreases the incidence of prostate disease.

#### *Spaying or Neutering Is Good for You*

- Spaying and neutering makes pets better, more affectionate companions.
- Neutering cats makes them less likely to spray and mark territory.

- Spaying a dog or cat eliminates her heat cycle. Estrus lasts an average of six to 12 days, often twice a year, in dogs and an average of six to seven days, three or more times a year, in cats. Females in heat can cry incessantly, show nervous behavior, attract unwanted male animals, and also exhibit escape behavior.
- Unsterilized animals often exhibit more behavior and temperament problems than do those who have been spayed or neutered.
- By altering your pet, it will be less likely to be involved in a bite situation.
- Neutering makes pets less likely to roam the neighborhood, run away, or get into fights.

*Spaying and Neutering is Good for the Community*

- Communities spend millions of dollars to control unwanted animals.
- Irresponsible breeding contributes to the problem of dog bites and attacks.
- Animal shelters are overburdened with surplus animals.
- Stray pets and homeless animals get into trash containers, defecate in public areas or on private lawns, and frighten or anger people who have no understanding of their misery or needs.
- Some stray animals also scare away or kill birds and wildlife.

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