For Immediate Release

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Local Animal Shelters Ask for Community's Help Over 4th of July Holiday

Woods Humane Society & SLO Animal Services Aim to Reunify Lost Pets with Owners

San Luis Obispo, CA (June 26, 2023) — With Fourth of July fireworks displays around the corner, **Woods Humane Society** and **SLO County Animal Services Division** (**ASD**) are asking the community to help keep pets out of shelters and in their homes this holiday.

"Each year, our shelter fills up with pets who become lost after being frightened by fireworks," says Eric Anderson, DVM, Animal Services Manager for the SLO County ASD. "Many of these pets have homes, but without ID tags or microchips we are unable to reunite them immediately with their owners. This influx of animals puts a strain on the shelter and on the pets, and also limits the kennel space available for truly homeless animals."

To avoid this situation, Woods Humane Society CEO Emily L'Heureux says the community can make a big difference by trying to reunite any found pets with their owners *before* bringing them to ASD—an action that can save space in the shelter while also improving chances of reunification.

According to Human Animal Support Services (HASS), the vast majority of lost pets are picked up less than a mile from their homes. When kept in the neighborhood where they are found, these animals have a 70% reclaim rate. However, when they are brought to a shelter, the typical reclaim rate is only 17%.

"With space so tight in shelters across the region, we hope the SLO County community will help us keep owned pets home this Independence Day by protecting their pets from getting loose, chipping and identifying their pets, and taking steps to reunify any found pets with their owners before bringing them to the county shelter," L'Heureux says.

Woods Humane Society and Animal Services recommend following these steps, seen in their new infographic, if you find a lost pet this Fourth of July, or at any time of year:

1. **Leash and walk the pet around the neighborhood to see if anyone knows where they live.**
2. **Take a picture of the animal and post it on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor, Lost.PetcoLove.org, and Craigslist.com.**
3. **Bring the animal to a vet or animal shelter to scan for a microchip.**
4. **Complete a Found Animal Report on the SLO County website.**
5. **If possible, hold on to and care for the animal for a few days; chances are the owner is nearby!**

To avoid losing your pet due to fireworks, follow Woods' list of **Pet Fireworks Safety Tips.**

Woods offers microchips for $20 by appointment; please call Woods SLO at (805) 543-9316 or Woods North County at (805) 466-5403. **Please note: Woods Humane Society is closed on the Fourth of July.** Microchipping is available at Animal Services for $25 on Wednesdays from 5:00-7:00pm and Saturdays from 1:00-3:00 p.m.

For more information about what to do if you find or lose a pet, visit Woods' Lost Pet Help resource page or Animal Services' Report a Lost Pet page. For more information about Woods, visit www.WoodsHumane.org or call (805) 543-9316. Woods Humane Society is located at 875 Oklahoma Ave., San Luis Obispo, CA 93405 and at 2300 Ramona Rd., Atascadero, CA 93422. For more information about Animal Services, visit www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Health-Agency/Animal-Services or call (805) 781-4400. Animal Services has moved to their new location at 865 Oklahoma Ave., San Luis Obispo, CA 93405.

For media inquiries or high-resolution images, please contact Media@woodshumane.org.

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About Woods Humane Society

Founded in 1955, Woods Humane Society is a privately funded, non-profit, animal sheltering and welfare organization that annually places more than 3,000 dogs and cats into loving homes. All animals are spayed/neutered, vaccinated and microchipped prior to being placed for adoption. Visit www.woodshumane.org to view available animals, donate or learn more. To make an adoption appointment, call Woods Humane Society SLO, located at 875 Oklahoma Avenue in San Luis Obispo, at (805) 543-9316, or Woods Humane Society North County, located at 2300 Ramona Road in Atascadero, at (805) 466-5403.

About SLO County Animal Services

The Animal Services Division is responsible for providing animal care and control services throughout the County of San Luis Obispo and within each of the seven incorporated communities. Animal Services' staff serves the community by helping to identify solutions to animal related problems, enforcing local ordinances and state laws relating to animals, providing humane education programs, and performing rabies control and surveillance. The Division also operates the only open-intake animal shelter in the county. For more information about Animal Services, visit www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Health-Agency/Animal-Services or call (805) 781-4400. Animal Services has moved to their new location at 865 Oklahoma Ave., San Luis Obispo, CA 93405.