

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 21, 2009

For More Information Contact
Brad Stallard, 328-8000

**NORTON CITY COUNCIL AND WISE COUNTY/CITY OF NORTON HEALTH
DEPARTMENT SPONSOR RABIES CLINIC MAY 9, 2009**

(Wise, VA) – The Wise County/City of Norton Health Department, Norton City Council, local veterinarians and local animal control officers are encouraging Norton residents to participate in the Rabies Vaccination Clinic to be held on May 9, 2009. This clinic is especially timely for Norton residents since the new cat licensing ordinance requires cats to have a current rabies vaccination before a license can be issued. Of course, dog owners are also welcome to bring their pets in for vaccination.

“People who love their companion animals know the importance of keeping their pets’ vaccinations up to date. They are not only protecting the animals but also themselves and their families.” stressed Brad Stallard, Environmental Health Manager of the Lenowisco Health District.

In the Lenowisco Health District there were no confirmed cases of rabies in domestic animals in 2008 or so far in 2009, but a positive skunk was identified in Scott County earlier this year.

“In addition to keeping pets’ vaccinations up-to-date, people should also avoid contact with unknown animals,” explained Dr. Sue Cantrell, Director of the Lenowisco Health District. Dr. Cantrell reminds people who feed or care for stray or feral animals that unless they take the steps to vaccinate those animals they could be putting themselves and their own companion animal at risk for exposure to rabies. “If you care enough to feed them you should care enough to have them vaccinated as well,” Dr. Cantrell stressed.

The rabies virus is shed in the saliva of animals sick with the virus, so any animal bite should be taken seriously. If an animal bites you, wash the wound immediately. Call your physician, local health department, or animal control agency immediately. Likewise, if a wild animal bites your pet, contact your veterinarian or local health department immediately.

Dr. Cantrell and Mr. Stallard strongly advise people to follow this guidance to prevent families and pets from being exposed to rabies:

- Vaccinate all cats, dogs, and ferrets against rabies and keep them up to date!
- Avoid contact with wild animals or stray cats and dogs.
- Do not feed wild animals or stray cats and dogs.
- Report stray animals to your local animal control agency.
- Eliminate outdoor food sources around the home.
- Keep pets confined to your property or walk them on a leash.

State law requires all dogs and cats over the age of four months to be vaccinated against rabies. Vaccines can be given as early as three months and one product is approved for kittens at eight weeks.

Listed below are the sites at which rabies shots will be given. One year vaccinations will be \$8.00 and three year vaccinations will be \$12.00.

Dr. Goins will be at the John I. Burton High School parking lot from 1:30 to 4:30pm on Saturday, May 9.

For more information on rabies, a disease that is almost 100% fatal, log onto the Virginia Department of Health's Web site at www.vdh.virginia.gov/whc/external_whc/rabiesnew.asp or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's web site at www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies/default.htm