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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rabies found in several wild animals near Murphy

MURPHY (May 25, 2016) Murphy's Animal Control officials are speculating that the mild winter just concluded may be partly to blame for an increase in the number of rabid skunks in the Murphy/Parker area, says Kim Parker, Support Services Manager.

"A normally harsh winter will often eliminate wild animals who are sick or weak," she said. "The winter we've experienced did not serve that purpose, and that may have resulted in a rise in animals that are susceptible to diseases."

The worst of these diseases is rabies, which can be transmitted to other animals or humans with potentially devastating results. While vaccines to protect against rabies are readily and easily available for pets and other domesticated animals, owners must ensure their animals are up-to-date on their vaccination shots.

Recently, Animal Control Officers sent six skunk carcasses to the State Department of Health Services for evaluation, and five of them tested positive for rabies. All were found in or near Murphy and Parker.

As yet, there have been no reported cases of human infection with rabies in the area, but the high number of skunks with the disease signals that the disease is more prevalent than normal.

"All pets, dogs and cats, and even horses, should be vaccinated against rabies," said Parker. "There are many low-cost vaccination clinics around the area for dogs and cats, so cost should not be a factor. Even indoor dogs or cats are at risk, since they must, at some point, go outdoors."

Pets that are exposed to rabies, even if vaccinated, should be taken to a veterinarian. Generally, the veterinarian will isolate the pet and treat it with a booster shot.

Walkers, hikers, runners and joggers should be on the alert for any wild animal that exhibits unexplained or aggressive behaviors. Rabies can attack the brain, causing many infected animals to run in circles or act in ways that are contrary to their nature.

"When confronting animals like this, people should avoid them, and call the non-emergency police number," she said. "We will take the necessary precautions when capturing these animals, using techniques that the public may not be familiar with."

If necessary, extra care should be taken when handling a dead animal that may have been infected. Sturdy, disposal rubber gloves should be used, and disposed of immediately. Children should be told to report dead animals, and not touch them.

The non-emergency number for the Murphy dispatchers is (972) 468-4236. For more information on rabies, please visit <https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/zoonosis/default.shtm>.

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ABOUT MURPHY -- Murphy is a fast-growing community located in Collin County. The population is approximately 18,020, generally characterized as highly educated with a median household income above the state average. With more than 70 percent of the land developed, the community is dominated by single-family residences. City planners strive to preserve a country feel while exhibiting an aggressive economic development stance. Money Magazine has dubbed Murphy as the 27th Best Place to Live in America for small cities, and D Magazine placed Murphy as the fifth best suburb in the 2014 list, where it has consistently ranked in the top 10.