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**NEWS
RELEASE**

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Fourth of July Brings Increased Risk of Lost Pets Across the Borderland

El Paso Animal Services Urges Residents to Prepare

EL PASO, Texas—As Fourth of July celebrations approach, El Paso Animal Services is encouraging residents to take proactive steps to keep pets safe and prevent them from becoming lost or displaced.

The holiday is historically the busiest time of year for animal shelters nationwide, with a surge in lost pet reports and stray animals entering shelters between July 4 and July 6.

Loud fireworks, open gates, backyard gatherings, and unexpected visitors can startle pets, causing them to panic and escape from homes or yards. This year, El Paso Animal Services has already taken in nearly 13,000 pets—a number expected to grow during the holiday weekend if proactive steps are not taken.

Pet owners are encouraged to keep pets indoors during fireworks, create a quiet and secure space inside the home, and ensure pets are wearing collars with current ID tags. Microchip information should be verified and updated ahead of time to ensure a quick reunion if a pet is lost. Residents can register or update their pet's microchip information at PetcoLoveLost.org and 24PetWatch.com. If your pets are not microchipped, free clinics are available across the city. A full list of upcoming events can be found at ElPasoAnimalServices.org.

In addition to preparing their own pets, residents who come across a lost animal in their neighborhood can take simple steps to help the pet return home without entering the shelter. Most lost pets are found within a mile of their home. If safe to do so, residents should walk the pet around the neighborhood and ask neighbors if they recognize the animal. If the pet has no visible ID, they can be taken to a nearby veterinary clinic, fire station, or El Paso Animal Services location to be scanned for a microchip.

Anyone who finds a lost pet is also encouraged to post the animal's photo and a brief description on PetcoLoveLost.org, local Facebook lost-and-found groups, and the NextDoor app. If able to temporarily house the pet for a short period, this greatly increases the likelihood of a quick reunion and prevents the animal from enduring the stress of entering the shelter.

"When a pet goes missing, every minute matters," said Terry Keschull, Director of El Paso Animal Services. "By planning ahead and taking simple actions, families and neighbors can play a vital role in keeping pets safe and ensuring they make it back home."

For more information on Fourth of July pet safety, reunification resources, and upcoming free microchipping events, visit ElPasoAnimalServices.org.

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Promoting **Transparent & Consistent Communication**
Among All Members of the Community

Media Contact: Julieanne Newbold
newboldjm@elpasotexas.gov
915.493.4324