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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Fourth of July Prep for Your Pets**

*Keep Pets Safe at Home*

This Fourth of July, as the community prepares for patriotic celebrations of food, family and fireworks, the Lafayette Animal Shelter and Care Center (LASCC) would like to help make Independence Day safer for Acadiana's four-legged family members.

**More dogs run away on the Fourth of July than any other day of the year.** Typical Independence Day activities create a 'perfect storm' for pets to run away. Everything that makes fireworks enjoyable for humans can be very stressful and frightening for pets. The bright lights and loud noises can trigger a fight-or-flight response in animals causing them to panic and run as fast and as far away from the noise as they can. There are also many distractions such as food, strange smells and unknown visitors that can result in pets running away.

"On the days and weeks following the Fourth of July holiday, we tend to see an increase in animals brought into the shelter," says LASCC Shelter Director Shelley Delahoussaye. "Some are strays, but many are pets that are lost, confused and sometimes injured. We get calls from owners whose dogs escaped from their yard or jerked out of their collars while leashed at a fireworks event. We do our best to reunite the lost animals with their owners, but prevention is key for these situations."

**Tips to Protect Your Pet this Fourth of July:**

- **Keep Pets Secured Inside Your Home** - When scared, a dog or cat will do everything it can to find somewhere it considers safe. Securing your pet indoors is an extra level of protection.
- **Give Pets a Safe Place to Hide** - Set up an area in a room or a crate with items that make them feel comfortable. (If you will be gone for the evening, leave pets something that has your scent, like an article of clothing.)
- **Use Ambient Noise** - A radio, white noise or TV can help drown out the noise outside.
- **Keep Pets Busy** - Treat toys such as a Kong filled with peanut butter can provide a distraction during the festivities.
- **Talk to a Vet** - For severe cases of anxiety, medication may be the best option.
- **Update Pets' Information, Just in Case** - One in three pets go missing in their lifetime. Having pets microchipped is a permanent form of identification and significantly increases the chances of lost animals being reunited with their owners.

"Please take these necessary precautions to ensure your pet enjoys peace and quiet while you have peace of mind. Be sure pets are microchipped and the microchip information is updated with correct phone numbers. This is one of the most important things an owner can do to protect their animal,"

Delahoussaye stresses, "If your pet does go missing, please check our website, [LafayetteLA.gov/LASCC](http://LafayetteLA.gov/LASCC)."

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