

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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UPDATE

SUFFOLK, Va. (June 30, 2009) The Suffolk Animal Shelter will remain closed to the public for an additional week. The shelter was originally slated to reopen today; however, the facility will remain closed after two animals in the shelter tested positive for the parvovirus this weekend. One of the animals tested is non-symptomatic and observation of that animal will continue. The second animal was found deceased and a necropsy will be performed to determine cause of death.

Shelter personnel will continue an extensive cleaning regimen of the shelter and monitoring the dogs that are currently housed at the facility.

Suffolk Animal Shelter Closes to Combat Parvovirus

SUFFOLK, Va. (June 30, 2009) The Suffolk Animal Shelter closed to the public Saturday so that personnel can address an outbreak of canine parvovirus. Officials advise that the shelter will remain closed until next Monday, in an effort to prevent the spread of the disease.

Shelter personnel were first advised that an animal that had been adopted from the shelter last week had become ill. Tests revealed that the canine suffered from parvovirus. When the shelter closed on Friday evening, it did not reopen Saturday morning. Saturday, several dogs in the shelter, including three of a litter of puppies,

became ill. Those animals tested positive for parvo and were euthanized. A total of twelve dogs have been euthanized to date.

Canine parvovirus is a contagious virus mainly affecting dogs. The disease is highly infectious and is spread from dog to dog by direct or indirect contact with feces or vomit. It can be especially severe in puppies that are not protected by maternal antibodies or vaccination.

The shelter was placed on quarantine, with no animals being adopted from the facility. Partnerships with local animal welfare organizations and rescues are also being utilized to reduce the number of animals coming into the shelter.

The Animal Shelter has taken an active and aggressive role in addressing the issue since the discovery of the disease. Actions have included not only the quarantine of the shelter, but an aggressive cleaning schedule has been adopted to combat the disease. Officials also met with a member of the State Veterinarian's Office Tuesday afternoon to consult on the City's plan to address the issue. The State Veterinarian concurred with the recommended actions.

The shelter is expected to remain closed until Monday, July 6 to ensure the welfare of animals currently at and those that might come into the shelter.

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