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FRANKLIN COUNTY

PRESS RELEASE

Rabies Prevention in Franklin County

Louisburg, NC – The Franklin County Health Department is reminding citizens that Rabies is a very real and continual concern in our county.

On January 9, 2009, a raccoon found in the King Drive area of Franklinton, tested positive for the rabies virus as confirmed by the NC State Laboratory for Public Health. There are no known exposures to animals or humans confirmed at this time.

Rabies is entirely preventable among humans and our domestic pet population. North Carolina law requires dogs and cats four months of age and older to be vaccinated against rabies. "Infected pets can bring rabies into the home and increase the chances of exposing family members to this very serious disease," said Eric Ireland, Health Director for the Franklin County Health Department. **All** domestic pets, whether inside or outside pets over the age of four months, must be vaccinated against this deadly virus.

Mr. Ireland is urging citizens to ensure their pets are properly protected. Contact your local Veterinarian's office and have your animals vaccinated against the Rabies virus.

Rabies can infect any mammal. In North Carolina, rabies is most common in raccoons, skunks, foxes and bats, but can be found in dogs, cats, horses, cattle and other animals. Due to the continued presence of rabies in Franklin County, the Franklin County Health Department reminds residents not to be afraid of local wildlife but to take the following steps to prevent the spread of rabies:

- Do not try to separate fighting animals.
- Avoid strange and/or sick animals.
- Keep pets on a leash when in public and supervised when outdoors.
- Immunize all domestic pets and keep shots up to date.
- Do not approach, play with or try to rescue wild or unfamiliar animals.
- Do not leave pet food outside to attract wild animals.
- Report any strays or animals acting strangely to Franklin County Animal Control at 496-3032.

For more information regarding rabies or educational programs available, please contact the Franklin County Health Department at 496-8110.

For additional information, contact Franklin County Health Director Eric Ireland at (919) 496-8111 or visit www.co.franklin.nc.us.

Franklin County Government is committed to effective and innovative public services for all Franklin County