



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**March 10, 2017**

## **Agriculture Secretary Urges Dog Owners to “Love Your Dog. License Your Dog.”**

***PA Dog License Awareness Month Celebrated at Cambria County Humane Society***

**Johnstown, PA** – No one wants to think about the family dog getting lost, but in the event that does happen, a dog license is the best way to make sure your furry friend gets home safely, according to Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding.

Redding visited the Humane Society of Cambria County today to mark Governor Tom Wolf’s proclamation of March as Dog License Awareness Month in Pennsylvania.

“Bringing your pet home safely is an important reason to buy a dog license, but there are others,” said Redding. “Every dog license sold helps give organizations like the department, the county, the Humane Society, and other partners the resources to keep dogs safe – whether they are lost or in a kennel – and to help ensure they are treated safely and humanely.”

Pennsylvania law requires a current license for all dogs at least three months old, but according to estimates from the Department of Agriculture’s Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement, fewer than half of all dogs in the commonwealth are licensed, although rates vary by county. In the Laurel Highlands region, the department estimates that about 90 percent of dogs in Somerset County are licensed; 75 percent in Clearfield County; approximately two-thirds in Bedford and Cambria counties; 53 percent of dogs in Blair County (excluding the city of Altoona, which issues licenses separate from the state); and about one-third in Centre County.

When a dog goes missing, Redding explained, it can end up in a shelter, and without a license, reuniting the dog with its family can be incredibly difficult, if not impossible.

A new video produced for this year’s “Love Your Dog. License Your Dog.” campaign, which will be shared through social media, notes that more than 5,000 unlicensed dogs end up in animal shelters each year.

“Licensing your dog is the surest way to be reunited in the event he or she goes missing,” said Redding. “It’s quick, and it’s easy. Licenses are available through your county treasurer, and many counties offer licenses through sub-agents like veterinarian offices or online.”

The fee for an annual dog license is \$6.50, or \$8.50 if the animal is not spayed or neutered. Lifetime licenses are available for dogs that have permanent identification like a microchip or tattoo. Older adults and persons with disabilities may be eligible for discounts.

The dog license application is simple and only requests owner contact information and details about the dog being licensed, such as name, age, breed and color.

Owners who fail to license their dogs could face a fine of up to \$300 for each unlicensed dog. In 2016, the bureau issued 2,997 summary citations and 124 misdemeanor complaints for various dog law violations, including failure to license, abandoned dogs, or dogs running at large or abandoned.

For more information, visit [www.licenseyourdogpa.pa.gov](http://www.licenseyourdogpa.pa.gov) or call the Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement at 717-787-3062.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Bonnie J. McCann – 717.783.0133 direct or 717.603.2200 mobile

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** The text of Governor Tom Wolf’s proclamation designating March as Dog License Awareness Month follows:

**DOG LICENSE AWARENESS MONTH**  
**MARCH 2017**

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania’s nearly 12.8 million citizens enjoy the state as a great place to live, work and play, especially those who enrich their lives by owning dogs; and

WHEREAS, care of a dog is an important responsibility, with dogs dependent on their owners for guardianship and safety; and

WHEREAS, purchasing a dog license is one of the best ways owners can safeguard man’s best friend; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth has recognized through statutes the importance of licensing all dogs aged three months and older by January 1, with penalties for non-compliance; and

WHEREAS, a dog license is an inexpensive way to keep peace of mind if a dog is lost. It is a dog’s ticket home, as a tag can readily identify a dog; and

WHEREAS, when dog owners purchase a dog license, not only are they protecting their dog, they are also helping dogs across the state by supporting the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement; and

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement helps ensure the welfare of breeding dogs and puppies in commercial and breeding kennels, regulates dangerous dogs, oversees annual licensure and rabies vaccination of dogs, and supports animal shelters that accept stray dogs; and

WHEREAS, dog licenses are available from local county treasurers, many of whom offer online licensing and register other licensing agents at stores and veterinary offices; and

WHEREAS, licenses are affordable, and discounts are offered to owners of spayed or neutered dogs, older Pennsylvanians, and dog owners with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, in addition to being licensed, all dogs three months or older must be vaccinated against rabies, a fatal viral infection of the central nervous system that is spread by infected animals.

THEREFORE, to increase public understanding about the laws regarding dog licensing, I, Tom Wolf, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, do hereby proclaim March 2017, DOG LICENSE AWARENESS MONTH in Pennsylvania. I urge all citizens to protect their pet by purchasing a dog license.

GIVEN under my hand and the Seal of the Governor, at the city of Harrisburg, on this first day of March in the year of our Lord two thousand and seventeen, and of the Commonwealth the two hundred and forty-first.

TOM WOLF  
Governor

###