

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CELEBRATE CANINES AT FREE 'PAWS IN THE PARK' FESTIVAL WITH CONTESTS, DEMOS, RAFFLES AND MORE



ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO – Get ready for some doggone fun with the St. Charles County Parks and Recreation Department! Dog lovers and their pets from across the region are invited to the 17th annual Paws in the Park dog festival from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 11, at Broemmelsiek Park in Defiance. The event, which supports local animal shelters, is a regional favorite and takes place at the park's Off-Leash Dog Area, 1795 Highway DD.

Bring your pooch to the park for an exciting lineup of contests, prizes, business exhibitors/vendors and sponsor giveaways, as well as K9 obedience skills demonstrations! Admission is free, but those who bring a pet supply donation

will receive a special gift. Donations benefit the St. Charles County Pet Adoption Center and Five Acres Animal Shelter. Monetary donations also will be accepted. Additionally, a limited number of pets will be available for adoption from the St. Charles County Pet Adoption Center. A special thanks to this year's corporate sponsor, 3 Raw Hounds, Wildwood; and event sponsor, Crossroads Veterinary Hospital, Wentzville, for supporting this exciting community event.

The day's festivities are as follows:

10 a.m., Vendor Booths Open: Participating businesses, including the corporate and event sponsors, will offer giveaways and product samples at their booths throughout the day.

10:30 a.m., Dog Contests: Best Costume, Best Trick, Best Dog/Owner Look-Alike, and Best Kisser will be judged by the corporate sponsor and parks staff under the pavilion in the dog park. Winners will receive a commemorative certificate and a prize to take home.

11:30 a.m., St. Charles County Police K9 Units and Guest K9 Teams Perform: Police officers and their canine partners will conduct a series of drug search demonstrations using a seized car and demonstrate obedience skills, including lost child and fugitive tracking; narcotics detection; and fugitive apprehension. Those performing include:

- Officer Mark Thomas and K9 Charlie
- Officer Courtney Spiess and K9 Tank
- Officer Tony Hojsik and K9 Fleck
- Officer Jake Garner and K9 Rico
- Officer Brigid Oldani and K9 Bonnie

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12:30 p.m., Tick Talk: With more than 100 varieties of ticks in the United States and thousands of species in the world, preventing tick-borne illness is something everyone needs to be aware of. Don't let ticks make you sick! Park Ranger Rachael Meara will discuss where ticks camp out and the diseases they spread, as well as how to protect your family and pets.

12:45 p.m., Watch Dog Volunteer Presentation: If you and your furry friends are frequent visitors of St. Charles County dog parks, you won't want to miss this short presentation about this important volunteer program. Park Ranger Ashley Maue will explain the importance of having Watch Dog Volunteers in our dog parks and discuss how easy it is to join.

1 p.m., Raffle Winners Announced: During the event, guests will have a chance to win a one-hour photo session with Starseed Family Productions and an MVP Club Car Wash voucher. Tickets are \$1 each and all proceeds benefit local animal shelters.

For more information about the Paws in the Park celebration or to become an exhibitor/vendor at the event, call the Parks Department at 636-949-7535. Exhibitor/vendor registration and payment is due by Monday, Sept. 6.

Voted "Best of" by readers of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch Go! Magazine List 2018* and winner of the *Riverfront Times Readers' Choice* in 2011, the Broemmelsiek Park Off-Leash Dog Area is a popular place for dogs to play year-round. The 5-acre, beautifully manicured fenced site has a large pond with dock and a pavilion with benches, making it the perfect location to host this exciting community event. Learn more about all of St. Charles County Parks' Off-Leash Dog Areas at stccmo.org/DogParks.

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About St. Charles County Parks and Recreation:

The St. Charles County Parks & Recreation Department was created in 1997 after voters approved a local use tax with the sole purpose of park land acquisition, development, operations, and maintenance. The department's mission is to preserve natural and historic features in areas throughout the county for the use of future generations. Today, the department operates 17 parks that total 3,947 acres of acquired park land. From historic homesteads to a youth skate park; from camping, hiking, biking, and fishing to weddings and educational classrooms, there's something for everyone in St. Charles County Parks.

For more information and specifics about each park, amenities, trails, and more, visit stccparks.org.