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For Immediate Release   **Melanie Sobel, 831-454-7203**
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July 4th Safety Tips for People and Their Pets

Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter wants to remind pet owners about safety over the upcoming Independence Day holiday weekend. More animals are lost during the 4th of July celebrations than at any other time of the year.

Loud noises from fireworks frighten animals due to their heightened senses of hearing, and they will do anything to escape the noise. This behavior is usually unpredictable and out of character, and it may include chewing through a leash, jumping through screens and glass windows, digging under a fence, jumping over a wall, bolting away from the owner and even running into traffic.

The good news is that there are many things you can do to help ensure your pet's protection. Just follow these simple guidelines to make July 4th a great holiday for both you and your pet!

- **Don't take your pet to fireworks displays.** The explosions of the fireworks are loud to the human ear. Imagine how loud it sounds to your dog, who can hear sounds up to 60,000 cycles per second -- that's three times greater than the human ear can even register.
- **Do not leave your pet in the car.** With only hot air to breathe inside a car, your pet can suffer serious health effects, even death, in a few short minutes. Partially opened windows do not provide sufficient air, but do provide an opportunity for your pet to be stolen.
- **Keep your pets indoors in a sheltered, quiet area.** Some animals become destructive when frightened, so be sure you've removed any items your pet could destroy or may be harmful to your pet if chewed. It's important that they have a safe, quiet "den-like" place to relax, such as a secure room of the house or blanketed crate. Leave a television or radio playing at normal volume to keep him/her company if you go out. Shut windows and blinds or curtains.
- **Exercise your pet.** Tire your dog or cat out with plenty of exercise early in the day.

- **If you know that your pet is seriously distressed by loud noises like thunder, consult with your veterinarian.** Call or make an appointment before July 4th for ways to help alleviate the fear and anxiety he or she will experience during fireworks displays.
- **Never leave pets outside unattended, even in a fenced yard or on a chain.** In their fear, pets who normally wouldn't leave the yard may escape and become lost, or become entangled in their chain, risking injury or death.
- **Make sure your pets are wearing identification tags so that if they do become lost, they can be returned promptly.** Animals found running at-large should be taken to the local animal care and control center, where they have the best chance of being reunited with their owners. Two forms of ID are always best when it comes to protecting your pet. If an individual finds your pet, the first thing he or she will look for is an ID tag. In Santa Cruz County, if your pet is taken to Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter, he/she will be scanned for a microchip, which is permanent identification. Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter offers microchips pets for $15 everyday, no appointment necessary.

About Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter (SCCAS)

The Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter is an open admission shelter which welcomes EVERY animal in need. Our goal is to be a humane resource for the community by providing a safety net and second chance for local animals. There are two locations where owners can find and recover lost pets, adopt new animal companions, or sign up for PLANNED PetHood, our low cost spay/neuter program available for all resident pets. Our success is achieved through a variety of life-saving services and programs which are described in detail on our website, www.scanimalshelter.org. The support of our community is crucial to sustaining and expanding these services.