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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Free Pet ‘Microchipping’ Offered Sunday

On **Sunday, October 10<sup>th</sup>**, Snohomish County truly goes to the dogs (and cats too); particularly for those whose owners would rather not lose them. The first **200** Snohomish County resident dogs and cats brought to the **Everett Animal Shelter** starting at 10 a.m. will receive free microchip implants identifying the pet’s owner’s name and contact information, ensuring that a lost animal gets a quick ride home, instead of a trip to the local animal shelter.

The Everett Animal Shelter is located at 2732 36<sup>th</sup> Street (turn at the Brown Bear Car Wash at 36<sup>th</sup> and Broadway, proceed under the freeway overpass, the shelter is on the right).

**Cats must be in a carrier and dogs must be on a leash. This program is available to Snohomish County residents only.**

The free “microchipping” is the 3<sup>rd</sup> such event sponsored by the Snohomish County Animal Advisory Board in conjunction with the Everett Animal Shelter and the County Auditor’s Licensing Division, with support from volunteer veterinarians. The first microchip clinic was held in September 2003 and the second in March 2004.

“The goal of this program is to reduce shelter costs and promote responsible pet ownership”, said Vicki Lubrin, License Manager at Snohomish County. “Statistics have shown that 90% of microchipped pets are successfully reunited with their families. Recently, the Everett Animal Shelter was able to reunite a dog stolen 6 years ago with its true owner because the dog had been microchipped”. “We want to thank Bud Wessman, Shelter Director and the staff of the Everett Animal Shelter for hosting this event”.

Licensing your pet is the quickest and most effective method to identify and reunite a lost animal with its owner. Microchipping provides assistance in the event the license tag and/or collar are lost. If you find a lost pet with a Snohomish County Regional Pet License tag, you can access owner information to help reunite the pet and pet owner by accessing the County Auditor’s web page at the County’s website at [www.co.snohomish.wa.us/auditor](http://www.co.snohomish.wa.us/auditor) or by phone through an Interactive Voice Response System at 425-388-3627 - 24 hours a day.

The Whidbey Island Kennel Club previously donated microchip readers to the Snohomish County Animal Control Officers. They now have the ability to scan stray animals and return them directly to their owners without taking the dog or cat into the shelter. It currently costs Snohomish County \$60.54 for every dog or cat taken to the Everett Shelter or PAWS from unincorporated county. The cost of providing animal shelter facilities impacts local governments and the most effective way to reduce sheltering costs is to reduce the number of animals being brought to the shelter by animal control agencies and the general public. If 500 lost and/or stray microchipped pets are returned to their owners annually using this system, it would save the County over \$30,000 a year in shelter fees. In addition, lost and/or stray pets and their owners would be reunited much sooner ultimately reducing the number of pets that end up in local shelters annually.

The cost of the microchips is being covered by the County's Animal Benefit Bequest Fund. The fund was established in 1999 to provide funding and support for programs, activities, equipment and/or facilities for the benefit of animals in Snohomish County. Resources for this fund are gathered from donations, gifts, and bequests by persons, businesses, and organizations.

Dozens of pets are available and awaiting adoption every day at the Everett Animal Shelter. The hours for pet adoptions are Monday through Friday 11 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Starting October 31, 2004, the shelter will be offering full service public hours, including pet viewing and adoptions, on Sundays from 11 am to 3 pm. The Everett Shelter phone number is 425-257-6000.

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