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**CITY INTRODUCES ORDINANCE PROMOTING INCREASED OPPORTUNITY FOR ADOPTIONS
AND RESCUE OF UNCLAIMED STRAY ANIMALS**

Mayor Emanuel introduced an ordinance before City Council today that will allow stray animals without ownership identification to be more quickly marketed to rescue groups or potential adopters.

"Families, individuals or rescue groups that want to adopt strays are currently forced to wait for five full days before the stray can be removed from shelters," said Mayor Emanuel. "Making residents wait to take home animals that we want to place in loving homes doesn't make sense, and this ordinance will help stray animals find their forever homes faster."

Each year, Chicago Animal Care and Control (CACC) impounds more than 12,000 stray animals, or animals without any indication of ownership, like a microchip, city dog license, county rabies tag or any other name tag. Despite efforts to reunite these animals with their families, which include hosting daily lost pet tours and the posting of photographs of lost pets online, less than seven percent of these stray animals are found and claimed by their owners. In 2013, less than one percent of the more than 5,000 stray cats and less than 15 percent of the more than 5,000 stray dogs were claimed by an owner.

"Stray animals with no microchip or tags currently have an extremely low chance of being claimed by an owner, despite our best efforts," said Sandra Alfred, Executive Director of CACC. "We have listened to the feedback of our community partners and agree that making these animals available for adoption and transfer to rescue agencies more quickly increases the chances that these animals will find a new home."

Currently, strays cannot be adopted by individuals or removed from CACC shelters for five days. The ordinance would reduce that hold time from five days to three, allowing these animals to be adopted by individuals or taken by rescue groups more quickly.

This ordinance was created in consultation with and the support of local animal welfare advocates, and rescue groups, as well as the Chicago Area Shelter Alliance. The promise not to euthanize any healthy and adoptable stray animals before five days exceeds the protection for stray animals currently provided under the laws of many major cities nationally.

This ordinance does not affect owned pets that become lost and have any form of ownership identification when they are brought to the shelter. These animals are held for at least seven days, during which CACC works diligently to research the available ownership information, making phone calls and writing letters to actively reconnect the pet with his or her known owner.

“We want to continue to increase the number of adoptions, transfers and redemptions of animals out of our shelter, as we have done each of the last six years. This ordinance will not only help facilitate our lifesaving programs, but also incentivize animal owners to obtain microchips, city dog licenses, and county rabies tags for their pets, guaranteeing an even longer lost animal hold of seven days should their pet get out,” added Alfred.

Since 2011, more than 26,000 stray animals have been adopted by residents, reunited with owners, and transferred to animal rescue agencies by CACC. This ordinance supports the continued success of these lifesaving programs.

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