CLEVELAND COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **Date: December 22, 2015**

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Sixth Positive Case of Rabies Identified in Cleveland County This Year

On **December 22, 2015**, the Cleveland County Health Department was notified of a raccoon that tested positive for rabies. This is the fifth rabid animal identified in the county this year. The animal was found at 2217 Cleveland Ave., on December 18, 2015. Any person bitten or exposed to potentially infectious saliva from this raccoon should contact their healthcare provider or the local health department for a rabies risk assessment. You may contact the Cleveland County Health Department at 704-669-3134 or 704-484-5154.

Rabies is a fatal yet preventable disease if post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is administered. Rabies is transmitted by the bite of an infected animal or via contamination of open wounds or mucus membranes with potentially infectious material such as saliva.

Prevention of rabies is based on protection of susceptible animals and people and appropriate management of persons and animals exposed to rabies:

1. Vaccinate pets. In accordance with NC State Law, all dogs, cats, and ferrets must be kept currently vaccinated against rabies and must wear a rabies tag. Cats are the most commonly identified domestic animal with rabies.
2. Control measures for pets exposed to rabies: If pets are exposed to rabies they should receive a booster dose of rabies vaccine if they are currently vaccinated at the time of exposure. If pets are not currently vaccinated against rabies when exposed, the animals will be euthanized or quarantined for six months in accordance with state law.
3. Control measures for persons exposed to rabies: Seek medical guidance from your healthcare provider or the local health department if you believe you have been exposed to rabies.

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4. Limit stray and feral animals. In the cities of Shelby, Kings Mountain, Boiling Springs, and Grover all dogs must be kept on a leash. Persons should not approach stray or feral dogs or cats.
   Feral cat colonies should be intensively monitored and their location reported to Cleveland County Animal Control.
5. Leave wildlife alone. Raccoons and other wildlife serve as the reservoir for rabies in North Carolina.

Rabies occurs throughout North Carolina. Anyone that sees an animal demonstrating unusual behavior needs to call the Cleveland County Animal Control Department at 704-481-9884.

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