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**Sioux Falls Humane Society COVID-19 Public Closure**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SIOUX FALLS, SD** – As we continue to respond to the evolving COVID-19 situation, we wanted to share an update on the steps we are taking. Our priority has always been the health and safety of our animals, staff, volunteers, and our community.

In this spirit and in response to the most recent recommendations from our government leaders about slowing the spread of COVID-19 and minimizing the risks to the most vulnerable among us, we've made the difficult decision to close the shelter and limit all non-urgent services to the public through at least Tuesday, March 31.

The shelter will be closed to visitors starting Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>. This includes adoption and surrender services. Appointments for surrender/intake services will be placed on hold. Our night receiving intake will still be open for stray animals. Should you need to pick up a missing pet, the city building next the humane society will be open limited hours of 11am-2pm and 4-5:30pm each day, with no exceptions. Should you have an animal emergency, please contact metro communications at 367-7000.

Please be assured that we will not, under any circumstance, leave an animal in harm's way. While we are closed to the public, our animals will continue to receive the very best care from our medical and animal care teams. From walks, meals, outdoor playtime, and lots of chin scratches – our dedicated staff will tend to their every need. In preparation for this decision, we started proactively managing the number of animals in our care by reducing intake and increasing adoptions. Over the past week, 55 animals were adopted into new homes.

We continue to closely monitor all CDC and local health authority updates as the situation continues to evolve – and we will use these recommendations to inform our decisions. We'll keep you updated of any changes to our plans by our website and social media. Our focus remains on keeping you and our entire community safe and healthy, while providing the best possible care for our animals.

We know this is a concerning time and our thoughts are with those who have been impacted. Please feel free to reach out to us if you have any questions or concerns, through email or on social media.

As always, thank you for everything you do for the animals.

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