

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT – 2012 Annual Report info

Reflective of efforts by the Department of Community Health and Environment and our community's commitment to healthy lifestyles, St. Charles County ranked among Missouri's healthiest counties for the second consecutive year. The study by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation lists keys to maintaining these high rankings as a continued focus on our medical community, healthy choices by our residents, an emphasis on education and employment, and decreases in obesity and smoking rates.

The department's Division of Environmental Health and Protection enhances our community by promoting healthy conditions and reducing environmental risks. Programs directed by this division include the inspection and licensing of food-service providers, daycare centers, aquatic and recreation facilities, body art centers and much more; mosquito control; solid waste and recycling; and natural resource management. An update to the Food Code in June 2011 enabled staff to further protect the welfare of citizens dining at one of the county's more than 1,200 food service establishments. Celebrating its fifth anniversary, the division's **24 Carrot Gold Food Safety Excellence Award** program recognized eight county eateries for demonstrating outstanding food service and stewardship. The county's two Recycle Works centers that complement curbside services, the division collected more than two million pounds of recyclable material.

The Division of Humane Services promotes the health, safety and welfare of pets and people in St. Charles County through education, adoptions and animal welfare enforcement. The division's Pet Adoption Center successfully placed nearly 2,300 pets in new homes in 2011, and the Animal Control staff returned 828 lost pets to their families. A new program to assist low-income households in efforts to control pet overpopulation successfully spayed or neutered 163 dogs and cats that were previously unaltered, and the popular Sterile Feral program treated an additional 320 wild cats. Volunteers contribute a great deal to the division's success and provided nearly 5,000 hours of service.

The Division of Public Health works in cooperation with local, state and federal agencies to improve the well-being of St. Charles County residents each year. From generating vital records, such as birth and death certificates, to treating or preventing illness and injury in everyone from unborn babies to older adults, the division's staff addresses a wide range of public health issues. In 2011, WIC services provided nutritional education and assistance to approximately 1,700 participants each month; while the Immunizations staff provided more than 15,000 vaccinations for area residents — including the newly offered shingles vaccine for older adults. More than 30,000 certified copies of birth or death certificates were issued to individuals from St. Charles County and surrounding areas. In addition, staff conducted nearly 750 community outreach programs. The division also supervised the response to two reported public health event outbreaks affecting citizens from the county and successfully treated five tuberculosis cases (the most in our county in five years).

Along with direct programming to assist the citizens of the county, staff collaborated with many county, state, regional and Federal organizations to enhance the Emergency Preparedness and Response program. In May, the county participated in a National Level Exercise to simulate a response to a devastating earthquake along the New Madrid Fault. To grow its volunteer capacity, the department earned certification to begin a Medical Reserve Corps and co-established St. Charles County's Community Organizations Active in Disaster organization. Outreach programs also communicated personal preparedness plans to families and organizations.

Building upon the successes in 2011, the department seeks to further its services for all members of the community. This summer, a community-wide exercise will practice response plans in the event of a simulated bioterrorism incident. The Division of Public Health will expand the types of vaccinations it provides through its Adult Immunization Program, adding travel vaccinations for county residents exploring the globe. An expansion of the Re-Use Mercantile shop through the Recycle Works centers will provide further uses for materials and parts that would have otherwise been disposed of in area landfills. Also, an update to the department's website and implementation of QR codes on food-service inspection certificates will provide a more user-friendly experience for guests.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT – Accomplishments

- I. Overall Focus
 - A. Three Divisions (Public Health, Environmental Health and Protection, and Humane Services)
 - B. Visible and Behind-the-scenes activities (in addition to tangible programs like health clinics, recycling, licensing, and pet adoptions; the department offers many “invisible” programs such as communicable disease investigations, food-service inspections, animal welfare ordinances)
 - C. Success - County ranks among Missouri’s “healthiest” counties for second straight year (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation report)

- II. Division of Environmental Health and Protection
 - A. Programs – Licensing/Inspections of food-service providers, daycare centers, recreation facilities, body-art facilities, and more; mosquito control; and natural resource management (solid waste, recycling, air quality, water quality)
 - B. Fifth anniversary of the 24 Carrot Gold Food Service Awards – recognized eight local establishments for excellence in food safety
 - C. Updated St. Charles County Food Code
 - D. Collected more than two million pounds of recyclable material through Recycle Works centers (one in St. Peters and other in Wentzville)

- III. Division of Humane Services
 - A. Programs – shelter/adoption of pets; owner education; animal control, and cruelty/neglect inspection
 - B. Adopted nearly 2,300 animals (raising total to nearly 30,000 adoptions since 1999)
 - C. Returned 828 missing pets to their owners
 - D. Spayed/neutered 163 pets in low-income households and an additional 320 wild cats through Sterile Feral program
 - E. Received nearly 5,000 hours of volunteer service from the community

- IV. Division of Public Health
 - A. Programs (Immunizations; Women, Infant, Children Services; STD Prevention/Treatment; Communicable Disease; Vital Records; and Health Education)
 - B. WIC program provided nutritional education and services to approximately 1,700 participants each month
 - C. Immunization clinic provided more than 15,000 immunizations, including more than 3,000 through the Adult Immunization Program
 - D. Vital Records issued more than 30,000 certified copies of birth and death records
 - E. Conducted nearly 750 community outreach programs
 - F. Division serviced two reported public health outbreak cases and treated five tuberculosis cases (the most in St. Charles County in five years)

- V. Emergency Preparedness Programming
 - A. Established partnerships with St. Charles County, state, regional and Federal agencies
 - B. Practiced emergency response plans during National Level Exercise simulating earthquake along New Madrid Fault in May
 - C. Earned certification for a Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteer program
 - D. Co-established local chapter of Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD)
 - E. Extended community outreach to discuss preparedness planning for households and organizations

VI. 2012 Plans

- A. Seek increased efficiency and enhanced customer satisfaction
- B. Revamp the department website to become a more cohesive part of the county's overall system
- C. Introduced QR codes on food-service certificates that allow guests to view that establishment's latest food-service inspection scores
- D. Summer exercise of St. Charles County's bioterrorism response plan