WASHINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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MEDIA RELEASE

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SHERIFF REMINDS DOG OWNERS OF COUNTY RUNNING AT LARGE LAW

The Washington County Sheriff's Office Division of Animal Control is strictly enforcing the county's running at large law. According to Washington County Sheriff Fred Newman, the Division of Animal Control began aggressively enforcing the law immediately after the Sheriff's Office took over animal control operations in January of 2004.

The county ordinance reads as follows: COUNTY CODE 10-32
THE RUNNING AT LARGE OF DOGS IN THE COUNTY IS PROHIBITED. FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION, A DOG SHALL BE DEEMED TO RUN AT LARGE WHILE ROAMING, RUNNING, OR SELF-HUNTING OFF THE PROPERTY OF ITS OWNER OR CUSTODIAN AND NOT UNDER ITS OWNER'S OR CUSTODIAN'S IMMEDIATE CONTROL. ANY PERSON WHO PERMITS THEIR DOG TO RUN AT LARGE, OR REMAIN UNCONFINED, UNRESTRICTED, OR NOT PENNED UP SHALL BE DEEMED TO HAVE VIOLATED THIS SECTION.

This law applies to the residents of Abingdon, Damascus, and Glade Spring, as well as county residents.

"We receive more calls for dogs running at large than any other call," stated Sheriff Newman. "About 80% of our calls involve dogs running at large. Most neighbors do not like dogs running loose within a subdivision or on their property," said the Sheriff. "We have had dogs running at large kill other animals. This is unfair to the law-abiding citizens who must endure this situation. Our Animal Control personnel take these violations very seriously," said Sheriff Newman, "We will continue to place a major priority on responding to the call, picking up the dog, and charging the dog's owner."

Anyone needing additional information on the county “running at large” law should contact the Washington County Sheriff’s Office at 676-6000, or the Sheriff’s Office Division of Animal Control at 676-6210.

“We hope to make the citizens of our county aware of the responsibilities of owning a dog, and the requirement to keep it within their property boundaries.”

Dog owners are reminded that county required dog tags are due February 1, 2010.