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Top Stories

Posted on Thursday, June 21, 2007

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UPDATE: 2-Year-Old Girl Attacked By Dog Recovering in ICU

By KENNETH DEAN
Staff Writer

This is one of the Siberian Huskies surrendered to Smith County constables because they did not have a current rabies shot, accoding to authorities. Five dogs were in the area when a 2-year-old girl was attacked and mauled on Hebron Road east of Tyler on Wednesday afternoon. (Staff Photo By Herb Nygren Jr.)

A two-year-old child is recovering in ICU after being attacked by a pack of dogs in her own backyard Wednesday afternoon.

Christopher Konrad said his daughter Jacie Konrad underwent emergency surgery at East Texas Medical Center and was being placed in the Intensive Care Unit.

"The doctors said it was pretty serious, but they think she will be OK," he told the Tyler Morning Telegraph late Wednesday. "She just got out of surgery and they said it will be awhile before we can see her."

Authorities said the incident happened shortly before 12 p.m. when the child walked from the front of the house where her mother was mowing grass around back where Konrad's two Siberian Huskies were chained at his home on Hebron Road in Tyler.

Smith County Constable John Smith and deputy constable Joe King, an animal control officer, contend the female Husky was in heat and attracted three stray dogs including a pit bull mix.

Smith, King and other officials went to the home after hospital personnel contacted law enforcement about the dog attack.

"The doctor told Smith County Sheriff deputies the child suffered deep puncture wounds, a torn scalp, deep lacerations and a punctured skull," Smith said. "This is very unfortunate and very tragic."

King said the child probably got in the middle of male dogs competing for the female and was bitten.

Though the Konrad dogs were chained, the yard is not fenced.

"We don't know which animal bit the child so we have to look at all of the animals in this case including the Konrads' dogs," he said.

VACCINATIONS A MUST

Konrad surrendered his dogs to authorities to be put to sleep and be tested for rabies because he could not produce verification the dogs had been inoculated.

"I know my female was about 2 weeks from needing her shots but I couldn't find the papers," he said. "My male had not been vaccinated yet because I had been putting it off hoping to get them both done at the same time."

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King and Smith said the fines for those not vaccinating their animals need to be increased to give the current ordnance some teeth.

"We need it to be raised so we can use that as a way to show we mean business and getting your animals vaccinated is serious," Smith said.

The pit bull was also put down and the three animals' heads were sent to Austin where they will be tested for the deadly disease.

The two other dogs were not located.

Konrad led each of his dogs to the cages in the back of King's pickup and tearfully handed them over.

"It's just unfair that my dogs are being put to sleep when the dogs that bit my daughter were strays," he said.

However, King said there was no way to tell which animal attacked the child or if all of the animals were involved.

"The fact is that the dogs haven't had rabies shots and the child was bitten in the head," he said. "If I have to put a value on something I am going to choose the child over the dogs every time."

In recent months Smith County commissioners have struggled to update the county's dog leash law and a wave of serious attacks have kept the issue in the forefront.

A Smith County deputy constable had to shoot a pit bull last week when two dogs attacked her as she investigated an earlier attack that sent a man to the hospital.

"We need more help and we need stricter laws," Smith said.

Updated Thursday, June 21, 2007 at 8:11 a.m. CDT

Smith said it is possible more than one dog bit the child.

Hebron Road is located between Old Longview and Old Kilgore highways.

The child was taken to East Texas Medical Center. According to her father, she is out of surgery and now in intensive care.

This story was updated at 4:58 p.m.

(Staff Photo By Herb Nygren Jr.)

Deputy Constable and Animal Control Officer Joe King (left) and Pct. 4 Constable John Smith investigate the mauling of a 2-year-old girl Wednesday on Hebron Road east of Tyler.

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