



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 25, 2018

MOSQUITOES IN ST. CHARLES COUNTY TEST POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO – Mosquitoes collected yesterday in traps set by the St. Charles County Division of Environmental Health and Protection have tested positive for the West Nile virus. This is the first positive test for the county this year. Residents should not be alarmed or panicked by this finding, but aware and vigilant in their personal efforts to discourage mosquito bites.

“County staff has been aware that West Nile virus is present in the metropolitan area this season. Now that the virus has appeared in St. Charles County, we are increasing treatment protocols for the surrounding areas,” explains Ryan Tilley, Director of the Division of Environmental Health and Protection. “St. Charles County Mosquito Control Program staff are targeting known habitat areas to minimize the development of adult mosquitoes. This will assist us in controlling the spread of the virus.”

Tilley says a team effort between residents and the St. Charles County Mosquito Control program helps to “Block the Bite” and reduce exposure to mosquito bites and related illnesses. Residents can reduce the risk of contracting West Nile by using repellent containing DEET, picaridin, IR 3535, or oil of lemon eucalyptus when outdoors the rest of the summer and into fall. Additionally, they should remove or treat areas where water settles for several days, and keep gutters and yards free of debris where mosquitoes may collect.

This is the second year the County has used collection sites to analyze distribution and types of mosquitoes. The traps were set up in various sites throughout the county in June, and will remain in place through September. The traps are checked and collections analyzed weekly.

“By using information from these collection sites,” Tilley says, “our staff can target specific areas where we need to decrease the overall mosquito population in the county.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 33 states, including Missouri and Illinois, have reported West Nile virus activity this year. Approximately 80 percent of those who become infected with the virus do not experience any discomfort. Those who do can show symptoms such as fever, headache, body ache, fatigue, nausea or rash. In extreme cases, especially involving those 60 or older or who have previous medical conditions, the disease can cause brain inflammation, neck stiffness, seizures, coma and death. For additional information on the West Nile virus, visit sccmo.org/WestNileVirus.

The purpose of the St. Charles County Mosquito Control program is to inspect problem areas and apply effective treatments to reduce the mosquito population; target habitat areas to control larvae; and spray to treat adult mosquitoes. In addition to efforts throughout unincorporated St. Charles County, the division contracts with several municipalities, including Augusta, Cottleville, Dardenne Prairie, Flint Hill, Lake Saint Louis, Portage des Sioux, St. Paul, Weldon Spring, Weldon Spring Heights and Wentzville. Residents who are concerned about nuisance mosquitoes should visit sccmo.org/mosquito or call 636-949-1800 to request assistance. Those living within the city limits of O’Fallon, St. Charles and St. Peters should contact their respective city halls for information.

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About St. Charles County's Division of Environmental Health and Protection

Throughout the year, the Division of Environmental Health and Protection works with residents, area businesses and local organizations to promote healthy conditions in St. Charles County. Following local, state and federal regulation, the division inspects and licenses public service providers, operates a robust recycling program and implements the county's mosquito control measures. To learn how the division helps to ensure the community's well-being please call 636-949-1800 or visit sccmo.org/environmental.

About St. Charles County

Founded in 1812, St. Charles County is one of the fastest growing counties in Missouri, and the state's third largest county in both population and economic share. St. Charles County consistently ranks one of the healthiest places to live in Missouri in the County Health Rankings report published by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. It is home to 12 scenic county parks, encompassing more than 2,800 acres with additional land under development and more in reserve for future development.

With a population of 385,840, St. Charles County is home to large employers including General Motors, Citi, MasterCard Worldwide and Boeing. It is ranked among the top 25 counties in the nation in high-tech job growth by the Progressive Policy Institute and consistently has the lowest unemployment rate in the Metropolitan St. Louis area.

St. Charles County employs nearly 1,100 in more than 30 departments and offices, who work to make the county an excellent place to live, work and shop. For more information, please visit sccmo.org.