



Police Foundation: Pet Microchip Scanners

by Tom Murphy (October 2013)

Let's face it... most cats and dogs love to run. And while the City of Palm Beach Gardens has ordinances requiring that household pets be kept under the immediate control of a person by means of a leash or otherwise confined in some manner, they do occasionally get loose.. and when they do, they often run off. While they love their home and family, they also want to see what might be happening a few streets over. And despite all the pet-finder skills of their owners, they sometimes go missing. Last year the American Humane Association reported that more than 7 million dogs and cats went missing.

Fortunately, these lost... and then found pets are often brought to the attention of the Police either by other residents in the neighborhood or by Officers on routine patrol. Sometimes these pets will have a collar with a county issued license, making their owner easy to identify. But sometimes the pet has "escaped" from his or her owner without their collar on making them very difficult to reunite with their owner. In these cases the animals are turned over to Palm Beach County Animal Care and Control. Stray animals are held for a limited time before they are placed in the adoption program.

Now, thanks to a grant from the **Palm Beach Gardens Police Foundation**, our Police Officers have the ability to scan these found pets for microchip identification, prior to turning them over to Animal Care and Control. Identified pets are then reunited with their owners and can be reclaimed at the **Palm Beach Gardens Police Department**.

A registered microchip, injected by a veterinarian, has no internal energy source and will last the life of the pet. By passing the microchip scanner over the pet's shoulder blades our Officers are able to read the dog or cat's ID code and then, thru a national registry, identify the pet and begin to reunite the animal with its owner.

The device recently funded by the **Police Foundation** is a universal scanner able to read all three microchip frequencies used in the United States and many used in foreign countries.

If your pet is not micro chipped, you may want to speak to your veterinarian and learn more about the program. And of course, if you pet is already micro chipped, it's important that you or your vet insure that the information in the national registry is accurate and current.

A pet microchip creates a forever bond between you and the pet you love. It will give your pet the best chance of coming back home to you.

Tom Murphy has been president of the Palm Beach Gardens Police Foundation, Inc. since its inception in 2007. Before helping to form the foundation he was a marketing executive with the IBM Corporation and earlier a member of the Nassau County (NY) Police Department.