

## Dr. Roger Mahr Announces Candidacy for AVMA President Elect

*A Message from ISVMA President, Dr. Wesley G. Bieritz:*

There are select times when the accomplishments of a colleague directly reflect upon the rest of us in the veterinary profession. It was with pride and respect that participants at the recent American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) convention witnessed Dr. Roger Mahr's official nomination as a candidate for the office of President-elect of the AVMA.

This is an exciting opportunity for us to talk with our clients, friends and colleagues about the outstanding leadership qualities that Roger will bring to the AVMA and how his leadership will directly impact our profession in the State of Illinois.

Dr. Mahr will spend the next year traveling the country to spread his message of commitment and unity of focus for the veterinary profession. In July 2005, Dr. Mahr seeks to be officially elected at the AVMA convention in Minneapolis. He will then be in line for election to the office of President of the AVMA in July 2006.

Being elected to leadership in a national organization comes with many responsibilities and opportunities. It also comes at a high price to the candidate. In addition to the substantial time commitment, there are numerous travel and incidental expenses that are not reimbursed. We all know that Roger would quietly assume this responsibility on his own, but wouldn't it be a fantastic tribute to our own Illinois candidate to have a fund established by his peers to support his effort?

As president of the Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association, I would like to personally ask you to consider contributing to the Campaign Fund for Roger Mahr\*. A contribution of \$25, \$50 or \$100 to help pay for his un-reimbursed expenses will help Roger focus on putting the national spotlight back on the State of Illinois!

*\*Please make all contributions payable to the Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association and mark in the memo section of the check that the contribution is for the Campaign Fund for Roger Mahr.*

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## Reading Between the Microchips: Coalition Calls for Scanners That Read All Chips to Help Reunite Lost Pets and Families

Washington, D.C. (August 5, 2004) — Caring families who microchip their pets to provide them with a permanent ID may have a false sense of security, according to a recently formed coalition of the nation's leading animal care and control agencies, humane societies and veterinary organizations.

Why? Unfortunately, today, not all pet identification microchips can be read by all scanners. Competing technologies have become a barrier to the best efforts of animal shelter staff and veterinarians to reunite lost pets with their owners.

The recently formed Coalition for Reuniting Pets and Families is asking that chip and scanner

manufacturers and marketers permit the use of a scanner that can read all microchips, and that such a scanner be made readily available to shelters, animal control officers and veterinarians throughout the country.

“Existing microchipping technologies have the potential to quickly and safely reunite lost dogs and cats with their families. But those who have primary contact with lost pets — veterinarians, animal control officers, and shelter staff — simply must have the ability to detect all identification chips with one scanner,” said Martha C. Armstrong, a spokesperson for the Coalition for Reuniting Pets and Families and a senior vice president for The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). “Today, unfortunately, a chip may be readable at your local shelter but not at the veterinarian’s office. This problem leads to missed reunions, a false peace of mind and many broken hearts.” Eight to 10 million pets stray from their home each year in the United States, according to Sue Richey, executive director of the American Kennel Club’s (AKC) Companion Animal Recovery (CAR) program. Only a fraction of them are returned, despite the best efforts of shelters, animal control officers and veterinarians.

Currently, more than two million of the country’s dogs and cats have an implanted microchip that is intended to increase their chances of being identified if they are lost. Competing companies today supply chips with different frequencies that are not detected by all scanners. Armstrong’s organization, The HSUS, after hearing from shelter staff and veterinarians across the U.S. regarding their frustrations with this conflict, convened a meeting July 9 in Washington, D.C., with various animal control agency, humane society and veterinary association leaders to press the microchip manufacturers and distributors for a solution. Teaming with The HSUS are the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the American Humane Association, the American Animal Hospital Association, the American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Society of Veterinary Medical Association Executives, the AKC Companion Animal Recovery, the Society of Animal Welfare Administrators and many other major animal shelters and humane societies across the country. The groups are calling for the distribution of scanners — capable of reading all chips and in sufficient number to equip all vehicles and sites — to animal shelters, animal control officers and veterinarians nationwide.

The Coalition unanimously supported sending a letter to all of the current distributors and manufacturers of microchips sold in the United States, urging them to resolve these issues. Additionally, the Coalition called on the manufacturers and distributors to consider The Iams Company’s proposal to donate 30,000 scanners that can read all chips. These scanners would be distributed to shelters, animal control officers and veterinarians throughout the United States. The Iams offer, valued at up to \$5 million, is dependent on all current companion animal microchip manufacturers and distributors agreeing to embrace the mass scanner distribution.

The Coalition’s letter to all pet microchipping manufacturers and distributors asked them to support a more robust nationwide animal recovery system. The proposed system includes mass distribution of scanners that read all chips, establishment of an easily updated national database of microchipped pets and ongoing pet owner education about the need for registering microchipped pets and continuing to use external identifications (e.g., collar and tags, tattoos, etc.) to complement the chips.

“We’re thrilled that the veterinary, sheltering, and animal control communities have come together with such consensus to tackle this issue and seize this opportunity,” said Dr. Daniel Aja, president-elect of the American Animal Hospital Association. “This would be a great win for all: Pet owners would enjoy greater peace of mind; shelters, animal control officers and veterinarians would have a more efficient system to help pets find their way home; and pet microchip companies would realize increased sales with the increase in consumer confidence about the benefits the industry can provide.”

For more information, visit <http://www.readallchips.com>.

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## What is the Coalition for Reuniting Pets and Families?

Each year, animal shelters take in millions of stray cats and dogs, most of whom never find their way home. Pet microchipping has the potential to save the lives of millions of these lost dogs and cats, but the wide variety of chip technologies on the marketplace has instead created confusion and missed opportunities.

For example, an owner who has conscientiously decided to chip her animal still has no guarantee that her pet, if lost, will ever return home. That’s because, in the current U.S. market, no one brand of scanner can read every chip at every possible outlet (shelters, animal control agencies, veterinarians), and no one brand of chip is readable by every scanner.

A group of leading U.S. animal protection and veterinary organizations has joined together to help bridge the technological gap and bring these lost animals home. The Coalition for Reuniting Pets and Families is proposing the solution — a dramatically improved national companion animal recovery system in the United States.

### **What is the Coalition doing to create this improved national companion animal recovery system?**

The Coalition is asking that chip and scanner manufacturers and marketers permit the use of a scanner that can read all microchips, and that such a scanner be made readily available to shelters, animal control officers and veterinarians throughout the country.

In addition, the Coalition is calling for the establishment of an easily updated national database of microchipped pets and an ongoing pet owner education effort about the need for registering

chipped pets and continuing to use external IDs (collar and tags) to complement the chips.

### **What are the Coalition's next steps?**

The Iams Company recently submitted a proposal to donate 30,000 scanners capable of reading all chips to shelters, animal control officers and veterinary clinics throughout the United States. The donation, valued at \$5 million, would give these organizations the tools they need to effectively reunite lost pets and their owners. The Iams offer – which was applauded by the Coalition – is dependent on agreement by all current companion animal microchip manufacturers and distributors to embrace the mass scanner distribution.

### **Who are the members of the Coalition?**

- § American Animal Hospital Association
- § American Kennel Club – Companion Animal Recovery
- § American Humane Association
- § American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
- § American Society of Veterinary Medical Association Executives
- § American Veterinary Medical Association
- § Society of Animal Welfare Administrators
- § The Humane Society of the United States
- § Major animal shelters throughout the country

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## **ATTENTION: Practice Owners & 2004 Graduates!**

Currently, only 30 graduates of the veterinary class of 2004 have availed themselves of their **complimentary first-year membership** in ISVMA. It is very simple to join – fill out the application form at [www.isvma.org/application.htm](http://www.isvma.org/application.htm) or call the ISVMA office to have an application form faxed to your clinic.

Every viable organization has its function that makes it unique and valuable. In veterinary medicine we have associations that provide affordable, high-quality continuing education. We have others that provide member benefit programs that veterinary practices need to conduct business efficiently. Others provide timely information that keeps you abreast of important developments in the profession. The Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association provides you with all of these things and something else that **no other** association offers.

The ISVMA is the only association that protects your veterinary license and your practice. We represent the profession at the State Capitol and with the regulatory agencies. We provide useful information to you to help you remain compliant with ever-changing state laws and regulations. ISVMA is the lone voice in Springfield representing the veterinary profession.

The veterinary profession needs ISVMA and the ISVMA needs the participation of the state's veterinarians. Antagonists as well as complementary, alternative and integrative therapy providers were building legislative capacity at a time when participation in the ISVMA was declining.

Things are turning around. ISVMA has added over 200 new members in 2004. The 2004 Annual Convention was more highly attended than any in recent history and the evaluations from the meeting were excellent. ISVMA is introducing new programs like a discounted credit card processing service, the E-SOURCE electronic newsletter, a completely redesigned Epitome and a dynamic new website. The new website includes a Members' Only section with valuable information and downloads available only to members, the ability to register for meetings on-line and pay with your credit card, plus it affords a search function that will allow prospective clients to search for ISVMA member veterinarians by county, zip-code, area code, or even practice type. Considering the fact that as many as 1700 people visit the ISVMA website each day, your membership can easily be justified alone by the exposure to prospective clients!

ISVMA is encouraging practice owners/managers to make membership in ISVMA a benefit of employment. There is no wiser investment in the future of veterinary medicine in Illinois.