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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**February 3, 2005**

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### **MILWAUKEE DOGS RAISE THEIR PAWS OVER COUNTY BOARD APPROVAL OF AIRPORT DOG PARK**

MILWAUKEE, WI – February 3, 2005 – Residents for Off-leash Milwaukee Parks is pleased to hear the County Board of Supervisors authorized the Airport Director to enter into an agreement with the Milwaukee County Parks Department for the operation of a dog exercise area on land adjacent to General Mitchell International Airport. The group has been working with the Parks Department for the past three years to identify potential sites for future dog parks and is supportive of the proposed airport location.

This resolution was presented by Supervisors McCue, Cesarz and Dimitrijevic, who have been supportive of the group's efforts to establish additional dog parks in their districts and throughout the county. These supervisors have a large number of dog owners in their district that support having an accessible dog park. The group would like to thank Parks Director, Sue Black, and her staff, for their support and making dog parks a priority in their plans to develop new recreational access for Milwaukee residents who have dogs.

Currently, the county only has one dog park which is located on the county's northwest side on the border of Menomonee Falls and Milwaukee. Partners in Parks lease the land from the Parks Department and operate a dog park on the site. Many residents from across the county frequent this park as well as use dog parks in adjacent communities like Mequon, Grafton, Brookfield, Racine, and even as far away as Johnson Creek to exercise their dogs. The addition of a dog park near the airport now means residents many residents have a more convenient location as well as a more safe, fenced in location to take their dogs. The airport site is over 20 acres which allows ample space to accommodate a growing population of city dogs and plans include a separate small dog area along with a double-gated entrance which is features the group benchmarked as being essential for a dog park.

Residents for Off-leash Milwaukee Parks initially proposed a system of off-leash, fenced in dog parks throughout Milwaukee County. The group hopes the county won't just stop at one new dog park and will continue to identify additional sites so that no matter where residents live, they will have a dog park nearby. Areas most in need are the east side and a more centralized location within the city.

The group's initial proposal recommended Milwaukee follow a system similar to Dane County's which includes residents who use the dog parks purchasing a permit to off-set the maintenance costs. With the approval of a budget within the Parks Department to create the airport dog park, it appears that the county will move forward with some type of permit system which for many

communities actually generates revenue. The group sees the permit system as a revenue source for the county and suggests turning golf courses that are not frequently used and losing money into new dog parks that will serve an untapped population of residents with dogs who have expressed willingness to purchase permits to help pay for the dog parks.

Residents for Off-leash Milwaukee Parks is a 501c3 non-profit organization that promotes the benefits of fenced in; off-leash dog exercise areas where dogs can run free and play safe. The group encourages responsible pet ownership and plans to offer training and educational programs at the new dog parks to dog owners with socialization and behavioral issues. The group feels that dog parks can become valuable assets within a community in the terms of creating a unique social environment not only for dogs but people as well.

For more information about the Residents for Off-leash Milwaukee Parks visit the group's web site at <http://www.milwaukeekeepdogparks.org> , email [info@milwaukeekeepdogparks.org](mailto:info@milwaukeekeepdogparks.org) , or call 414-769-8806.

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