



**WARREN COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
Kevin T. Harrison, Sheriff**

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June 18, 2008

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COUNTY COMMISSION

To: Warren County Commission
From: Sheriff Kevin T. Harrison
Ref: Wesa-A-Geh-Ya Facility

I have received a significant increase in citizen calls expressing concern over the Wesa-A-Geh-Ya facility owned and operated by Ken and Sandra Smith on Highway A in Northwestern Warren County. These complaints seem to have been generated as a result of a June 15, 2008 article in the St. Louis Post Dispatch where the Smith's are quoted as saying they plan to expand their facility from the current size of two acres up to twelve acres as soon as they generate the funding.

As our county develops and the residential population continues to increase, the above facility will continuously evoke concern and fear from nearby residents. While I realize the Smith's have a legal right to possess their animals, I also know that I am charged with the public safety concerns of this county. This facility has always posed potential public safety threats, and distinct challenges to my department. We can no longer sit idle and allow this facility to operate unregulated within our community.

An immediate strategy would be to impose a county ordinance prohibiting the possession of such animals anywhere in Warren County. The existing animals would have to be grandfathered, and closely monitored regarding registration. Furthermore I think it is imperative that our ordinance prohibits the breeding of the existing animals, and any animals born after the date of the ordinance be deemed prohibited and illegal to possess. The language in the ordinance should address both the prohibitions, and the specifics on the registration requirements of the grandfathered animals. This would resolve and strengthen the vague portions of the current state law.

This will not solve this problem overnight, but it will significantly enhance my department's role in monitoring such animals. It will also cap the scope of the problem at its current scale. I look forward to discussion regarding this topic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin T. Harrison".

Sheriff Kevin T. Harrison