The Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association (WVMA) and Invisible Fence® Brand (IFB) dealers are teaming up to ensure fire departments and first responders throughout the State are equipped with specially designed oxygen mask kits in an effort to save more pets from succumbing to fire/smoke inhalation.

"By bringing local member veterinarians and local IFB dealers together to offer fire departments the oxygen mask kits we hope to draw more attention to pet safety and the importance of appropriate medical care for pets," said Kim Brown Pokorny, Executive Director, WVMA.

The statewide launch will be held Saturday, September 11 at 1 p.m. at Country View Veterinary Service located at 1350 S. Fish Hatchery Rd. Oregon, WI 53575. Fire departments that will be receiving the kits include: Brooklyn, Cambridge, DeForest, Fitchburg, McFarland, Middleton, Monona, Mount Horeb, Oregon, Sauk City, and Verona.

Although the number of pets that die in fires is not an official statistic kept by the U.S. Fire Administration, industry websites and sources have cited an estimated 40,000 to 150,000 pets die each year in fires; most succumbing to smoke inhalation.

As part of the collaborative effort between WVMA members and Invisible Fence® Brand the oxygen mask kits will be jointly presented to local fire departments throughout Wisconsin. Invisible Fence® Brand covers the cost of the kits which includes a small, medium and large mask, tubing, cleaning and operational instructions, as well as a protective bag.

JGB Distributing, Inc., Invisible Fence® Brand distributor for the Midwest, started the donation program in Michigan in 2007. The program, now called Project Breathe™ launched nationally this spring. To date, about 1,700 kits have been donated to fire stations across the United States and Canada.

"We are excited to partner with the WVMA and member veterinarians on a program that is very near and dear to our hearts—there is nothing better than hearing about a life saved," said Cam Robinson, Invisible Fence of Madison.

The Ontario Veterinarian Medical Association, Michigan Veterinarian Medical Association, and the Iowa Veterinarian Medical Association are also Pet Safety Partners with Invisible Fence® Brand dealers.

"The WVMA would like to thank Invisible Fence® Brand for being our pet safety partner and helping our members outfit departments throughout Wisconsin with these lifesaving tools," Brown Pokorny said.

"Our ultimate goal is to outfit every fire station across the US and Canada with these lifesaving pet oxygen masks," said Kate Mach, Project Breathe™ Program Coordinator.

To get started with Project Breathe™ contact your local WVMA member veterinarian or find one online at www.wvma.org . For additional information contact Torrie at the WVMA at (888) 254-5202 or wvma@wvma.org . To learn more about Project Breathe™ visit www.invisiblefence.com/02 .

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