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RapidPass Now Available for Blood Donors

SEPTEMBER 07TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

RapidPass Now Available for Blood Donors

Dexter, Missouri - American Red Cross blood and platelet donors can now help save lives in less time by using the new Red Cross RapidPass online health history system.

RapidPass streamlines the donation experience by allowing donors to complete pre-donation reading and health history questions online from the convenience of a computer at home or work. It became available to donors locally on July 27 and is expected to reduce the time donors with a RapidPass spend at blood drives by up to 15 minutes.

“When people come to donate, they are giving more than blood or platelets – they are also generously giving their time,” said Todd Wagner, director of donor recruitment, Missouri-Illinois Blood Services Region. “RapidPass is a simple, convenient way for Red Cross donors to make the most of their time while helping save lives.”

To get a RapidPass on the day of a blood donation, donors should visit redcrossblood.org/rapidpass, complete all of the questions, then print their RapidPass or show it on a mobile device when they come to donate.

Though an appointment isn’t needed to use RapidPass, donors are encouraged to make an appointment by using the Blood Donor App, visiting redcrossblood.org or calling 1-800-RED CROSS to further expedite their donation.

How to donate blood

All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver’s license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age (16 with parental consent in some states), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

About the American Red Cross

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40 percent of the nation’s blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org or visit us on Twitter at @RedCross.

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Cape Nature Center Snake Gives Virgin Births

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Cape Nature Center Snake Gives Virgin Births

Cape Girardeau, Missouri - The Missouri Department of Conservation's (MDC) Cape Girardeau Conservation Nature Center reports a resident female Yellow-bellied watersnake at the center is likely reproducing without contribution from a male. Intern Kyle Morton, who cares for the snakes at the center, didn't know what he was looking at when he went to clean the snake cage one morning.

"I thought, 'what joker put tomatoes in here for the snake'," Morton said.

It wasn't tomatoes, though; as Morton examined the round, soft, egg-like structures, he realized they were freshly laid membranes from the female snake.

"She had acted normal other than not eating for several weeks," Morton said. "So it definitely took me by surprise."

Morton reported his find to one of the naturalists at the center, who verified what it was. The snake did the same thing last summer, giving birth to two now healthy year-old watersnakes. Naturalist Jordi Brostoski found the membranes last summer, when it first happened.

"At first I thought the snake had regurgitated something until I looked at it closer," Brostoski said. "That's when I realized what had happened and then the hatchling snakes surprised me by slithering under the bedding in the cage."

According to Jeff Briggler, MDC herpetologist, although it's not heard of often, virgin births can be common in some species, through a process called parthenogenesis.

Parthenogenesis is a type of asexual reproduction in which offspring develops from unfertilized eggs. It occurs in many insect orders, most commonly with bees, wasps and stick insects and is also found in some species of fish, amphibians, birds and reptiles, but not in mammals.

"There are many types of parthenogenesis in which I will not go into great detail," Briggler said. "In layman's terms, parthenogenesis is a mode of asexual reproduction in

which the offspring (babies) are produced by females without genetic contribution of a male.”

Briggler said parthenogenesis seems to occur in both captive and wild situations and it doesn’t seem to impact the health of the female snake. Additionally, this species of snake has not been documented as participants in parthenogenesis.

“For many years, it was believed that such birth in captivity was due to sperm storage,” Briggler explained. “However, genetics is proving a different story.”

This snake has been a resident at the nature center for nearly eight years, which is likely too long of a time for this to be a result of sperm storage.

Briggler said parthenogenesis is a common occurrence in many lizard species. Published accounts of this form of reproduction in snakes have included the Brahminy bind snake, Timber rattlesnake, Copperheads, Cottonmouths, Burmese python, Rainbow boa, Common boa, Green anaconda, several gartersnake species, Aruba island rattlesnake and Afarura filesnake. As more genetic work is conducted, Briggler believes it may turn out that parthenogenesis is more widespread than scientists have thought in the past.

One interesting result of the process is that in the majority of the species that participate in parthenogenesis, the offspring produced are all male, Briggler said.

“There is always a high proportion of infertile eggs due to chromosome combination, but a few can be successful and hatch if the mother has a dissimilar sex chromosome (ZW) compared to the male with copies of the ZZ chromosome,” he said.

In this case, the female ZW chromosome will produce egg cell with ZZ and WW via meiosis. The ZZ combination can form a male embryo cell that can begin to divide and produce a snake. The WW chromosome is not viable.

The Yellow-bellied watersnake’s offspring didn’t survive this year, possibly due to the combination of chromosomes. However, last year’s two young ones are thriving and serving as educational reptiles for the Cape Nature Center.

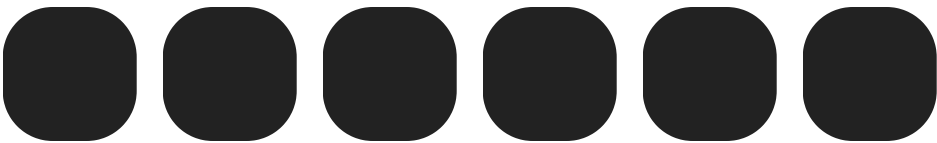
The Cape Nature Center is located inside Cape Girardeau's North County Park, just east of Interstate 55 (Exit 99) and Kingshighway (State Highway 61). More information about the center can be found at mdc.mo.gov/CapeNatureCenter.

Photo by Candice Davis.

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Monday is Labor Day!

SEPTEMBER 07TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

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It's Monday! Monday's are most people's least favorite day of the week, so what better way to spend it than to have it off of work!

Today we celebrate Labor Day. We add an extra day to our weekend to celebrate the labor movement, which gave to us better working conditions and fair treatment from our employers and the government. Labor Day is also associated by some as the end of summer, before the school year starts.

CELEBRATE

Labor Day is often spent as a vacation weekend by many families. Most campgrounds on this weekend are packed full. As you celebrate this day, consider and appreciate your hard work and how it has added to the well-being and prosperity of our country and use #NationalLaborDay to post on social media.

HISTORY

Labor Day was celebrated for the first time in New York City in 1882.

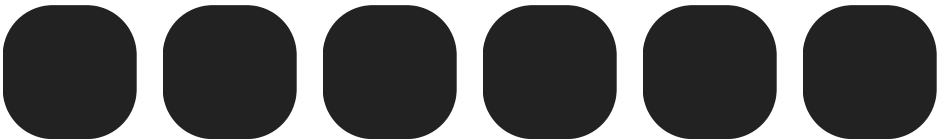
It was originally celebrated on September 5th, but was moved to the first Monday in September in 1884. Labor Day started out as a state holiday, getting voted in by individual states, but gained popularity and was voted a national holiday by the U.S. Congress in 1894.

What are you doing to celebrate National Labor Day? Post your photos and #NationalLaborDay!

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SEMO Electric Members Experiencing Phone Scams

SEPTEMBER 03RD 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

SEMO Electric Members Experiencing Phone Scams

Possible Phone Scam Occurring in Missouri

Press release from SEMO Electric Coop on the recent phone scams occurring in Missouri - At SEMO Electric Cooperative, it is our goal to keep the personal and financial information of our members secure. That is why we are warning our members that scammers could be posing as SEMO Electric in an attempt to obtain information that would compromise their financial security.

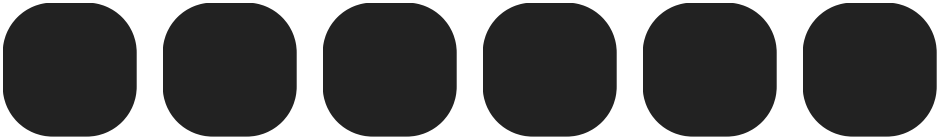
SEMO Electric Cooperative has received reports from other Co-ops around the state, informing us that scammers are calling member's homes and businesses demanding payment for what they say is a past due bill and if it isn't paid the electric will be shut off.

SEMO Electric employees will never ask for your full Social Security number over the phone and if payments are late, SEMO Electric may contact members with an automated phone call to inform members of a late payment, not to ask for payment.

If you feel you are being scammed, write down the number the call came from or any information about the call and contact SEMO Electric Cooperative. Never risk sharing your information. Do not give the person any personal or financial information.

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Troop E Prepares for Labor Day Traffic

SEPTEMBER 03RD 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Captain George E. Ridens, commanding officer Troop E, Poplar Bluff, announces that Troop E will be participating in enforcement operations throughout the Labor Day weekend. The objective of these operations is to promote safety and reduce traffic crashes. Throughout the holiday weekend, troopers within Troop E and throughout the state will be participating in Operation C.A.R.E. (Combined Accident Reduction Effort). In addition to Operation C.A.R.E., Troop E will also participate in a statewide enforcement operation during the peak travel periods on Friday, September 4, and

Monday, September 7. During this operation, Troop E troopers will be assigned to Interstate 55 to maximize visibility. Enforcement efforts on secondary roads within Troop E will be conducted during the same time frame.

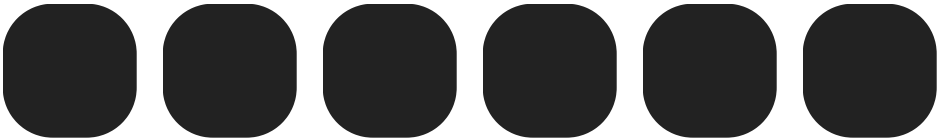
Captain Ridens said, “Over the entire holiday weekend, troopers will be targeting all traffic violations and will be especially vigilant regarding excessive speed, careless and imprudent driving, and aggressive driving violations. Troopers will also be available to help motorists in need of assistance.”

Approximately 63 percent of Missouri fatal crash victims who are required to be restrained are NOT at the time of the traffic crash. The Patrol urges motorists to protect themselves and their passengers by making sure everyone in the vehicle is properly restrained in a seat belt or child restraint. Join us in supporting the Drive To Zero Highway Deaths. Watercraft operators should ensure that everyone in the vessel is wearing an approved life jacket. Click It 4 Life And Wear It!!

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