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**For Immediate Release**  
**07/24/08**  
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**Who Let the Dogs Out?**  
**County Council “Unleashes” First Dog Park**

The Dog Days of Summer will take on new meaning when Delaware County Council “unleashes” its first dog park, located in Kent Park in Upper Darby.

Dog owners will be able to let their canine pals romp unleashed in the new fenced-in facility which was unveiled July 24 during an official “Unleashing of the Dogs” ceremony attended by elected officials and four-legged friends. The Dog Park, which officially opens Aug. 1, is part of an overall renovation to the Kent Park facility.

County Council Chairman Linda Cartisano was joined by Upper Darby Mayor Raymond Shay in opening the Dog Park gates and unleashing celebrity dogs Beatrice, a bull terrier, Paulo, a black Labrador, and several other excited canines.

Nationwide dog parks are gaining in popularity as development encroaches on open space, limiting where people can safely take their dogs for exercise. The Dog Park is part of Delaware County’s extensive parks system, which features 11 parks and 616 acres of open, protected space that enhances the environment and gives people a place to exercise, enjoy nature and build community.

The Delaware County Department of Parks and Recreation and Upper Darby Township are operating the Dog Park at Kent Park jointly. The dog park is part of a renovated multi-recreational area that features a playground, fishing area, and the separate fenced-in dog park, complete with a covered pavilion, benches, water and, of course, dog-litter bags. The playground has new climbing apparatus for young children to enjoy.

Kent Park is a scenic 10-acre stretch of green that runs along Darby Creek under the historic Lindbergh Bridge. Kent Park is a county-owned park that has traditionally been used for hiking and fishing. The Kent Park recreational area is part of a broader plan to create a Greenway along Darby Creek, offering not only open space and recreational opportunities, but also protection of the Darby Creek watershed. Part of the overall improvements to Kent Park included remediation of serious drainage problems that limited its use.

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*(Dog Park continued)*

In response to dog owners, Kent Park now offers a fenced-in area for dogs to get fresh air, exercise and playtime with other dogs. As open space diminishes, people in more developed neighborhoods have fewer places to take their dogs for exercise and fun.

There are an estimated 76,751 households in Delaware County with at least one dog.

“I am a dog owner who has to walk my dog for exercise,” said Council Chairman Linda Cartisano. “I think a dog park gives people a wonderful opportunity to exercise their pets, to teach their pets appropriate behavior around other dogs, and for the dog owners themselves to socialize.”

“All of our county parks provide people with a variety of recreational opportunities, from golf at Clayton Park to softball in Smedley Park to jogging in Rose Tree Park. Now Kent Park offers a unique outlet for dogs and their owners,” she said.

The Kent Park Dog Park features two fenced-in areas: one for dogs 25 pounds and larger; and one for smaller dogs. Both enclosures are double-gated to prevent dogs from getting loose.

Park users are required to register their dogs with Delaware County/Upper Darby, and to abide by the rules and regulations designed to keep the park safe and well-maintained. The initial registration fee is \$20 per household and \$10 for renewal; \$10 for senior citizens and \$5 for renewal.

The Park is set up to encourage responsible use. Dogs must have a current license and current rabies vaccination. Registered users get a key fob to access the locked Dog Park enclosure.

There will be a surveillance camera on site where Delaware County Park Police can monitor the premises and there is an emergency phone available to call 911.

The Dog Park will be open from 8 a.m. to dusk daily.

Jim Maloney, health officer for Upper Darby Township, said the township will man the Dog Park with part-time dog monitors during peak hours.

The key to a successful dog park is responsible behavior on the part of the dog owners.

Parks and Recreation Director Marc Manfre said Dog Park users will be subject to strict rules including: no more than two dogs per person in the park, dogs should be properly inoculated and parasite-free, dog owners must clean up after their dogs, do not bring dogs that are sick or in heat, no prong or choke collars, and no aggressive dogs. As with all county parks, no alcohol is permitted.

“The benefits to a dog park are many. A well-exercised dog is a happier healthier companion and a better neighbor. In other towns with dogs parks, such as Philadelphia and Manhattan, people report that groups of dog owners by their mere presence have helped to deter crime and vandalism,” Ms. Cartisano said. “Accessible and safe parks are an essential ingredient to a successful, strong neighborhood.”

“A dog park brings people together in a greater sense of community. People’s love for dogs creates a common bond. All of our parks, including the Kent Park Dog Park, add to the quality of life in Delaware County.”

## Kent Park Dog Park

- **For Information:** Kent Park Dog Park is located in the 3900 block of Bridge Street, off of Baltimore Pike in Upper Darby. Hours are 8 a.m.-dusk daily. People must register their dogs to obtain a key fob for entrance. Current license and rabies inoculation are required. Registration is \$20 per household; \$10 for renewal; \$10 for senior citizens and \$5 for renewal.
- **Limited Introductory Use:** The computer system for the key fobs is still being installed. Until that is complete, dog owners will have access to the Dog Park 4-8 p.m. weeknights and 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturdays and Sunday. They still need to register for use and they will be notified when the key fob system is completed. It is expected that the entry system will be fully operational by early August.
- **People can register for the Dog Park at three locations:**
  - Upper Darby Township Health Department, municipal building, room 306, 100 Garrett Road, Upper Darby. (610) 734-7640.
  - Delaware County Parks and Recreation, Leedom House, Rose Tree Park, 1671 N. Providence Road, Upper Providence. (610) 565-7410.
  - Delaware County Government Center, License Department, ground floor, 201 W. Front St., Media.