



Possible rabid cat attacks four people in Cornelia

CORNELIA – Cornelia officials are urging people who live within about one-half mile of Irvin and Hoyt streets to exercise extra caution as a possibly rabid cat is loose in that area.

“At approximately 7:30 [Wednesday] morning, I received a call from dispatch alerting me of a person that had called in on Irvin Street ... and reported that a cat had attacked her at the addresses around 356 and 367 Irvin Street,” said Cornelia Animal Control Officer Corey Palmer. “She advised dispatch that the cat just came out and attacked her. It had no provocation.”

“That’s a tell-tale sign of rabies,” said Cornelia Chief Marshal Jeff Barron.

Palmer and Animal Control Officer Richard Burton responded to Irvin Street. Upon pulling up near the old Fleming Foodservice building, Palmer said another vehicle stopped and told him she had been bitten as well, but had not had a chance to report it yet.

“She got attacked,” Palmer said. “She said she came out to her car and the cat was underneath the car, and it just came out from underneath, no big deal. Then, all of a sudden, the cat was crawling up her leg and bit her.”

The ACOs began looking for the cat, but had no luck locating it. A black cat that was located was shown to the victim, who said it was not the one that attacked her.

Shortly thereafter, a person living on Hoyt Street reported that he had gotten scratched by the cat. That was the last time anyone had contact with the cat, until shortly after 1 p.m. At that time, the cat was reported to be in the area of the former Fleming Foodservice on Irvin Street.

Animal control officers again responded, with no contact with the cat.

Prior to the second sighting, the cat’s initial victim, who asked that her name not be used, described what happened when she was attacked.

“I was walking down Irvin Street to Fieldale,” the victim said, adding the cat was coming down the road across from house number 367.

“The cat was coming down that road and it starts running at me, and it just runs up the back of my leg and grabs a hold and bites me,” she said.

She said the cat later got her hand when she tried to shield a woman and children that were



Cornelia Code Enforcement Officer Richard Burton patrols the area of Hoyt Street where one of the four victims of a possibly rabid cat was attacked Wednesday. (Photo/Rob Moore)



walking by the animal.

The cat remained at large late Wednesday afternoon.

City officials ask those in the area to take extra precautions when walking, to keep their pets inside, and to closely monitor children playing outside until the animal has been caught. Sightings of the cat should be reported to the Habersham County E-9-1-1 Center at (706) 778-3911. To report an attack, immediately dial 9-1-1.

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