

Murray the Groundhog predicts more winter

by Steven Spencer, Staff Writer
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ALTON - Murray the Groundhog made a stop at the Alton Visitor Center Friday morning to let everyone know six more weeks of winter are on the way.

Mayor of Alton Brant Walker read brief proclamation declaring Friday "Murray Groundhog Day" in the city of Alton, with Murray, a permanent resident of the Treehouse Wildlife Center, being the "Official Groundhog Day Meteorologist."

"I Mayor Brant Walker, hereby proclaim Friday, Feb. 2, 2018, as Murray Groundhog Day in the City of Alton, Illinois and I encourage all citizens to celebrate Treehouse Wildlife Center and the rehabilitation of native wildlife," Mayor Walker said.

When Murray isn't busy with his responsibilities as official meteorologist, he spends his time helping at the Treehouse Wildlife Center as an education ambassador in the centers mission to rescue, rehabilitate and release wildlife while promoting environmental awareness through education.

Rachael Heaton, Director of Operations at Treehouse Wildlife Center, gave the crowd a brief bit of information on Murray before predicted six more weeks of winter.

"Murray the Groundhog came to Treehouse, as a young groundhog after he was kept by somebody else kind of as a pet," Heaton said. "So he has no fear of humans, for that

reason we decided he would be a great education ambassador and live permanently at the center."