



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**



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America's Next Top Dog: Is Your Dog the Canine Cop of the Year?

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Whether it's saving the sofa from any fallen crumbs, or helping the neighborhood by keeping the grass fertilized, all dogs serve and protect their families and communities in unique ways. To honor the every-day deeds of dogs, the **National Museum of Crime & Punishment (NMCP)** is presenting ***America's Next Top Dog: Canine "Cop" of the Year***, a nationwide contest to identify the dog that serves his or her family or community best. To involve both local and national animal protection organizations, **The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)** and **The Washington Humane Society (WHS)** will participate as judges.

"Since the museum opened in 2008, we've hosted several guest speakers related to animals and law enforcement," said Janine Vaccarello, Chief Operating officer of the National Museum of Crime & Punishment. "What professional law enforcement dogs can accomplish is amazing. But even the typical family dog can help people feel more secure in their homes. This contest gives everyone the chance to recognize their own dog's special contribution to the betterment of their family or their community, whether it's something serious like a K9 police dog, or a therapy dog, or something a bit more tongue-in-cheek like patrolling the kitchen for snacks."

All dog owners that are U.S. residents are eligible to enter the contest. Creativity and props are encouraged in submissions, as long as the image is considered appropriate for all ages. Images should not portray dogs in any situations which could be, or could appear to be, dangerous for the dog. For inspiration, contestants can check out the photos on the contest page.

"This contest shows how integral animals have become to our everyday lives" says Scott Giacoppo, Vice President of External Affairs for the Washington Humane Society. "WHS is proud to be a part of this contest because it gives people the chance to share with everyone just how special their pet really is."

Submissions for each month must be received by the 25th at 5:00 p.m. EST. All submissions received after that date will be considered for the following month. Winners will be announced on the 29th of each month. Monthly winners will receive a featured spot on the NMCP website and e-Newsletter, a press release sent to their local newspapers and TV stations in the monthly winner's hometown, an annual family pass to the museum including your house-trained canine, and **Canine Cop Day**, where the National Museum of Crime & Punishment will be devoted to glorifying that month's selected winner.

The dog's winning photo will be posted at the museum, and guests that state the winning dog's name at the museum's front desk will receive half price admission. Each monthly winner will qualify for the nationwide vote to determine the Canine Cop of the Year, who will receive a trip to Washington, D.C. with their pooch and the opportunity to march in the D.C. Independence Day Parade.

“Half of our mission at The Humane Society of the United States is to celebrate animals, so we’re truly pleased to be part of the Canine Cop contest,” said Ann Chynoweth, senior director, End Animal Fighting & Cruelty Campaign for The HSUS. “This is a great opportunity to enlist the support of everyone who participates in the contest, as well as create awareness for the other half of our mission: confronting cruelty to animals.”

In tandem with the contest, the museum will raise funds for both The Humane Society of the United States and Washington Humane Society, as well as develop a temporary museum exhibit in 2011 featuring information about Crimes against Animals.

For more information about the contest, visit http://www.crimemuseum.org/americas_next_top_dog. For more information about crimes against animals, visit http://www.crimemuseum.org/Crimes_Against_Animals (information on this page is a collaboration between NMCP, WHS, and The HSUS).

About the National Museum of Crime & Punishment

The NMCP’s mission is to provide guests of all ages with a memorable insight into the history of crime, crime fighting and solving, and the consequences of committing a crime in America through a captivating interactive, entertaining, and educational experience. Some of the attractions include a CSI Experience, a high-speed chase simulator and FBI shooting range, Americas Most Wanted studio, and a room where visitors can try to hack into a computer, crack a safe and test their Wild West shooting range. The museum is located on 7th Street NW between E and F Streets in downtown Washington, D.C. at the Gallery Place/Chinatown Metro (Arena exit). Learn more at www.crimemuseum.org.

About The Humane Society of the United States

The Humane Society of the United States is the nation's largest animal protection organization — backed by 11 million Americans, or one of every 28. For more than a half-century, The HSUS has been fighting for the protection of all animals through advocacy, education and hands-on programs. Celebrating animals and confronting cruelty — On the Web at www.humanesociety.org.

About the Washington Humane Society

The Washington Humane Society, the only Congressionally-chartered animal welfare agency in the United States, has been the leading voice for animals in the District of Columbia since 1870. As the only open-access shelter in the nation’s capital, no call for help goes unanswered, and no animal is ever turned away. The Washington Humane Society provides comfort and care to more than 30,000 animals each year through its broad range of programs and services including: sheltering, adoption, humane law enforcement, spay and neuter, humane education, human – animal rehabilitation programs, and lost and found services. For more information please call or e-mail the media contact above or visit: www.washhumane.org

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