



Consistent with the findings of the baseline survey in 2001, pet owners say want the best care money can buy. The survey found that 40% of cat owners and 38% of dog owners would pay for luxury suites with raised beds and rugs for their pets.

The 2003 survey also found that today's pet owners want the convenience of having all the pet care services they use—boarding, grooming, training and even vet check-ups—available under one roof. Survey respondents who board their pets when they travel indicate that they would like the kennel to offer additional services including:

- Σ
- More than 70% of survey respondents say they want grooming services at the facility where they board their pets
- Σ
- Almost 35% want dog training while their pets are boarding
- Σ
- More than 30% would like their pets to have vet check-ups when they board

The survey also found that a growing number of pet owners want to book their pets' boarding reservations online. More than 40% of the 2003 survey respondents indicated that they would like to make reservations online, compared with just 25% two years ago.

However, 50% still want to make their pets' reservations with a person—either on the phone or face-to-face. That's because, while amenities are important, the most essential feature for most pet owners is a staff that loves pets. "What's important to me is that the people who are caring for my dog really love animals," said one respondent. "I want to know that she's as well cared for there as she is at home."

The Kennel of the Future survey was established in 2001 and is administered via e-mail. Participants include pet owners from across the U.S. Of those responding, 1,311 own at least one dog, 377 own at least one cat, and 288 own both a dog and a cat. The survey included questions on the type and location of facilities, services offered, preferences for making reservations, room size and special amenities. There was also a section where pet lovers could describe the perfect kennel in their own words.

Best Friends is the largest company in the pet boarding business, providing deluxe boarding accom-

modations, daycare and day camp, professional grooming and spa treatments, and a full range of training services at most of its 39 locations nationwide. The company operates Best Friends Pet Resorts and Salons locations in 18 states, including California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia.

For more information visit the Best Friends website at www.bestfriendspetcare.com.

COLORADO MEMBER RECOGNIZED FOR DEVELOPMENT OF BOARDING/DAYCARE SOFTWARE

The National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) and computer maker Dell Inc. has chosen Top Dog Daycare of Colorado Springs, Colorado, as a finalist in the Dell/NFIB Small Business Excellence in Customer Experience Award.

The award recognizes the value that small businesses place on customer service. "Twenty years ago, as a small-business, we created a sales model that starts and ends with the customer. This approach has been the foundation of our growth," Michael Dell, chairman and chief executive officer of Dell Inc., said. "Today's finalists also understand the customer comes first and they have used technology to improve their services, products and performance."

Boasting a 10,000 square-foot, open-air facility with no kennels to

restrain dogs for overnight or daily care, Top Dog Daycare is the original day care for dogs in the Pikes Peak region. They offer overnight dog boarding kennels, grooming services and dog training. With 15 employees, Top Dog Daycare has provided superior customer service and excellent care for dogs for four-and-a-half years.

Top Dog owner, Joelle Hilfers, has developed a software program that utilizes online services to improve their business and customer service, including a reservation system that eases scheduling and booking tasks for employees and customers.

"This software is an internet-based program that allows us to track every animal in the facility at all times, and to monitor our finances down to the penny (not to mention the other countless benefits)," said Corey Miller, Top Dog Daycare's Director of Business Development.

The Dell/NFIB Small Business Excellence in Customer Experience Award finalists were selected by members of the Herb Kelleher Center for Entrepreneurship at The University of Texas at Austin for their spirit of innovation. Small-business owners were challenged to illustrate how they have used information technology to drive a significant change and/or developed a competitive advantage in delivering superior customer value and experience.

Top Dog Daycare offers franchise opportunities with their software program, K-9 Connect, included in the franchise fee. K-9

Connect software has also recently become available as a stand-alone product.

For more information on Top Dog Daycare or K-9 Connect software contact Corey Miller, (719) 448-9600 or (719) 243-5465, corey@topdogdaycare.com, or visit www.topdogdaycare.com

TEXAS MEMBER WINS MULTIPLE AWARDS

Caryl Scrimpscher, owner of Rob Cary Pet Resort in San Antonio, Texas, has been on a roll since last year, receiving recognition for her many talents.

In October 2003 Caryl was honored with the Entrepreneurial Spirit Award (Innovator category) by the San Antonio chapter of National Assn. of Women Business Owners.

In February of this year she earned the SBA Top Small Business Award at the South Texas Business Fund Banquet.

And most recently (April 24, 2004), Caryl's Pomeranian, CH Starfire's RobCary Sobe It, won Best In Show at the Big Spring Kennel Club dog show. Sobe is currently the number 3 Pom in the country, all owner handled.

Send us news of your professional accomplishments for publication in the Pet Services Journal or Boarderline newsletter.

ABKA, 1702 E. Pikes Peak Ave.
Colorado Springs, CO 80909
Fax: 719-667-0116
Email: Tracy@abka.com

Members in the News

SURVEY SHOWS PET OWNERS WILLING TO PAY FOR EXTRAS

Best Friends Pet Care, Inc. has released the results of their third annual "Kennel of the Future" survey, a national trends survey that looks at changing pet owner attitudes about the care of their pets. Approximately 1,400 dog and cat owners responded to the 2003 survey.

Among the significant trends uncovered by the survey were the following:

- Almost half of survey respondents (48.5%) said they would like their boarding kennel to offer a video monitoring service so they can "look in" on their pets via the internet while they are away
- Σ
- More than 53% said they want their pet to take part in a daily play group with other pets during their boarding stay
- Σ
- 45% said they would pay extra for radio or television in their pets' room