

For Immediate Release

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One Lucky Dog Will Be Chicago's First-Ever "Dog of Distinction"

City Clerk Mendoza's Office Launches Dog Registration Campaign In Advance of City Enforcement Push

Chicago, Ill. (Jan. 4, 2012) – Chicago dog owners want to avoid being in the dog house come this spring when Chicago Animal Care and Control begins a focused effort on enforcing dog registration. To help increase city dog registration and raise awareness of the mandatory requirement, City Clerk Susana Mendoza is launching the first-ever City Clerk's Dog of Distinction campaign.

"We believe many people are simply not aware of the requirement to register your dog with the city," said Clerk Mendoza. "Since taking office, I have said that we need to greatly increase our dog registration numbers. Chicagoan and civic leader Kathy Posner came to me with the idea of the Dog of Distinction campaign. I saw the campaign as a perfect opportunity to partner with Chicago's business community to drive our registration numbers up and to bring awareness to other city laws that dog owners need to be aware of, like dog registration and leashing your dog," continued Clerk Mendoza.

"Right now there are some estimates that put Chicago's dog population at almost a half million dogs. We currently have about 30,000 dogs registered with the city. Clearly we have work to do to raise those registration numbers. It's not just a matter of complying with the law. Registration aids in public health and reunites stray dogs with their owners," continued Clerk Mendoza.

Campaign Details and Prizes

All dogs registered with the City Clerk's Office through March 31, 2012 are automatically entered into the Dog of Distinction campaign. On April 2, five dogs and their owners will be chosen at random to compete for Chicago's first-ever Dog of Distinction. The public will then vote online in April for the dog they think best exemplifies Chicago's spirit and is worthy of the Dog of Distinction title.

Finalists receive prize packages donated by Chicago's pet-loving businesses. Chicago's Dog of Distinction receives a custom-designed dog tag with real rubies and topazes created by Sherry Bender of famed The Goldsmith Ltd., an appearance in a 'WCIU, the U' TV ad, a weekend stay at the Palmer House Hilton, a photo shoot at Urban Out Sitters, and a feature story in *Chicagoland Tails* magazine.

All finalists receive two tickets on a Shoreline Cruise dog-friendly architectural cruise, a reservation to the exclusive Palmer House Hilton Dog Tea Party, Urban Out Sitter gift bag filled with the latest in dog treats and accessories and a *Chicagoland Tails* gift package created just for Chicago's prize-winning dogs.

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Benefits of Dog Registration

City dog registration helps reunite owners with their pet should the dog stray away from home. According to the National Council on Pet Population Study and Policy, less than 20 percent of dogs who go missing are returned to their owners. Most dogs reunited with their owners were identified with tags or other identifying features, reinforcing the advantage for owners who register their dogs.

Dog registration also benefits the public health. All dogs registered with the city must have a current rabies vaccination. Additionally, in offering discounts to those with spayed or neutered dogs, pet registration offers an additional incentive to do so and ultimately helps control the pet population.

Chicago's dog registration tag is a simple sticker that adheres to the back of the rabies vaccination tag. The sticker contains the unique dog registration number as well as the phone number for the City Clerk's missing dog and registration hotline, 312-744-DOGS (3647).

Dog Registration Cost and Fines

Dog registration is \$5 for neutered or spayed dogs or \$2.50 for sterilized dogs with a Chicago owner over age 65. Unsterilized dogs are \$50 to register or \$5 if the owner is age 65 or older. City dog registrations are available in 1 or 3 year increments, with the expiration date coinciding with the rabies expiration.

Fines for not registering a dog range from \$30 to \$200. Dog registration can be purchased online at chicityclerk.com or an application can be mailed to the owner by calling 312-744-DOGS (3647). Registration is also available at any City Clerk's office location, 121 N. LaSalle in Room 107, 5674 S. Archer Ave. or 5430 W. Gale St.

About City Clerk Susana Mendoza

Susana Mendoza was elected Chicago City Clerk in 2011 and is the first woman ever elected to the office. City Clerk Mendoza's office is responsible for maintaining official city government records, distributing approximately 1.3 million vehicle stickers and residential parking permits, issuing city business licenses and licensing all dogs in the City of Chicago. City Clerk Mendoza is committed to improving the City Clerk's office by making it the most technologically savvy, user-friendly and efficient City Clerk office in the country. For more information about the City Clerk's office, visit www.chicityclerk.com. You can also find the City Clerk's office at www.facebook.com/chicityclerk, www.twitter.com/chicityclerk and www.youtube.com/chicityclerk.

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