

And the Winner Is...

Awards ceremony honors animal welfare professionals in Washington, D.C., area



Aaron Wheatley (left) of Loudoun County Animal Care and Control in Virginia received the 2006 Domestic Animal Rescue Award. Rodney Taylor, associate director of Animal Services Management for Prince George's County in Maryland, presented the honors.

It was Oscars week, but the 150 animal welfare professionals who assembled in Washington, D.C., on March 2 weren't waiting to see who would take home "Best Picture" honors. They had come to the third annual Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) Animal Services Awards to celebrate the accomplishments of their colleagues in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

The awards program was developed by the COG Animal Services Committee—a group made up of representatives from local agencies who convene periodically throughout the year. The awards provide "much needed recognition for animal care and control professionals, who skillfully fulfill their invaluable roles with unwavering dedication," says committee member Cory Smith, who is also the program manager for Animal Sheltering Issues at The Humane Society of the United States.

The following are selected results from that day's awards. For a complete list of the winners, visit www.mwcog.org/news/press.

Leadership Award

Kay Speerstra, Executive Director, Animal Welfare League of Arlington

For making positive change through many new initiatives, including animal transfer and foster programs, and for increasing cooperation within the community.

Animal Control Officer of the Year Award

Chris Schindler and Timothy Moyer, Humane Law Enforcement Officers, Washington Humane Society

For responding to almost 1,500 complaints of animal cruelty or neglect during a staffing shortage at the organization.

Animal Care Award

Animal Care Team, Loudoun County Animal Care and Control

For being open to the process of overhauling cleaning and care routines with the goal of improving shelter animal health.

Volunteer of the Year Award

Jamie Nichols, Animal Welfare League of Arlington

For volunteering as a foster parent for cats and transporting wildlife who need rehabilitation.