HOW TO GET AN OFFICIAL PROCLAMATION

A great way to gain publicity for your ***AKC Responsible Dog Ownership Day*** event is to obtain an official Proclamation from your Mayor/Commissioner/Governor. Proclamations are given in recognition of a special event and can help you get media coverage.

STEP 1: Identify the right person to assist with the Proclamation – it may take time so start early!

- Identify the appropriate contact at least 8 weeks in advance.
- Check the white pages under city or state government for addresses and phone numbers to write or call for information on requesting a Proclamation. A city or county website may also list appropriate contacts. If no one deals exclusively with Proclamations, try a public relations or public information officer contact. An office manager or an aide/admin might be able to help as well.
- Be prepared to highlight the significance of the event and its impact on people in the local area.

STEP 2: Ask questions!

- Do they want you to draft a Proclamation ready for signature or do they want you to provide just the text for them to format in their style?
- May you include in the Proclamation the special naming of the day/date? For example, **"In honor of responsible dog ownership, I _____ (Mayor/ Commissioner/Governor) proclaim September 17th 2003 _____ *AKC Responsible Dog Ownership Day*, etc."**
- Do they want a hard copy of the text, electronic copy or both?
- Could you arrange a signing ceremony and invite media? (See below for details)

STEP 3: Draft necessary documents and submit to appropriate person.

- Draft a cover letter and the text for the Proclamation. Address the official correctly and explain that your institution, along with the AKC and hundreds of clubs across the country, is celebrating RDO Day. Include the theme, the date, and your goals to increase awareness of and recognition for responsible dog ownership.
- Include interesting facts - and a brief description of your RDO Day plans. Ask for his/her help by proclaiming RDO Day for the city or state and include a draft Proclamation for consideration. Include a contact number for additional information. Close sincerely with name, credentials, and title.

- Mail or hand deliver your cover letter, draft Proclamation and support materials. Offer information that might be helpful to the politician – brochures, statistics, or other items – which describe and explain responsible dog ownership.
- Once signed, pick up the Proclamation in person – that way, it can't be damaged or lost in the mail and you can personally thank the person who helped you out – you may want to do this again!

STEP 4: Arrange a "signing ceremony" at the official's office and invite media.
A "signing ceremony" is a great way to get media to cover your event. Ask your contact if he/she can assist you in getting the mayor involved in the presentation of the Proclamation or make an appearance at the event itself. If they can't help, they can tell you who can.

- Confirm all details, including whether or not media and photographers can attend.
- Be sure to ask if well-behaved dogs are allowed at the ceremony – dogs are a great visual for media! If dogs are not allowed inside the offices, ask if the ceremony can be held outside on the city hall steps.
- Draft a one-page media alert with all event details and distribute to your local media. While print media may require more advanced notice, a television station may only need the media alert two or three days in advance. A follow up call is always a good idea.

STEP 5: The AKC is here to help!
Let us know if you are planning to request a government-issued Proclamation. We can provide you with a sample, which you can use to draft the text of your Proclamation. Keep in mind that it may be easier and faster to get a signed Proclamation if you draft the language.

If you need help distributing to print and broadcast media in your local area, please send a hardcopy of the signed Proclamation to Lainie Cantrell at AKC, 260 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016. 212-696-8228.