

Art Contest Opens for New Cat License Plate

Initiative to raise funds for Georgia cat and dog sterilizations.

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Artists are invited to use cats as models for the next Georgia license plate design. Each year, thousands of healthy cats and dogs are killed in Georgia shelters because people allow their pets and strays to breed, and there are not enough homes for them, according to the Humane Association of Georgia. As part of a mission to curb the state's pet population, Georgians have turned to art.

A cat artwork contest unveiled by the Georgia Department of Agriculture invites residents to create a design for a new license plate to benefit its Dog and Cat Sterilization Program. The DCSP brings in money for spay/neuter procedures performed by licensed and accredited veterinarians in all 159 Georgia counties.

The art contest determines the best cat-themed image for a new tag to benefit the program. From six top submissions to be posted on the department's website, Georgians will vote for their favorite cat artwork.

The winner receives \$2,500 and the artwork will be featured on the new Cat License Plate, to be sold in addition to the current dog designs beginning December 2008. The pet-themed license plates, sold for \$25, are the main funding source for the sterilization program. Since 2003, the plates have raised more than \$2.5 million for spay/neuter procedures and educational outreach.