

\$1 Million Up for Grabs in Shelter Makeover

Website competition aims to raise awareness for homeless dogs and cats.

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Animal shelters across America are getting another shot at winning a \$1 million prize with the Second Annual Shelter Makeover Contest, launched by Zootoo.com, a social networking website for pet owners.

The contest gives animal shelters the chance to increase adoptions and help raise awareness for cats and dogs in need, according to the company. Participating shelters earn points when their supporters register on the site and share photos, stories, and advice about pets.

The shelter with the most public votes on the website at the contest's close wins the grand prize. This year's contest ends May 1, 2009. Nineteen runners-up will share awards totaling \$195,000.

More than 1,000 animal shelters took part in the first Shelter Makeover, which was won by Stray Rescue of St. Louis in St. Louis, Mo. That makeover is in the works.

Richard Thompson, Zootoo.com founder, said that every shelter that participated in the first contest was a winner as demonstrated by an increase in donations by 21 percent and adoptions by 30 percent, "all because of the attention they got from the contest. It's exactly what we hoped would happen – bringing shelters and communities together."