

ASPCA Unveils CSI Vehicle for Dogs, Other Animals

The new crime scene investigation unit is designed to help prosecute cases of cruelty towards dogs and cats.

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Photos courtesy ASPCA The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals unveiled this week its mobile animal crime scene investigation unit, a vehicle equipped with tools that will allow animal cruelty investigators to use veterinary forensics in their investigations. The specially designed CSI unit also features medical equipment for sick and injured animals.

With the unveiling of the new vehicle, the ASPCA also announced plans to begin construction of the ASPCA Anti-Cruelty Institute in 2008.

"Time and time again we see that our nation's most appalling criminals have a history of abusing animals — that animal cruelty and human cruelty are indelibly linked — and the ASPCA is committed to providing resources and training to stop these crimes in their tracks," said Ed Sayres, ASPCA president and CEO. "The mobile animal CSI unit and the Anti-Cruelty Institute are two new milestones in our ongoing fight against animal cruelty."

ASPCA's forensic veterinarian, Dr. Melinda Merck, will lead the team that operates the new mobile CSI unit. Equipped with state-of-the-art forensics tools, the unit will travel across the country to help local law enforcement professionals build cases against perpetrators of animal cruelty. Merck will be able to use the tools in the unit to examine crime scenes and provide care for abused animals.

"I'm proud to be at the wheel of this mobile unit that will allow the evidence gathered at crime scenes to be processed more efficiently," Merck said.

Ground-breaking for ASPCA's Anti-Cruelty Institute will take place in New York in 2008. The institute, scheduled to open in 2010, will offer veterinarians and law enforcement officials the training and education necessary to recognize and respond to animal cruelty. The facility also will feature a forensic laboratory, veterinary hospital, and treatment center for animal victims of cruelty.

"The Institute will bring together the best and brightest animal welfare respondents from around the world, in an environment where they can most benefit from the ASPCA's unique breadth and depth of animal welfare/anti-cruelty expertise," Sayres said. "The Institute will truly help us take the fight against animal cruelty to a new level."