



St. Louis Animal Shelter Wins Online Contest

\$1 million grand prize will help Stray Rescue expand into a 16,500-square-foot building.

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An extreme makeover of Stray Rescue in St. Louis, Mo., will be made possible by a \$1 million grand prize, awarded to the shelter Wednesday. The shelter beat out 973 other participants throughout the country in an online contest.

Randy Grim, Stray Rescue founder, learned the news from Richard Thompson, multimillionaire founder of Zootoo, a pet information website that launched the First National Shelter Makeover Program in October. The shelter, with its \$800,000 annual operating budget, rescues and rehabilitates dogs from the streets.

The grand prize includes money, goods and services provided through Zootoo. Contestants earned points by rallying their communities to become active members of the website by writing reviews and discussing news.

"Stray Rescue of St. Louis," Thompson says in a journal entry on the website, "met all the criteria we were looking for in terms of need, community commitment, best practices, and efforts to get more animals adopted.

"Many of the top 20 did. But what gave Stray Rescue of St. Louis a bit of an edge was the way they've taken the initiative to gather resources throughout their community to be helpful to their shelter."

With the newfound income, Stray Rescue will undergo an expansion into a 16,500-square foot building donated in November. Two runners-up will also receive cash prizes: Humane Society of the Ohio Valley in Marietta, Ohio (\$20,000), and Jefferson County SPCA in Watertown, N.Y. (\$10,000). A second makeover contest is planned to start in the summer.