

Going to the dogs

■ Magazine honors Cd'A's pooch friendliness



SHAWN GUST/Press

Going to the dogs

Nick Cox, of Coeur d'Alene, plays with his nine-week-old blue nose pit bull Wednesday in the city park. Dog Fancy magazine recently selected Coeur d'Alene as the winner of its annual Dog Town USA contest.

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By DAVID COLE/Staff writer |  3 comments

COEUR d'ALENE - Coeur d'Alene is being recognized as DogTown USA, the most dog-friendly city in the country.

The city has been selected as the national winner of Dog Fancy magazine's annual contest.

Coeur d'Alene will be featured in Dog Fancy's October issue, which hits newsstands Aug. 23, the Coeur d'Alene Area Chamber of Commerce said in a press release Wednesday.

Dog Fancy editor Ernie Slone will attend a Coeur d'Alene City Council meeting on Tuesday to present a check to the Kootenai County Dog Park Association and to present Mayor Sandi Bloem with a plaque honoring Coeur d'Alene as the DogTown USA winner.

Heather Huber, at City Park Wednesday with her 1 1/2-year-old Chihuahua named Pip, said the recognition is well deserved.

"We take her pretty much everywhere we go and people are friendly about it, as long as food isn't sold there," the 32-year-old Coeur d'Alene resident said.

Kim Tucker, 47, also a Coeur d'Alene resident, said people are friendly anytime she's out with her 3-year-old Shih Tzu in public.

"People always want to pet her (Shelbie) and are really nice," Tucker said. "She loves going to the beach."

Jake York, 18, of Coeur d'Alene, who was walking downtown Wednesday with his dog, said the city has lots of places to exercise Nico, his 8-month-old pit bull-terrier mix. His favorite is Tubbs Hill.

"There're lots of places to go out and have fun and run with him," he said.

Other dog-friendly places to exercise a four-legged friend in Coeur d'Alene include the Canfield Mountain Trails and the Centennial Trail.

Doug Eastwood, city parks director, said the magazine appreciates the "strides that we are making" in being dog-friendly.

Having an off-leash dog park, Central Bark, at Atlas and Nez Perce roads, helped the city in the competition.

The city identified more than 13 dog-friendly hotels. There are 11, maybe more, events scheduled for dogs and their owners this year, including Dog d'Alene downtown, he said.

The city has ordinances specifically written to protect animals and no laws target specific breeds, he said.

Also, some restaurant operators allow dogs on their premises, with some events setting out water bowls. There are many dog-training and behavior classes, and 24-hour vet services available.

The city also benefits from having a great relationship with the Kootenai Humane Society.

The city feels great about the recognition, Eastwood said.

But, "I especially feel good for the Kootenai County Dog Park Association," he said. "We could not have done this (selected DogTown USA) or created an off-leash dog park without their help and influence. What a great bunch of people. I'm appreciative of this honor on their behalf, and the behalf of Coeur d'Alene's parks department."

It's appropriate that a city receiving the recognition have a lot of dogs, too, which Coeur d'Alene does.

The city has more than 46,000 residents and more than 17,000 dogs, Eastwood said.

"Maybe someday the dog population might exceed the human population here," he said.

Then it will really be DogTown USA.