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WHEN THE DOGS COME TO TOWN, THE LOCAL ECONOMY CAN'T HELP BUT NOTICE.

York, PA (August 2010) - Every March, more than 7800 dogs representing more than 152 breeds come, sit and stay for five days of canine competition during the **annual Celtic Classic's Dog Show, Rally & Obedience Trials**. That translates into thousands of dog owners, handlers, groomers, family members and bow-wow enthusiasts all eating, sleeping, playing and buying at establishments throughout York City and surrounding areas.

"That's a lot of doggy dollars, and we love it," said Carol Dotts, president of the local York Kennel Club. "But the dog economy here is bigger than a single event. It goes year-round and involves a lot of people and a lot of dogs." *Planning for next year's Celtic Classic is already underway and is scheduled to take place at the Toyota Arena - York Expo Center, Old Main, and Memorial Hall West in York, Pennsylvania, March 16th thru 20th 2011.*

The Celtic Classic's annual dog show is just the tip of the tail.

Despite a weak U.S. economy, our region's dog industry seems to be growing as it follows the national trend toward more pets, more pet owners and more spending on pets. Dogs make up a large portion of that spending, with some estimates ranging around 40 percent of the \$45.5 billion in annual pet expenditures across the nation.

And locally, the stats are nothing to sniff at:

York, Lancaster and Delaware Counties combined have more than 36,000 doggy households with a pooch population of more than 37,000 dogs, according to estimates by the American Veterinary Medical Association.

The Celtic Classic is made up of three clubs: The York Kennel Club, The Lancaster Kennel Club and The Delaware County Kennel Club, combined they have more than 200 members, and continues to grow.

"Everything in the dog industry is growing by leaps and bounds," said Jeff Moore, board member of the York Kennel Club. "Twenty or 30 years ago, pets were just pets. A dog was a dog. But now they're treated like children — and people want the very best for their children."

Moore noted that three things seem to be driving growth of dog product lines: the urge to pamper, better pet health and new and better designs of traditional products.

Moore, 40, pointed out that aging Boomers, now facing empty nests as their kids reach adulthood, often turn to pets — and particularly dogs — to fill the voids. "Older folks can lavish a lot of attention on a little dog."

And speaking of little dogs, Hollywood has re-glorified the small dog into "accessory pets," said Moore. "Even around here, a person can spend a lot of money on stuff like fancy

leashes, jeweled collars and dog clothes.” Yes, dog clothes are especially popular in this area through the winter months, Moore said. “Like I said, these dogs are like children.”

Frou-frou accessories aside, however, it’s pet health product lines — including natural-ingredient dog foods and nutritional supplements — that have really caught the attention of dog lovers, said Dotts.

In particular, healthier dog food recipes — many containing veggies, beneficial oils, dietary minerals and little salt or sugar — have captured a larger share of the dog food market, said Dotts. Special supplements, such as omega-3 oil, are formulated specifically for hound health — to lubricate joints, battle skin irritations, limit ear infections, improve coat texture and shine and increase alertness in older dogs.

“People want to be healthy, and they want their dogs to be healthy, too,” said Dotts.

There are also all those gadgets that just make a dog owner’s life easier and a dog more comfortable, those tools, furniture and devices that now come in high-tech designs that ensure safety and ease-of-use. Top sellers include see-through electric toenail clippers, automatic watering bowls and collapsible, cloth-sided carriers.

A lot of these items are purchased the days during and preceding the Celtic Cluster’s annual dog show, adds Moore. “Buyers are mostly dog show folks who’ve forgotten something or need a new enclosure or an extra sack of food. Usually, these are small items, but with the large attendance, they can add up quick.”

Kennel club president Carol Dotts said dog shows in many communities “can slip past, right under the economic radar.” But in York, the show is large enough to have an impact on local RV parks, restaurants, retailers and hotels, motels and more.

“We’re lucky that our hotel industry here pretty much welcomes dogs,” Dotts said. “Only a couple prohibit them, so we have a sufficient list that allow dogs in the rooms. Our show folks know that York is a dog-friendly town.”

Even the running of the show itself produces a definite bump in the York economy, said Moore. In the past the Pennsylvania Visitors Bureau has estimated the five-day show brings over a Million dollars to the local economy. Registration and entry fees for the show will top more than \$50,000 alone. The show uses a large amount of local resources, such as; Catering, restaurant gift certificates, water and septic services and hotels just to name a few. Jim Rau Dog Shows manages the nuts-and-bolts of the operation, including registration, equipment and set-up.

As one of the largest dog show events on the East Coast, the Celtic Classic’s five-day show adds value to the local economy and offers local residents a fun, educational and family focused activity to partake. According to the American Pet Products Association, (APPA) 62% of U.S. households own a pet, which equates to 71.4 million homes and out of that 45.6 million are canine.

For More Information:

***Contact Jeff Moore, York Kennel Club, at (410) 299-8902
or visit the shows website at www.thecelticclassic.com.***

Statistical data provided by the American Pet Products Association.

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