



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Memphis Animal Services Celebrates Animal Services Officer Lawrence Higginbottom's Selection by National Animal Care & Control Association as "Animal Control Officer of the Year"

MEMPHIS, TENN. (October 27, 2022) – The National Animal Care & Control Association understands that the work done by animal care and control professionals across the country is physically and emotionally demanding and requires individuals of the strongest character. NACA has been recognizing individuals, agencies, organizations, and state associations for more than 25 years on the national level for their service within the animal care and control field and this week they are announcing the winners of their seven 2022 Annual Awards:

- **Animal Control Officer of the Year:** [Lawrence Higginbottom](#) (Memphis, TN)
- Humane Law Enforcement Officer of the Year: [Dany Flores-Lopez](#) (Deerwood, MD)
- Animal Care and Control Employee of the Year: [Jessica Every](#) (Land O'Lakes, FL)
- Bill Lehman Memorial Award: [Jacob Kamins](#) (Corvallis, OR)
- Diane Lane Memorial Award: [Andy Heuer](#) (Davenport, IA)
- Outstanding Animal Care and Control Award: [Stratford County Animal Control](#) (Stratford, CT)
- Outstanding State Association Award: Louisiana Animal Care & Control Association (LA)

"Officer Lawrence Higginbottom is a shining example of what an Animal Services Officer should be in a progressive animal services agency," said Jerrica Owen, NACA Executive Director. "NACA is proud to recognize an officer who so enthusiastically embraces the lifesaving elements of community-supported sheltering, like reuniting pets with their families in the field whenever possible."

Memphis Animal Services held a friendly competition in the summer of 2022 among its Animal Services Officers to see who could reunite the most pets in the field without bringing the pet back to the shelter, which is better for multiple reasons:

- It doesn't subject the pet to the stress of the shelter
- It doesn't expose the pet to the potential germs of the shelter
- It reduces the amount of time the pet parent spends worrying about their pet
- It eliminates any boarding fees the pet parent may have to pay
- It keeps kennels open at the shelter so there's more room to help incoming pets in need
- It helps keep officers connected with an uplifting, positive aspect of their job: keeping families together



Officer Higginbottom was the winner of this “Field RTO” competition, and he has said that one of his favorite parts of his job is being able to bring someone back their pet before they even step foot in the shelter.

“Growing up I was always taught to do something that you love, and it'll never feel like a job,” said Officer Higginbottom. “I am very honored and thankful to receive such an award, doing something that I genuinely love doing.”

Keeping pets with families is a major focus of Memphis Animal Services, and shelter leadership ensures that staff prioritizes it through programs like MAS’s robust pet reunification program as well as its Pet Resource Center, which helps connect pet parents with resources they may need to keep their pets.

“It’s no longer enough in animal welfare to only care about animals. You have to care about people too,” said Alexis Pugh, Director of Memphis Animal Services. “And that’s one of Officer Higginbottom’s strengths. He’s gifted with both people and animals, and he believes they both deserve our respect and compassion.”

About Memphis Animal Services

Memphis Animal Services is the municipal animal control and sheltering agency in the city of Memphis. As an open access pet resource center, MAS does not deny assistance to any pet in its jurisdiction regardless of breed, temperament, or medical condition. MAS saved 89 percent of the more than 8,000 pets in its care in 2021. For more information, visit memphisanimalservices.com/, call 901-636-1416, or visit the facility at 2350 Appling City Cove. To become a fan of Memphis Animal Services on Facebook go to: facebook.com/memphisanimalservices. Follow Memphis Animal Services on [Instagram](#), [Tiktok](#), and [Twitter](#).

About NACA

The National Animal Care & Control Association (NACA) is a non-profit organization committed to setting the standard of professionalism in animal welfare and public safety through training, networking, and advocacy. NACA was formed in 1978 to assist its members to perform their duties in a professional manner while upholding the principals of the human – animal bond. Animal care and control professionals perform a variety of services and are often a vital connection between people, animals, and the environment. NACA works to support animal care and control professionals by providing standardized trainings, resources and setting the standard for animal welfare field services. nacanet.org