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The Kentucky Humane Society

Mason's Luxury Walk-In Dog Suites Help the Kentucky Humane Society Decrease Length of Stay and Increase Adoptions of Large Dogs

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– SUSAN OPPEL

Background

The Kentucky Humane Society (KHS), located in Louisville, KY, is a private, nonprofit organization that is the state’s largest pet adoption agency. Founded in 1884, it is the oldest animal welfare organization in Kentucky. In 2013, 94 percent of the pets taken in were saved. KHS found homes for 6,316 cats and dogs, making 2013 the biggest adoption year in the facility’s history.



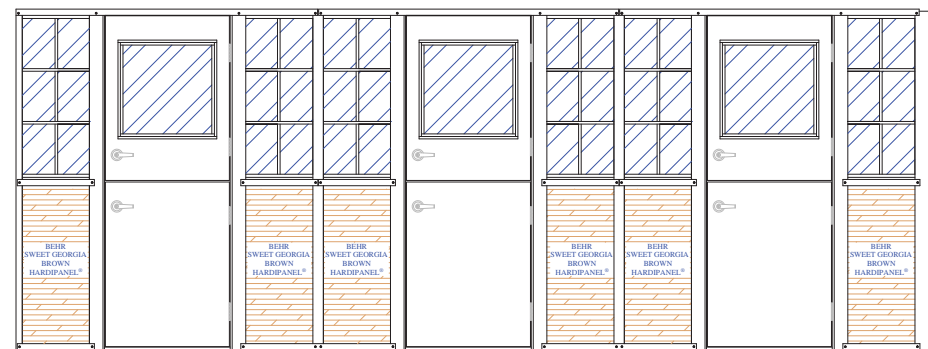
Challenge

As part of an expansion in 2010 to have a presence in a second location in the Louisville area, the Kentucky Humane Society bought a former emergency veterinary clinic that included a large 3,000 square foot laboratory. The new East Campus houses the administrative and education programs, and a portion of the facility is used as an offsite adoption center.

While the four front examination rooms were easy to convert to real-life rooms to showcase large dogs, there was still a significant amount of under utilized square footage within the existing building. With space for large dogs compromised throughout the city, KHS wanted a solution that would enable them to increase adoption of large dogs.

While there is growing popularity of real-life rooms to promote adoptions, the trend raises concerns about the cost, design constraints, choice of sturdy materials and how to incorporate them into the building footprint and the existing HVAC system. KHS wanted to bring the warmth, comfort and home-like environment of a real-life room, but needed a plan that did not require construction and enabled the facility to remain open during installation. The staff knew that potential adoptive families and the dogs would benefit from a solution that replicated the concept of real-life rooms, as they found it was much more welcoming than a traditional kennel.

“We knew we wanted to add more space to showcase adoptable large dogs, particularly since our adoption program in the previous two years had really taken off,” said Susan Oppel, Operations Director of the Kentucky Humane Society. “We needed a solution that was more inviting than typical sheltering cages and didn’t require us to go into construction mode. It was critical for us to remain operational in order to help save more animals.”



Solution

KHS and Mason Company worked together to install three of Mason’s Luxury Walk-In Dog Suites. Constructed of bronze anodized aluminum with fiberglass reinforced laminated wall panels, the Luxury Walk-In Dog Suites provide the functionality of a kennel without the look of cages.

Rather than a gate front, each unit has a solid bottom dutch door with a top window. The look of a regular door conveys a soft, warm feeling yet is constructed of tough anodized aluminum that can withstand the strength of large dogs.

“Visitors can go up to the window and throw a treat to the dogs and the dogs don’t feel locked in a cage,” said Oppel. “This has been great for reactive dogs as they don’t have as much of a barrier reaction to the suite compared to a cage door. A doorknob on inside keeps the large dogs safely inside the suite.”

The 6’ x 8’ suites provide ample room for dogs to play and rest. They also serve as “get acquainted” rooms for potential families to help facilitate adoptions.

Mason Company installed the Luxury Suites in a single day, which was important in helping fulfill KHS’s mission and needs. “The installation process it didn’t create a mess, as there was no sand and no drywall. Adding the suites instantly provided our facility with the ability to offer more of an adoption selection to the public, with six large dogs rather than three,” said Oppel.



Results

With the addition of the Mason Luxury Walk-In Dog Suites, KHS increased capacity for large dogs, which has helped KHS find homes for more large dogs faster.

Because the suites make it easy for all of the dogs available for adoption to be seen by the potential adopters, the solution has also saved staff time and labor in having to move the dogs from holding to customer interaction. The suites also are easy to clean and have a water-resistant silicone seal along the walls and doors.

The materials and design provide a great alternative to building real-life rooms that are not modular and are not able to be moved or reused.

Oppel recommends Mason Company for their quality products, excellent communication and superior customer service. “Mason Company is a great company to work with, and we will always go to them first for any of our kennel and animal enclosure needs.”

