



Pets Go Wireless at IdeaFetch Contest

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Wireless Week

These days, wireless technology is into everything. And it's not just affecting our lives, but also the lives of our pets. With natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina focusing the country's attention on the need for pet rescue ideas, it's hardly surprising that entrants pulled out all the stops and went high tech during the first annual PetSafe IdeaFetch pet product invention contest.

More than 5,000 ideas were submitted for the inaugural contest, which offered a \$40,000 purse and the chance to have the idea developed and sold nationwide. Top winners and their products were unveiled at the American Pet Product Manufacturer's Association Global Pet Expo in San Diego on March 23.

One winning concept was the Home-Along Pet Fire Escape. The wireless device unlocks and opens pet doors, crates or gate doors when any standard smoke detector in the home sounds, allowing a release system for pets during a house or building fire.

The Collar Activated Pet Dish was another winning idea. Aimed at owners of multiple pets with individual dietary requirements, the enclosed dish remains closed until the pet with the corresponding collar approaches. The pet dish recognizes the signal from the collar and then opens so the pet may eat.

Addressing some of the problems with pet microchipping, a third design calls for the use of GPS. The GPS Tracking Unit for Pets attaches a small GPS unit to a pet's collar and can be transferred from one pet to another – something that can't be done with microchips. If the pet wanders off, the owner simply heads to the nearest computer and logs on to locate the animal, without the assistance of animal control or the Humane Society.

There's no denying it. All of these are great high-tech ideas for our four-legged friends. But, if the day ever arrives when pet owners start receiving text messages from their dogs and cats, let's hope the inventors also

manage to come up with a way to have the animals pay their own wireless bills.