

## Survey Results

In reply to an NSDA survey, K-9 handlers from across the country provided insight regarding areas they would like to see change within the canine community. Below is the information gathered from the sixty-two (62) replies to that survey.

### **Rankings**

- #1 Creating Standards
- #2 Creating Education
- #3 Developing Seminars
- #4 Developing Research

Other areas in which handlers submitted rankings included:

- Fostering communications
- Networking
- National media awareness
- Voice in Washington, D.C.

### **Areas lacking in the K-9 community**

The area that handlers believe are lacking in the K-9 community are listed below. They are in no particular order.

#### ***Training, testing and certification:***

1. Standardization of training, callout procedures, certification testing,
2. National testing. Regional standards versus national standards.
3. Client centered standards and evaluation methodologies which are fitted to the different environments in which we search.
4. Seminars at inexpensive locations where handlers can bring their dogs.
5. Lack of education.
6. Emphasis on documentation and standard forms for the disciplines.
7. Knowledgeable trainers.
8. Debrief searches, try to learn from our mistakes, and move forward in skill and training.
9. Educational programs that support the canine handler with no access to qualified trainers.
10. Consistency in quality. Too much acceptance of sub acceptable level of canine training and performance that shows on missions.
11. Educating public on what K-9's are capable of doing.
12. Educating Law Enforcement.
13. Tapping the wisdom of mentors that are aging.

#### ***Attitude:***

1. Keeping egos in check. Many handlers feel the need to compete or berate other handlers.
2. There is a weekend-warrior mentality – don't have to take responsibility for our actions, don't have to train, don't have to respond, don't have to get good because the bar is so low, and no one is watching. This breeds complacency and the lackluster performance that Law Enforcement and other agencies see.
3. Lack of cohesion and sometimes a lack of respect for our fellow K-9 handlers.
4. Finding ways to keep handlers from burning out.
5. Volunteer life expectancy in SAR – keeping the volunteer/unpaid professional satisfied, dealing with the stresses of today's complicated times, and providing service to the community.
6. Teamwork – tired of politics. There is no "I" in the word "Team".
7. Trust.

#### ***Communications:***

1. Working relationships with Law Enforcement and other SAR groups.
2. Advocacy.
3. Lack of communications between dog groups themselves as well as with Law Enforcement.
4. One national voice.
5. Having a voice in Washington, D.C.