Pet stores say Christmas is going to dogs, cats

... and cats ...
Area pet supply stores say gifts for dogs and cats are high on the priority list for many fam-

ilies.
"Our business will jump 70-80 percent during the holidays." percent during the holidays, "said John Auge, assistant store director for PetaMart at Six Mile and Haggerty. "I think a stocking for pets is almost standard anymore. It's very similar to marketing for children's gifts."

The situation is similar at Superpets in Westland.
"It gets absolutely crazy during the holidays," said Sasha Swanger, customer service manager. "It's amazing to see how much money people spend on

their pots during this time of year."

Pet store operators say most of the gifts go to dogs and cats, with some others given to birds in the form of cages and treats.

"Business is great this time of year," added Gene Greed, director of sales and advertising for Pet Supplies Plus from his world headquarters office in Livonia,

where he oversees stores in Livo-nia, Canton, Redford and Farm-ington Hills. There are a lot of last-minute gifts for pets, just like for adults and kids, and pec-

list-immitte gittes to pees, justifies for adults and kids, and people buy extra treats and toys for the holidays.

Many of the stores have entire sistes with boliday gifts, including candy-cane-atriped rawhide bones, stockings full of pet goodies, Santa squeaky toys, and for cats, toys with catnip.

"Many people think about their pets the first," said Greed. They're attached to their pets because they are part of the family." to only are local pet businesses thriving this season, so are mail order companies.
"Pets have become more a part of the household," said Linds Krehmeyer, marketing media."

of the household," said Linda menmeyer, marketing media manager for Doctors Foster and Smith, a dog-oriented mail order gift and supply company. "Many dogs used to live outside, but now most have become part of the family. They're treating them mere like people."

The company, based in Rhinelander, Wisc., has a holiday gift section for pets in its brochure, and Krehmeyer says

If 'it's amazing to see how much money peo-ple spend on their pets.'

scrvice manager, Superpets

dog owners tend to buy what the owners like.

"Many people tend to buy flavored treats and toys they would like," said Krehmeyer. "If we show a picture of bacon with the bacon-flavored treats, and the owner likes bacon, many times they'll assume the dog will like

owner likes bacen, many times they'll assume the dog will like it, too."
"Over the past two or three years, especially with our holiday insert, sales at this time of year boom," said Krehmeyer. "Many people buy out of love, and don't even consider price a factor."
During the holidays, the scale seems to tip in favor of the dogs.
"Cat buyers usually spend leason their companions," said Krehmeyer. "Cats are more independent and generally have little interaction, as compared to a dog. Did you ever see a cat beg for treats".

Karen Berger, owner of Pet

Pourri in Farmington Hills, says the holidays bring out the best in pet owners.

"I'm smazed at what pet owners will buy during Christmas, and how much money they'll spend on stockings and treats," said Barger. "Many owners will buy the little Santa hata and beard coatumes, reindeer antiers or angel halos for their dogs to wear during the season."

Julie Girard, marketing coordinator for Oink Oink, says the Tysen-roll business is growing, but the Christmas season is even busier.

Pourri in Farmington Hills, says

busier.
"Business is beeming, and "Business is booming, and we've certainly picked up this time of year," said Girard. "Peo-plo like to pamper their pets and make them a part of the holiday season."
Oink Oink, which manufac-tures more than 100 different kinds of dog treats makes holi-day stockings and a Hickory

rarms-tike box with various treats, which are big sellers this time of year.

The bottom line ... peta are big successed using sellers for the retail pet industry, said Greed. "It's also the most fun time of year for us, as business during the holidays.

"Industry-wide, the holidays essee happy peta and pet own-ra."

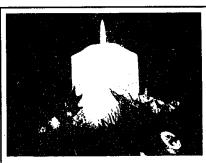


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