

From the office of the Sheriff: “Dogs will add value to the Department”

On March 8th, the Dodge County Sheriffs Department will make a presentation to the County Board of Supervisors requesting to add two deputies to the department. I will be asking the board for \$24,850.00 to fund them. I am asking to fund the purchase with money from the Sheriff's Departments \$400,000.00 in 2010 unexpended funds. As I have written numerous times in the past, your Sheriff's Department is very frugal and since 2003, has given back \$4.2 million in unexpended funds and excess revenues. This will be the first time we will ask the board to grant us the authority to use some of these excess funds to better the department and enhance our level of services to the county.

You may be asking yourself, how can you add two deputies for a mere \$24k? Easily, the two additions will be K9 units. We are seeking, for the first time, for two dogs to our force. Our motivation for this initiative is based upon the void created within Dodge County when the cities of Mayville, Beaver Dam, and Village of Lomira recently retired their K9 units. Currently there is no formal plan to replace those resources, all of which were used by our department for multiple reasons.

I have always been a steadfast supporter of K9 units, primarily those who have the mission of drug detection and a secondary skill of tracking lost or missing people. Since the retirement of three K9 resources, there is a huge void, henceforth, we are asking the county board to fill the void. In the past, the Sheriff's Department has supported these agencies in their K9 efforts, providing letters of support and financial support for those units. I feel it is now time for us to step up to the plate as we have never had a K9 unit within the department.

The entire effort began several months ago when the Law Enforcement Committee of the county board, reacting to the report of diminished K9 resources, directed a study to explore the feasibility to create two K9 units within the department. Several employees formed the study group with county board participation, directed me to determine how we could add two K9 units and keep the costs under \$30k. The study group has worked very hard, put together a plan, organized affordable veterinarian care to include equipment and food donations. The word got out to the community and we received two significant unsolicited financial donations from citizens who understand the importance of these resources.

What will these K9 units do? They will save personnel costs; enhance our ability to fight the growth of illegal drugs within the county, provide a capability to search for lost and missing persons, and fill the void created by the loss of three K9's. The dogs will reduce or search time, enhance our response time to a missing person call, and provide another means to engage the community through public interaction with the K9's and their handlers.

K9 units have proved their value to law enforcement and we have been fortunate to have ready access to the units for many years. With that availability significantly eroded with recent retirements, it is incumbent upon us to react to ensure we can provide essential K9 services to the county. Most importantly, in recent years, we have lost more citizens to drug overdoses than traffic fatalities. The K9 units will allow us to impact that statistic in a positive manner. Thanks for listening, tnehls@co.dodge.wi.us.