



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Middlesex Sheriff's Office

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Sheriff Koutoujian thanks Vest-A-Dog for equipment grant **Office utilized grant to purchase new equipment for K-9 unit training**

Billerica – Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian today thanked Massachusetts Vest-A-Dog for its continued support of the Middlesex Sheriff's Office (MSO) K-9 Unit.

"Vest-A-Dog has been a tremendous partner, assisting us in recent years acquire multiple protective vests for our K-9s and important equipment for training this year," said Sheriff Koutoujian. "Maintaining a top quality K-9 unit requires continuous training and investment and we are appreciative of Vest-A-Dog's efforts to support us."

Vest-A-Dog is a Massachusetts-based non-profit, whose mission is to support police dogs and K-9 units by helping to provide bulletproof vests for K-9s, equipment and training.

Utilizing a \$1760 grant awarded by Vest-A-Dog this summer, the MSO was recently able to acquire a Hard Dogs bite suit, which will be utilized for training purposes. The MSO's four K-9 teams conduct routine training both internally and with units from partner law enforcement agencies. Bite suits allow the K-9s to practice detaining subjects who disobey or disregard orders from their handlers. These drills are important aspects of training for both the K-9s and the handlers.

"These suits are a great example of the vital equipment that is needed for both the K-9s and their handlers," said Massachusetts Vest-A-Dog President Kathy Hinds. "With this grant cycle, we have now provided more than \$100,000 in grants to local and state police, as well as sheriff's offices."

MSO K-9s are trained to carry out a number of responsibilities on the grounds of the House of Correction & Jail, including drug searches. The K-9s also act in support of local law enforcement, conducting missing persons and fugitives searches, as well as school drug searches. MSO K-9s and their handlers also routinely participate in public safety demonstrations as part of community outreach and education initiatives.

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