

Becker County Sheriff's Office K9 Cooper to get body armor

Becker County Sheriff's Office K9 Cooper will receive a bullet and stab protective vest thanks to a charitable donation from non-profit organization Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. K9 Cooper's vest is sponsored by "Get Invested" Becker County 4-H fundraiser hosted by Ashley Fletcher and will be embroidered with the sentiment "Vest donated by Ashley Fletcher, Becker County 4-H". Delivery is expected within eight to ten weeks.

Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. is a 501c (3) charity located in East Taunton, MA whose mission is to provide bullet and stab protective vests and other assistance to dogs of law enforcement and related agencies throughout the United States. The non-profit was established in 2009 to assist law enforcement agencies with this

potentially lifesaving body armor for their four-legged K9 officers. Since its inception, Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. provided over 2,400 protective vests, in 50 states, through private and corporate donations, at a cost of over 2.1 million dollars.

The program is open to dogs actively employed in the U.S. with law enforcement or related agencies who are certified and at least 20 months of age. New K9 graduates, as well as K9s with expired vests, are eligible to participate.

The donation to provide one protective vest for a law enforcement K9 is \$1,050.00. Each vest has a value between \$1,795 – \$2,234 and a five-year warranty, and an average weight of 4-5 lbs. There is an estimated 30,000 law enforcement K9s throughout the United States. For more information or to learn about volunteer opportunities, please call 508-824-6978. Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. provides information, lists events, and accepts tax-deductible donations of any denomination at www.vik9s.org or mailed to P.O. Box 9 East Taunton, MA 02718.

The Becker County Sheriff's Office had been without a K9 since 2008. Starting in May of 2015, the Sheriff's Office received donations from Becker County residents, businesses, and civic organizations who felt strongly about having a K9 team in



Becker County. With these donated funds, the Sheriff's Office purchased Cooper. After 12 weeks of intense training, the team of Deputy Cody Bouchie and K9 Cooper began serving the residents of Becker County. Since then, Cooper has been utilized on approximately 40 calls where he has aided in the apprehension of suspects and narcotics searches. Cooper also received 1st place in a Narcotics Trial in the spring of 2017. Cooper has a vital role with the Becker County Sheriff's Office. We want to thank Ashley Fletcher, the Becker County 4-H program, and Vested Interest in K9's, Inc., for their protective vest donation in an attempt to keep K9 Cooper safe.