

## **Becker County Sheriff's Office K9 Cooper has received body armor**

Becker County Sheriff's Office K9 Cooper has received a bullet and stab protective vest thanks to a charitable donation from non-profit organization Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. K9 Cooper's vest was sponsored by "Get Invested" Becker County 4-H fundraiser hosted by Ashley Fletcher and embroidered with the sentiment "Vest donated by Ashley Fletcher, Becker County 4-H".

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 2,600 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](http://www.vik9s.org) or mailed to P.O. Box 9 East Taunton, MA 02718.

Deputy Bouchie has 6 years of experience as a Becker County Deputy. He and Cooper have been a K-9 team since June of 2016. They have been a very active team and have numerous persons and drug finds in their short time together. This vest will add to Cooper's safety when deployed in the field during dangerous situations. The Sheriff's Office would like to extend a sincere thank you to Ashley Fletcher and the Becker County 4-H program, as well as Vested Interest in K9s for their hard work and dedication to get Cooper this much needed vest.