

OSP Welcomes Two New Drug Detection Canines

by Bend Weekly Sources

The Oregon State Police (OSP) are doubling the number of Drug Detection Canines assigned to the Patrol Services Division with the addition of two narcotics detection dogs that will be working out of the Springfield Area Command office and central Oregon. The canine handlers and dogs are currently undergoing a two-week Basic Handler School in the Medford-area, and should be working with their new partners at their respective offices around the first of June 2006.

The two new narcotics detection dogs and their handlers are:

"Reggie", a 2-year old male black Labrador, is assigned to the Madras/Bend Area Command office with his handler, Senior Trooper Clinton Previtt, an 8-year Oregon State Police veteran. "Hemi", a 2-year old male chocolate Labrador, is assigned to the Springfield Area Command office with his handler, Trooper Tom Hunt, who has been with Oregon State Police nearly two years. "Reggie" and "Hemi" join narcotics detection canines "Judge" and "Cookie", the first two OSP Patrol Services Division narcotics detection canines that joined the Department about 18 months ago. "Judge" and his handler, Senior Trooper Dan Chichester, are assigned to the OSP Pendleton Area Command office. "Cookie" and her handler, Senior Trooper Greg Costanzo, are assigned to the OSP Central Point Area Command office.

During their first 18 months, "Judge" and "Cookie" have clearly demonstrated the value of narcotics detection canines in helping discover illegal drugs on our highways and in our communities. A couple examples of cases involving the dogs include:

On March 10, 2006 at approximately 12:47 p.m., OSP Senior Trooper Dan Chichester, accompanied by his drug detection canine "Judge", were on patrol eastbound on Interstate 84 near the Interstate 82 junction when he stopped a sport utility vehicle with two male occupants for a traffic violation. During the stop, "Judge" alerted to the rear of the vehicle. Further searching led to the discovery of approximately 8 pounds of packaged marijuana in backpacks in the rear area. On January 14, 2006 at approximately 3:30 a.m., (OSP) Senior Trooper Greg Costanzo and "Cookie" were involved in a traffic stop with Trooper Stephanie Bigman and Sergeant Mark Byrd on Interstate 5 northbound near milepost 18 for a traffic violation. During the stop, troopers received consent to search the sport utility vehicle. During the search "Cookie" alerted on the vehicle. Closer inspection led to the discovery of approximately 8 1/2 pounds of crystal methamphetamine concealed inside the vehicle. Drug enforcement detectives estimated the drug seizure value between \$90,000 and \$100,000. In addition to the illegal drugs, troopers also seized nearly \$12,000 in cash. The canine handlers and their dogs are attending a two-week Basic Canine Handler School that is being held at the Department of Forestry office in Central Point.

"The narcotics detection canines are trained to detect the odors from the controlled substances of Marijuana, Cocaine, Heroin and Methamphetamine. The dog's keen sense of smell is vastly superior to that of the human, and therefore is invaluable", said Detective Dave Beck, Drug Dog Detection Program Coordinator assigned in the OSP Drug Enforcement Section. Detective Beck has been working with dogs for over 15 years and is the handler of OSP's fifth narcotics detection canine named "Beepers".

According to Detective Beck, during the basic handler school training the canine teams are trained to conducted searches of vehicles, buildings, storage facilities, luggage, and various other environments and locations.

OSP Welcomes Two New Drug Detection Canines by Bend Weekly Sources