



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wildwood Crest Police introduces department's first K-9 officers

WILDWOOD CREST – The Borough of Wildwood Crest Police Department is set to add a pair of K-9 officers to its ranks for the first time in the department's history.

The police department first announced the program to the public during the April 27 meeting of the Wildwood Crest Board of Commissioners.

The two police K-9s, along with their handlers from the Wildwood Crest Police Department, are currently undergoing extensive training in narcotics and explosives detection at the John "Sonny" Burke Police K-9 Academy in Atlantic County.

As per Wildwood Crest Commissioner of Public Safety Joseph Schiff, the police department's new K-9 program is being fully funded through donations to the newly formed non-profit Wildwood Crest K-9 Association and has not created an increase to the police department's budget.

"I firmly believe the addition of our K9s will further add to the borough's already intensive public safety efforts," said Joseph Schiff, Wildwood Crest Commissioner of Public Safety. "To be able to bring another level of safety and security to our residents and visitors at very little to no cost to our taxpayers makes this program a very valuable additional tool in the borough's policing measures."

The Wildwood Crest K-9s are a 9-month-old Czech Shepherd, K-9 Quest, and a 16-month-old German Shepherd, K-9 Flex.

K-9 Quest, assigned to Officer Tyler Lavender, is in training for narcotics detection. Once graduated from the K-9 Academy, K-9 Quest will be proficient in detecting the presence of narcotics, including ecstasy, cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine. Following the summer months, K-9 Quest and Officer Lavender will return to the K-9 Academy to complete patrol training, which includes instruction in tracking, building searches, article searches and criminal apprehension.

Officer Lavender has been a patrol officer for the Wildwood Crest Police Department since 2018.

K-9 Flex, assigned to Officer Zack Magnavita, is in training for explosives detection. Once graduated from the K-9 Academy, K-9 Flex will be fully trained to alert the presence of a variety of explosives, including gunpowder, black powder, Composition C-4 and Trinitrotoluene (TNT).

Officer Magnavita has been a patrol officer for the Wildwood Crest Police Department since 2019.

The K-9s are expected to complete their initial training on May 26 and are expected to be on patrol in time for Memorial Day weekend.

In addition to adding an additional layer of security to the borough on a daily basis, the K-9s will also play a vital role in the many public safety measures taken at events, festivals and other gatherings that regularly take place throughout the borough.

“This program has been developed to enhance public safety from routine patrol to special events,” Wildwood Crest Police Chief Robert Lloyd said. “As laws and crime trends change, the police department must adapt and deploy new resources to continue to meet the expectations of the community we serve.

“There has been a lot of excitement building around this program and I can’t thank everyone enough for all of the support. I look forward to seeing the positive impact these K-9s will have on the safety of our community.”

For further information about the Wildwood Crest K-9 program, call (609) 729-8030 ext. 122.

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