

During the summer of 2010, the department deployed Narcotics Detection Canines "Daisy" and "Bugsy". Both dogs were obtained from Master K-9 Inc., which works with many law enforcement agencies in our area. Daisy was assigned to the department's school resource officer, and Bugsy was assigned to a patrol officer.

Over the last two years, both Canines have had a positive impact in the reduction of drug in the community. The Department's Narcotic Canines are used daily to search for and alert Officers to the likely location of drugs. At Ukiah High School, the use of Daisy has reduced drug violations on campus by over 50% during the first year assigned to the campus. Both Canines have located over 200 pounds of Marijuana and almost ½ pound of Methamphetamine in searches.

The department has enjoyed success implementing and managing the drug detection canine program, and has now also implemented a Protection Canine program for the department to assist with officer safety.

Because of the increasing demand on officers, and limited officer resources, staff is becoming increasingly concerned for the safety of the Department's patrol officer staff.

In the spring of 2012 protection dogs "Thor" and "Rush" were added to provide our patrol division with some extra backup.

These canines, after having been properly trained and certified, are used for the following purposes: handler protection; searching for fleeing suspects; apprehension of fleeing suspects; crowd control; and public relations demonstrations for local schools and community organizations.

Each patrol dog and handler K-9 team participates in extensive training. During their training period, the handler and dog are required to attend a 5 week training course with Master K9 based in Riverside County, California. The teams begin with obedience, and over the 5 week course they advance to open area searches, building searches, man tracking, evidence searching, and suspect apprehension techniques. The K9 teams are then certified by "POST" and approved for patrol work.

Upon successful completion of the Basic K9 Handler Course, the teams participate in a minimum of (16) hours of rigorous training per month. The training is to ensure the efficiency of each dog and handler in all phases of their assignments.

The handlers live and work with their dogs, and by being so close they become a highly trained, close knit team. The canines allow officers to do their work faster, more efficiently, and in a safer manner. In many cases, just knowing the police canine is on scene and the potential exists for the canine being utilized to locate or apprehend a suspect has caused individuals to surrender without confrontation or additional flight. Had the canine not been on scene the suspect may have chosen a violent confrontation with officers, or fled into the community at large rather than risk going to prison. Being able to apprehend these violent individuals quickly and safely brings an added level of safety to the citizens and community we proudly serve.