

## **Pike County Sheriff's Office K9 Hercules to get body armor**

Pike County Sheriff's Office K9 Hercules will receive a bullet and stab protective vest thanks to a charitable donation from non-profit organization Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. K9 Hercules's vest is sponsored by an Anonymous Sponsor and will be embroidered with the sentiment "This gift of protection provided by Vested Interest in K9s, Inc.". 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 2,600 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 \$950.00. Each vest has a value between \$1,744 – \$2,283 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.

Sheriff Cotton and the Pike County Sheriff's Office would like to thank Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. and for the generous donations from the public. K-9 Deputy DeMoll and Deputy K-9 Hercules will benefit greatly from this protective vest as they serve and protect the citizens of Pike County and surrounding agencies. K-9 Hercules has been with the Pike County Sheriff's Office since June 2017. So far, K-9 Hercules has aided in four felony drug arrest, assisted MDOT on a commercial vehicle traffic stop, assisted MDOC and Southwest Mississippi Narcotics Enforcement Unit, and was requested to assisted Marion County Sheriff's Office to track a missing juvenile. K-9 Hercules regularly makes public service appearances. K-9 Hercules has proven in a very short time to be a valuable asset to the Pike County Sheriff's Office.

