



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

News Release

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**STATE SHERIFFS ACCEPT DONATION
OF PROTECTIVE VESTS FOR K9 TEAM**

HONOLULU – Hawaii’s K9 deputies now have some of the same protection as their human partners following the donation of five bullet and stab protective vests by non-profit Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. to the Department of Public Safety (PSD) Sheriff Division.

As Gov. Neil Abercrombie looked on, the deputy K9s donned their custom vests in public for the first time at an unveiling held today at Washington Place. The vests will protect the K9s from bullet and stab wounds as well as blunt force trauma.

“The loyalty and service demonstrated by these animals are worthy of recognition, and we are grateful they are being given added protection as they work alongside their human counterparts to enforce the law,” Gov. Abercrombie said. “These vests compliment recently expanded protections provided by Act 205, codifying the term ‘law enforcement animal’ into the Penal Code, which I was pleased to sign into law in June.”

When state Sheriff Deputy Frank Lacaden heard about Vested Interest in K9s donation program earlier this year, he spearheaded the effort to apply for vests for the five K9 members of the department’s teams.

“Before receiving this potentially lifesaving body armor, all our K9 partners had for protection was the collar around their necks,” Lacaden said. “You just never know what kind of dangerous situation is waiting for our K9 deputies when you send them through those doors. We are very grateful to Vested Interest in K9s for granting us our full request for five vests.”

Each vest is worth \$950 and has a 5-year warrantee. New K9 graduates as well as K9s with expired vests are eligible to apply for the ballistic vests.

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Vested Interest in K9s orders the Armor Express vests exclusively from distributor Regency Police Supply in Massachusetts. Regency Police Supply also custom-embroidered the body armor the K9s received today.

Through private and corporate sponsorships, Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. has provided more than \$400,000 in protective vests to 437 law enforcement dogs in 36 states since their inception in August 2009.

"Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. is proud to have provided each of the Sheriff's Division law enforcement dogs with protective vests that could potentially save their lives," said Vested Interest in K9 President Sandy Marcal. "We are very grateful to the donors across the country who helped make this possible through the Groupon campaign."

The vests the Hawaii Sheriff K9 team received were paid for through a charity partnership between Vested Interest in K9s and Groupon Grassroots, which allowed individuals to make an online, \$10 tax-deductible donation from March 13 to 20, 2013, through the Groupon secure website. All funds received were allocated to purchase ballistic vests for the K9s. At the close of the March event, Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. raised \$155,537, which provided 164 ballistic vests for law enforcement dogs across the country.

Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. is a Massachusetts-based 501(c)(3), all-volunteer charity whose mission is to provide bullet and stab protective vests for law enforcement dogs throughout the United States.

For more information about Vested Interest in K9s, visit www.vik9s.org or call (508) 824-6978.

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