

Supervisors authorize K9 fundraising account for sheriff's office

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If Del Norte County Sheriff Erik Apperson had his way, his department would be augmented by a robust K9 program. He pitched the upside of creating a fundraising account for the county's K9 program to the Board of Supervisors on Jan. 28.

"There are a lot of benefits to a K9 program. When at Crescent City police, I managed the program there. It's great for staff because it provides for lateral movement outside promotional movement, so it brings more depth to staff. And it provides a higher level of service to our community," Apperson said.

Needing little additional incentive, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the funding program.

District 3 Supervisor Chris Howard clarified how the fund would work.

"This does not come out of the general fund but is a completely separate fund to be set up for the sheriff's department K9s to collect donations and other pieces to help the program," he said.

Apperson said the sheriff's office had a K9 policy on books for a long time and this fundraising mechanism would help expand it.

"One interesting focus I think will make the sheriff's office K9 program a little unique, and I give credit to CDCR (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation) at Pelican Bay (State Prison), they recently instituted a very successful K9 program," Apperson said. "I want multiple K9s and I want one of them assigned to a correctional officer at the Del Norte County Jail. I've heard rumbles over the years there's been issues of controlled substances and drugs in there. I would like to build a program that's so stout, we would not only have a K9 assigned to operations but also to our correctional division. I think that fixes that problem pretty quick."

Asked about how much a robust K9 program would cost, Apperson said he intends to be as successful as he can raising funds.

“The more funds I create, the more dogs I can get, the more cops I can get trained and the more equipment I can purchase,” he said. “K9 programs are not inexpensive. As we move forward and look at fundraising opportunities, it’s my goal to hit somewhere north of \$60,000. I’d like to get three K9s. Dogs can range around the \$10,000 a dog price. And you can nearly double that with the training and equipment associated.”