



# ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATIVE NEWS

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Ulster County K-9 Graduates – Prides for the New Officers**

(Kingston) – While many in Ulster County are most familiar with K-9 officers visiting schools, community events, and other venues to demonstrate their canine partner's contribution to public safety, this month, these valued officers of law were the honored guests of the Ulster County Legislature.

Majority Leader Kenneth Ronk noted, “Some of the most overlooked and underappreciated officers that are employed in law enforcement are these canine officers and their handlers.”

Having recently completed the fourteen week training school at the Ulster County Sheriff’s Office, these K-9’s and their handlers are policing the streets in the Towns of Ulster, Saugerties, and as part of the Ulster County Sheriff’s K-9 Unit. Their skills in police patrol, tracking, and article searches/scent detection have already been utilized in the county in crime prevention and investigation efforts.

Head instructor Ulster County Sheriff’s Deputy George Carlson knows firsthand that a properly trained K-9 officer and handler can do the job of five men at times and costs less to train, “We have had drug money seizures of over \$200,000 with at least 65% returning to the county and the remaining up to 35% going to whatever Federal agency is doing the forfeiture.”

Deputy Carlson noted K-9 officers, who average eight to nine years of service before they retire, are purchased through donations and seized drug money and not taxpayer dollars. He commented, “These dogs are young dogs, ready to go, and very active.”

From the Town of Ulster, K-9 Officer Castor fills a void left behind by the retired K-9, Dak. Dak served six years before a deteriorating bone condition forced him into a well deserved off-duty status with his handler, Officer Joseph Garvila. Continuing to bring his skills as a K-9 handler to the Town of Ulster, Officer Joseph Garvila graduated with K-9 Castor thanks to the local financial support and commitment to the Town of Ulster’s K-9 program from New York Precast, LLC and Dave Auringer; Millens Recycling; Kingston Block; Mainetti, Mainetti and O'Connor, PC Attorneys at Law; Ulster Hose Co#5 and the Ulster Police Benevolent Association (PBA).

Town of Ulster Police Chief Anthony Cruise expressed gratitude to the business community for supporting the Town’s K-9 unit. He stated, “Being the business hub for the County, it is very important for the Town of Ulster to have an active K-9 unit.”

In Saugerties, \$10,000 in donations was collected by the Town of Saugerties PBA to bring K-9 Officer Sara to the Department. Through the sales of t-shirts and a generous donation from the Kiwanis Club of Saugerties, Officer Michael Craft delivered his third K-9, Sara, a black-haired German shepherd to the community. In the near future, Saugerties will add another to their K-9 unit with the recent award of a \$50,000 Homeland Security Grant for the purchase, training and equipment of a new K-9 Bomb Detecting Unit which will sustain, maintain, and enhance terrorism-prevention efforts throughout Ulster County.

Ulster County Sheriff Paul VanBlarcum noted many of their dogs had been purchased with drug seizure money but that this new addition was thanks to the Board of the Sheriff’s Foundation, a not for profit formed three years ago to

solicit donations for county law enforcement initiatives such as the K-9 unit. He highlighted a recent incident in New Paltz, to which the canine officers assisted in the seizure of \$84,000 in drug money.

K-9 Dozer and handler Deputy Robert Vedder is joining the Ulster County Sheriff's five member K-9 unit which began in 1999. Sheriff VanBlarcum concluded the pride presentation with, "I want to say it is another two feet, it is actually another four feet on the streets."

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(pictures of K-9 Officers, with their Handlers and Pride Presentation are attached)



Town of Saugerties K-9 Sara with Sergeant Michael Craft



Town of Ulster K-9 Castor with Officer Joseph Garvila



Ulster County K-9 Dozer with Deputy Robert Vedder



(left to right, front row: Ulster County Deputy Robert Vedder with K-9 Dozer and Town of Saugerties Detective Michael Craft with K-9 Sara; back row: Ulster County Majority Leader Kenneth Ronk, Ulster County Sheriff Paul VanBlarcum, Town of Ulster Police Chief Anthony Cruise, Ulster County Deputy George Carlson, and Town of Ulster Officer Joseph Garvila and K-9 Castor)