

# On the Bright Side: Community steps up to support police K-9 unit

By Mark Boshnack Staff Writer | Posted: Tuesday, December 30, 2014 6:00 am

Delaware County Undersheriff Craig DuMond said Monday that public support for his department's K-9 unit has been "absolutely remarkable."

The K-9 unit was launched in the spring of 2013, supported solely through community and corporate donations. The support allowed the dog, Osman "Ozzie" Steele, and his trainer, Sgt. John Demeo, to graduate from the Syracuse Police K-9 Academy in September of that year. Ozzie, who was trained in patrol and drug detection, made his first narcotics arrest 24 hours after graduating.

Ozzie and Demeo have been "a tremendous asset," DuMond said, and both were at the top of their class.

Delaware County Sheriff Tom Mills said the two "have exceeded our expectations and have made all of us proud.

Moreover, Delaware County is eternally grateful to the generous donors for their outpouring of support to the program as well as the Office of Sheriff."

The initial goal was to raise \$10,000 to \$12,000, DuMond said, but so far nearly \$25,000 has been received. The additional resources have been a "blessing" that have allowed the program to meet some unexpected costs.

With the level of continuing support, DuMond said the program is in preliminary talks to add an explosives-detection dog. Besides cash and checks, the program has received donations of supplies, food and veterinary care.

Most of the donors want to remain anonymous, DuMond said, but the latest contribution came about a week ago from the Delaware County Highway Supervisors Association. The group's president, Roger Dibble, presented DuMond and Sheriff Tom Mills with a check for \$1,000.

"We wanted to do what we could," for a worthy goal, Dibble said in a phone message.

Anyone wishing to help fund the unity can send checks to the Sheriff Tom Mills K-9 Fund and mail them to the Delaware County Sheriff's Office, 280 Phoebe Lane, Suite One, Delhi, NY, 13753.



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Contributed Sgt. John Demeo and K9 Ozzie are shown in this undated photo.