



# News Release

For Immediate Release

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## Police Dogs Retire from Taylorville PD

At the Taylorville City Council meeting on Wed., July 11, the two K-9 dogs from the Taylorville Police Department will be retired because of the department's change to Unified Police Department.

Taylorville's two Belgian Malinois dogs, "Joe" and "Hutch," have been working for the city for the past three to four years. Their supervisors, Officers Jeff Sanderson and Jake Elsasser are the handlers for the K-9 unit.

"I'm going to miss the assignment," said Elsasser. "When you spend that much time with the dogs, you get attached."

The city council will be voting to surplus the K-9 equipment, which includes Joe and Hutch. The dogs will become pets for Sanderson and Elsasser. "Knowing he can be here with me where I can take care of him, is huge," said Sanderson.

Joe has been a police dog for Taylorville for the past four years, and Hutch for three years. The breed is very prey-driven, which is why the dogs are so good at detecting narcotics. One night on a call Joe found five pounds of meth stowed inside the dash of a car. Even though the stash was wrapped in plastic, and covered with motor oil, mustard, and cayenne pepper, the dog was still able to recognize the scent.

According to Sanderson, "The dogs can smell in layers." He likened it to humans who smell brownies baking. "It's like these dogs would smell each individual ingredient."

Hutch's first find was a shooting suspect. The suspect took off on foot and Hutch was deployed. He found the suspect hiding a few blocks away in some bushes. "He led me right to him," Elsasser said.

Sanderson said converting a police dog to a pet may be interesting, as Joe has never been able to sleep anywhere except his kennel. The Sandersons are excited to introduce Joe to their other dog and hope the two get along. "I am excited for my new responsibilities for UPD. It was a good move for the department," said Sanderson. "I am glad I have the opportunity to take care of Joe and make sure he is loved through his retirement."

According to Taylorville Mayor Russ Wall, UPD has its own K-9 unit which is why the dogs are being surplused. "Maintaining a K-9 unit is very expensive. This is one area where we save by going to UPD," said Wall. "We are grateful for the service these dogs have given residents of Taylorville."

The public will have an opportunity to show their appreciation to the dogs during the city council meeting on July 11 at 6:30 p.m. The dogs will be given a plaque for their community service and residents can greet the dogs in the lobby of City Hall following the presentation.

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Russ Wall

*Mayor*

Dama Barbour  
Ernest Burgess  
Larry Johnson  
Kristie S. Overson  
Jerry W. Rechtenbach

*Council Members*

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