



## NEWS RELEASE From Mayor Dean DePiero

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **PARMA TO BRING BACK ITS K9 POLICE PATROL UNITS**

**(PARMA)** – The City of Parma Police Department will soon add two German Shepherd dogs to its roster, resurrecting the department’s K9 Unit that was discontinued in 2005. Two police cruisers are being modified with specialized equipment while the Police Department conducts its handler officer selection process.

“The dogs can help our police officers in numerous situations,” said Parma Mayor Dean DePiero. “Their unique talents can help lead investigators to the source of illegal activity and ultimately the arrest of law breakers.”

The Parma Police Department plans to have the K9 Unit up and running by August following intensive training. The police officer/K9 handlers will undergo a six week training program with their four legged partners who must receive certification by the State of Ohio before beginning patrol work.

“Police K9 Units are valuable law enforcement tools,” said Police Chief Robert Miller. “They have proven effective in the areas of narcotics detection, apprehension of fleeing criminals, tracking, article searches, and officer/handler protection. The new K9 teams will be a welcome addition to the police department.”

The first K9 program at the Parma Police Department was started in 1997 when Ptl. Norm Kekic was paired with a Belgian Malinois named K9 Tommy. In 1998 a second dog was added as Ptl. Jeff Wells was paired with a Belgian Malinois named K9 Carlo. Both dogs were imported from Holland and were trained in Camden New York. The new dogs will also be imported from Europe.

“There’s no doubt both teams served the department effectively and productively,” said Parma Safety Director Greg Baepler. “They assisted officers in tracking and apprehending criminals, detecting illegal narcotics, searching buildings, area searches, and finding articles such as firearms used in crimes. Like Chief Miller says, their tenacious detective work is invaluable.”

(more)

Both Carlo and Tommy also played a big part in helping bridge the gap between the city and the police by being accessible at numerous public relations events. On numerous occasions, they accompanied Ptl. Kekic and Ptl. Wells when they were giving talks throughout the community. Both dogs were instrumental in locating illegal narcotics during vehicle and house searches. In addition, they assisted other agencies in searching for wanted suspects and illegal narcotics. K9 Tommy died in 2000 and K9 Carlo lost his fight against cancer in 2005.

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