



PRESS RELEASE

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K-9 Units Provide Valuable Assistance

Most people don't think twice about the members of the Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) K-9 unit at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility (CMCF) in Pearl, Miss., as contributing to community safety. In reality, the K-9 units at all state prison facilities are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year to assist law enforcement agencies statewide with everything from roadblocks to tracking down suspects.

For instance, the K-9 unit at CMCF assisted with a huge drug bust last May. Officers seized five pounds of marijuana, \$5800 in cash and three ounces of cooked crack from the residence of the suspect, who was on parole at the time.

The K-9 unit dogs are all donated from community members or from litters bred at CMCF. As odd as it may seem, K-9 officers are not allowed to breed the dogs until the MDOC Deputy Commissioner of Institutions gives official approval; the dogs are considered state property. Officers assigned to the K-9 unit at CMCF work with the dogs at least one hour three times a week. With 16 dogs currently at CMCF, that's a lot of time spent training.

One dog in particular, a Belgian Malinois named Moses, was donated to MDOC from U.S. Customs. Moses, who was trained to respond to Belgian commands, is considered an all-purpose dog. He is trained in apprehension techniques, tracking and in drug detection. Moses is so popular, he's often requested. In fact, Moses, along with a black labrador retriever named Dudley, will be traveling to Meridian the week of Oct. 15 for the Regional Counter Drug Training Academy conference in Meridian, Miss. In April 2002, Moses will then head to the National Narcotic Detector Association Training Competition.

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MEDIA NOTE: If you would like a digital photograph of the K-9 Unit, contact Claire Papizan at (601) 359-5689 or e-mail your request to cpapizan@mdoc.state.ms.us