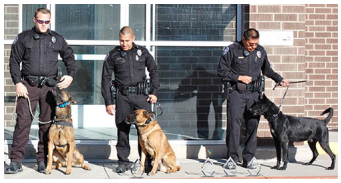

More than a month has passed since the K9 officer competition in Houston was hosted by K9's 4 Cops on Oct. 27-30, but awards are such that they may be talked about at any time, as these are being done now.

The four Belgian Malinois officers of the Gallup Police Department acquitted themselves well at the combined training and competition four-day meet. Two of them earned trophies as they took on an estimated 70 others in different events.

Kwinto, handled by Jessie Diaz, placed third overall in the Narcotics Scramble which involves sniffing out drugs from different hiding places. Nero, handled by Angelo Cellicion, placed second in the Hard Dog contest, which attempts to measure his ability to keep attacking the perp -in this case a well-padded decoy – until he is down on the ground and unable to fight back. Nero also took third in the Obstacle Course and in the Fast Dog categories.

A lot of the four days was spent in training as instructors aided the handlers in other aspects of

police work that is better done by their four-footed officers; Tracking; Narcotics discovery; and Clearing Buildings. GPD's regular instructor, Doug Roller of Tactical Canine, would surely approve this additional training since his ability to travel from Los Angeles to Gallup is not always regular in nature, though intense when he is here.

GPD chose Houston this year for the training and competition instead of Indiana, where they had gone before. Lt. Edwin Yazzie with 18-years on the force is in charge of the canine officers and their handlers. Two other dogs are also on the force: Kuno, handled by Matt Graham; and Jayko, handled by Terrence Peyketewa.

"Everything was made possible by the chief and captain on down," Yazzie said.

Peyketewa said that he and his 4-year-old partner Jayko engaged in tactical and tracking training activities.

The Gallup Police Department has used canines since the late 1980's as a vital part of keeping the peace. The dogs live with the humans although the city provides dog food and necessary medical care. They are worthy contributors that deserve to be mentioned and awarded, just like their human counterparts.

"K9s have the full support of the mayor, city manager and council," Capt. Rick White said.