

## Put through their paces, these four dogs are ready to join the team

Written by Staff Reports  
Friday, 16 July 2021 05:22

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CHINLE, Ariz. — Four dogs joined the Navajo Police Department K-9 program on June 28.

Orcan, Rakky, Gecko, and Xensi have all completed their first training course at the Adlerhorst International LLC Police K-9 Academy in Jurupa Valley, Calif. and made their first trip to Chinle, Ariz. June 24, with a stop at Canyon de Chelly, Ariz. to get their department photos taken.

The department's K-9 Unit experienced a temporary hiatus after two dogs retired from police services.

The dogs are originally from Europe and were selected by the Adlerhorst International, LLC trainers, where they were brought to the California training facility.

In May, the K-9 Unit officers traveled to the facility to meet their four-legged partners and completed the six-week training program to become certified K-9 officers.

“We are excited for the new addition to our department. The K-9 unit will be a valuable asset to our department, our communities, and the Navajo Nation,” Chief Phillip Francisco said. “We are extremely proud of our newly certified K-9 officers for taking on these challenges and responsibilities.

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“Together they will make a great team, working alongside one another to make a positive impact in our community.”

The officers and their dogs, Orcan, Rakky, Xensi, and Gecko, completed a 240-hour apprehension course and basic handling training which included proper handling of dogs, deployment, and the care of police service dogs. The team will be returning back to the training facility to undergo their narcotic detection training where the dogs will be trained to detect cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and marijuana.

Officer Josiah Begay, a K9-unit officer whose dog has since retired, was recently assigned to the K-9 team where his knowledge and experience as a K-9 officer are helping to shape the program.

“The K-9 unit will be a valuable addition to our department,” he said. “Through their apprehension training, our canines will assist officers in locating and apprehending suspects involved in serious crimes.

“They will provide added safety for our officers and will help make communities safer by addressing drug issues in communities,” Begay said.

Begay is also slated to expand his role in the program by becoming a certified K-9 instructor, which will allow him to facilitate monthly training on the Navajo Nation and train the dogs in their own environment, a first for the Navajo Police Department.

In addition, the K-9 Unit will also connect with their communities by reinstituting traditional community involvement initiatives, such as promoting safer learning environments at schools through drug prevention and school visits, as well as apprehension and detection demonstrations.

“These dogs come from a strong lineage of canines that make them good police dogs and their contribution will help tremendously in our police work,” Begay said.

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Orcan, Xensi, and Gecko are Czech Shepards and Rakky is a Belgian Malinois.

The dogs will be based in their home districts of Kayenta, Ariz., Chinle, Ariz., Window Rock, Ariz., and Shiprock, N.M. Their services will be used throughout the Navajo Nation.

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