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Foundation will support Boise K-9 program

Police enter a partnership to create a way for people to contribute to the dog unit.

Are you in the giving spirit this holiday season? Do you want to support Boise police K-9 dogs with a tax-deductible donation this year? Check out the Boise Police Canine Foundation. Boise Police Deputy Chief of Administration Patricia Braddock said Tuesday citizens have approached the department for years wanting to make donations to the K-9 unit - something the department could not legally accept.

With costs rising and the K-9 unit (now with 13 dogs) busier than ever, police officials and the Idaho Community Foundation came up with the idea of a nonprofit foundation.

While basic operational costs like food and board for the dogs are paid through the K-9 unit's annual budget, donations will help the department buy new equipment, like a new \$1,300 bite-proof suit. The department would also like to add another patrol dog to the roster, and that costs between \$8,000 and \$9,000.

Boise police spokeswoman Lynn Hightower said there is no fundraising goal - police officials have no preconceived notions about donations.

"We know citizens love and appreciate the work the dogs do," Braddock said. "These dogs are not pets - they are highly trained members of our police force."

The K-9 unit has four drug-detection dogs, five explosive-detection dogs, and four patrol dogs, who can sniff for drugs and capture suspects. The patrol dogs are German shepherds or Belgian malinois, which are bred in Europe. Police use Labradors, usually from the Idaho Humane Society or other local animal shelters, for drug and bomb detection jobs.