

DOG'S VEST FRIEND



Special photo/Ross Sturdevant

From left, Susie Jean, Douglasville K-9 Officers Lee Martin with Darth, Wes Starrett with Ky, Adam Cannon with Ayko, Tommy Denning with Buzz, Ashley Sanders with Deke, not pictured Brad Loudermilk with Bodo. Below, is Susie Jean.

Resident forms nonprofit organization to purchase vests for canine officers

By Gail Fiveash
Douglas Neighbor News Editor

Many people have a favorite television show they tend to watch weekly, but one favorite show a couple of years ago has had a lasting effect on one Douglas County woman.

Susie Jean of Lithia Springs was watching the Fox Series "America's Most Wanted" one night when officers cornered a rifle-carrying suspect.

"The officer shouted at the man to put his weapon down or he was going to turn his dog loose," Mrs. Jean said. "The man didn't and the officer let his dog go."

To her shock, said Mrs. Jean, she watched as the suspect turned the weapon on the dog and shot him.

"The dog hit the ground but got up and put the man down," she said. "The officer shouted...you shot my

dog...then the officer took his dog in his arms as the animal died."

"I just couldn't get that out of my mind," she said. "I am retired and had been hunting for something to do and it hit this is a sign."

Since she has carried the mantle for getting stab/bullet proof vests for canine officers.

She formed the non-profit organization, Vest N.P.D.P Inc. exclusively to purchase vests.

To help her, Douglas County Bank provides banking services free and Johns and Johns

Attorney at Law are providing legal services.

In January 2003, she had received enough donations to purchase three vests for Douglasville Police K-9 Officers Darth, Ky and Bodo.

She gives credit for the purchase of these to the participation of the officers and private and corporate sponsors.

In October, three more vests were donated to K-9 Officers, Carlo, Kashka and Airey of the Powder Springs Police Department.

In 2004, enough donations were made to purchase three vests for Atlanta Hartsfield Security K-9s, Rusty, Basco and Elza and then the last three Douglasville K-9 Officers, Buzz, Ayko and Deek.

"These dogs know no fear and simply act off the instructions of their partner," Mrs. Jean said. "And as was the case on 'America's Most Wanted' they give their lives."

The police dogs are there for their partners and they deserve as much protection as we can give them, she said.

"My goal is to have every police K-9 be fitted with a police dog vest through out Atlanta and surrounding area," said Mrs. Jean.

If you would like to help, donations can be made to Vest N.P.D.P Inc. P.O. Box 756, Lithia Springs GA. Information: (770) 745-1772 or (678) 637-7056.

