

Lubbock Law Enforcement to Receive Bulletproof Vests — for their Dogs

LUBBOCK, TX (KCBD) - The Lubbock Sheriff's Office and Lubbock Police Department are getting new life saving equipment... for their dogs.

Four bulletproof and stab proof vests will be donated on Thursday for the 10 K-9 units in Lubbock to help protect their four legged partners. During a special presentation, Susie Jean, of Vest N' P.D.P., will donate the four bulletproof and stab-proof vests to the police and Sheriff's Office.

"I told her we didn't have any vests for our department, and we would like to see that because we deploy our dogs in all kinds of situations which are dangerous for them," said Rodney Stevens, a K-9 Corporal with LSO. "This company without a bat of an eye said we'll get you some ordered."



Echo is one of four dogs to receive protective vests.

Stevens has had four K-9 partners since 2000. His current partner, Echo, is a two a year old German Sheppard and is one of the lucky K-9s who will get a vest.

"These dogs are kind of like the secret warriors of the Sheriff's Office. People don't realize how much they do," said Stevens. In just half a year, Echo has helped Stevens with 65 arrests and seizures totaling \$60,000, and drug busts involving hundreds of pounds of marijuana and other narcotics.

"If I'm at work, my dog's with me. We do pretty much everything together, and his loyalty to me - he would give his life for me, so we're going to do what it takes to make sure he goes home, too," he said. Susie Jean's nonprofit organization, Vest N' P.D.P., has donated 640 bulletproof vests in 42 different states. She started the nonprofit ten years ago when she lost her two German Shepherds to cancer, and saw a police dog being shot and killed on America's Most Wanted.

"He was shot, the dog fell down, the dog got back up and knocked down the criminal, and then the dog fell back down and died in his officer's arms," said Susie. "I just asked myself... why, why doesn't that dog have a vest?" The answer – most departments simply can't afford the expensive piece of equipment. A level three bullet and stab proof K-9 vest costs around \$1,600. That's more than a human bulletproof vest.

So Susie decided to create her nonprofit, helping K-9 units across the country. "I just had to do something. They have to put their dogs in jeopardy because the human has family, and so the dogs are the first ones to go in a bad situation," she said. "These officers are with their K-9 partners 24/7. They help our community. It takes a lot of money, taxpayer money, to get these dogs... and one shot, one stab an they're gone."

Her company is based in New Mexico, but Susie will be in Lubbock on Thursday to present the vests at 2 p.m. at 916 Main Street.