



NEWS from **DHSES**

NEW YORK STATE
DIVISION OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES
1220 Washington Avenue, Building 7A, Suite 710, Albany, NY 12242

Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor

Jerome M. Hauer, Ph.D., MHS, Commissioner

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Contact:
Peter K. Cutler
(518) 242-5202
pcutler@dhses.ny.gov

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL GRADUATES FIVE CANINE MEMBERS FROM ACCELERANT DETECTION TRAINING

Two canine graduates named in honor of Tomasz M. Kaczowka and Michael J. Chiapperini of the West Webster Fire Department who lost their lives in the line of duty

The New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES) Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC) will hold a graduation ceremony Friday, April 11 at 11:00 am for its 2014 Accelerant Detection Canine Course. The ceremony will be held at the New York State Academy of Fire Science in Montour Falls.

Five graduates of this specialized training include members from OFPC's Fire Investigation Unit, Erie County Sheriff's Office, Oswego County Fire Coordinator's Office and Edmonton, Canada Fire and Rescue.

Canines "Tomek" and "Lieut" were named, with input and approval of their families, in memory of Firefighters Tomasz M. Kaczowka and Michael J. Chiapperini of the West Webster Fire Department who lost their lives in the line of duty on December 24, 2012.

"These dedicated dogs and their handlers find evidence that helps put arsonists behind bars," DHSES Commissioner Jerome M. Hauer said. "These teams save investigators time and man hours because they can sniff out accelerants very quickly."

“OFPC has been conducting Accelerant Detection Canine training since 1988 and our pride and appreciation of the commitment by handlers and their K9 partners is reaffirmed with each graduating class.” State Fire Administrator Bryant D. Stevens said. “The time and energy both have to put into the program, most importantly bond as a team, as well as to master the skills is simply astounding.”

“Public safety will be enhanced thanks to these new K9 teams,” OFPC Chief of Inspections and Investigations Paul D. Martin said. “The added capacity to detect identifying ignitable liquid vapor residue at fire scenes will go far toward the apprehension and prosecution of those who commit arson.”

The canines and their handlers underwent eight weeks of training at the Academy of Fire Science, and various locations in Seneca County as well as in the cities of Syracuse and Utica. During the training, students and their partners received instruction in basic obedience, agility, scent imprinting and discrimination, building, outdoor and vehicle searches, basic veterinary care and conducted various environmental exercises.

All canine candidates in the 2014 program were donated through the generosity of humane societies including: Lollypop Farms, Herkimer Humane Society, Beverly Animal Shelter, and Animal Shelter of Schoharie Valley. These canines are screened prior to selection for the program and meet strict testing criteria prior to graduation.

The following is the list of graduating handlers and their canine partners:

- OFPC Investigator Andrew Pohl - Canine “Tomek”
- OFPC Investigator Christopher Lupold - Canine “Lieut”
- Oswego County Fire Investigator Derrick Backus - Canine “Ryker”
- Erie County Sheriff’s Detective Steven Meerboth - Canine “Blaze”
- Edmonton Fire and Rescue Captain Murray Steedsman - Canine “Grover”