

Virginia Law Enforcement K-9 Memorial to be dedicated on Virginia Tech campus

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BLACKSBURG, VA., May 22, 2009 --
The Virginia Law Enforcement K-9 Memorial will be dedicated on the grounds of the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine at Virginia Tech on Friday, Oct. 16 at 1 p.m.

The memorial consists of a life-size bronze German Shepherd police dog sculpted by Blacksburg artist Larry Bechtel, creator of the noted "Officer Down" statue installed in front of the Roanoke City Police Department, the Addison Caldwell statue at Virginia Tech, and several other major installations.



Located adjacent to the main entrance of the [veterinary college's \(http://www.vetmed.vt.edu\)](http://www.vetmed.vt.edu) Veterinary Teaching Hospital, it will be installed upon a granite base that will denote the names of Virginia law enforcement dogs who lost their lives in the line of duty.

An estimated 100 K-9 officers and their dogs from departments located in cities and counties across the state, as well as hundreds of others, are expected to attend the event.

The memorial seeks to honor the lives of law enforcement dogs killed in the line of duty, according to John Hoover, a Franklin County Sheriff's Department K-9 officer, certified North American Police Work Dog Association "Master Trainer," and official with the Virginia Police Work Dog Association.

"This is something we've dreamed about for a long time," said Hoover, who has been working with a committee of college officials, members of the United States Police Canine Association (USPCA), and other officers and officials for about five years on the project. "These dogs are heroes, and what they do should be recognized by everyone they help protect."

A five-year private fundraising campaign that sought to raise the money to build the memorial was capped off last spring when an anonymous donor stepped forward with a \$45,000 gift.

“Our college is honored to partner with the law enforcement community on this project,” said Dr. Gerhardt Schurig, dean of the veterinary college. “We’re often so involved with animals as pets that we forget about the very critical role that working and service animals play in society every day. Veterinarians have an important responsibility to keep these animals healthy and vital.”

Details about the ceremony are still being finalized, but speakers are expected to include Schurig, Virginia Tech President Charles W. Steger, a special guest speaker from the national law enforcement community.

Read related stories:

- [“Virginia Police Work Dog Association Holds Fall Workshop”](http://www.vetmed.vt.edu/news/vs/oct08/index.asp#k9)
(<http://www.vetmed.vt.edu/news/vs/oct08/index.asp#k9>)
- Virginia Tech News story: [“Boomer and Boris join Virginia Tech Police Department”](http://www.vtnews.vt.edu/story.php?relyear=2008&itemno=809)
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IMAGE INFORMATION: Blacksburg sculptor Larry Bechtel works on the Virginia Law Enforcement K-9 Memorial.

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