K-9 11/30/16 L. ERICKSON

K-9 police dogs have become a crucial part of many law enforcement departments in western Wisconsin. Law enforcement agencies are more reliant on K-9 dogs now than ever before and the loss of a K-9 dog is more than just costly. Lisa Erickson has the story.

MP3 RUNS 1:00 O/C: ...I’M LISA ERICKSON

LISA ERICKSON: WHEN A DEPARTMENT DOESN’T HAVE A K-9 DOG IT CAN MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO DO SEARCHES AND ASSIST OFFICERS WITH DAY-TO-DAY WORK.

NAT SOUND: DOG BARKING.

LISA ERICKSON: THE OSCEOLA POLICE DEPARTMENT HAS HAD A K-9 DOG FOR MANY YEARS. RIKO IS THEIR SECOND K-9 DOG. OSCEOLA K-9 HANDLER AND OFFICER JOSH MORGEL SAYS HAVING A K-9 DOG IS HELPFUL IN MANY WAYS, BUT APPRECIATES ONE MORE THAN OTHERS.

JOSH MORGEL: HAVING THAT EXTRA LITTLE SENSE OF SECURITY WHEN YOU ARE DOING SOMETHING BY YOURSELF. ONE OF THE THINGS HE IS TRAINED IN IS HANDLER PROTECTION. SO IF, I WAS TO BE BY MYSELF AND SOMEBODY WAS TO ATTACK ME AND I WAS TO START TO FIGHT WITH THEM AND THEY WERE TO FIGHT WITH ME, I CAN HIT A BUTTON THAT I CARRY AND IT WILL POP HIS DOOR OPEN AND HE WILL COME AND DEFEND ME.

LISA ERICKSON: FOR THE FALCON NEWS SERVICE, I’M LISA ERICKSON.

 A K-9 handler’s job requires the dogs to be deployed in some of the riskiest situations, yet most departments do not financially support K-9 teams to attend continuous training, according to the non-profit organization Dogs for Law Enforcement.