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Gurnee Police Department Welcomes New K9s

Gurnee – The Gurnee Police Department welcomed two new police canines to its agency Monday evening. K9 Hawk and K9 Leo took their official oath of office during the Gurnee Village Board meeting. Their handlers, Officer Hitzelburger and Officer Yencich, respectively, were in attendance to participate with their new partners.

In preparation for the new police canines, the Gurnee Police Department held a canine naming contest with the community. Gurnee students enrolled in Kindergarten to 12th grade could participate in the contest by submitting their name recommendations online. After receiving hundreds of submissions, the final two names were selected.

Sixth grade Woodland Middle School student Ivy Lindstrom submitted the name Hawk. Sixth grade Viking School student Vyncen Bolados submitted the name LEO.

A partnership with Gurnee Mills and Six Flags Great America allowed the department to continue the canine program. Each organization donated to the canine program, allowing the police department to adopt and train two new dogs.

The new canines underwent training at TOPS, located in Grayslake, IL. TOPS is a family-owned business since 1978, and they have trained police canines at its facility for many years. There are at least 40 police canines trained at TOPS working on the streets throughout Lake, Cook, McHenry, and Kenosha counties. The canines and handlers initially underwent eight weeks of training to earn their certification. They will receive continual follow-up training through TOPS for various patrol functions, including article and building searches, narcotics detection, and tracking capabilities.