

# HAINES CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT K9S MATRIX, CASH, AND MACHADO HAVE RECEIVED DONATION OF BODY ARMOR

Carl Fish



*Haines City Police Department Press Release*

K9s Matrix, Cash, and Machado have received bullet and stab protective vests thanks to a charitable donation from the non-profit organization Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. K9 Matrix's vest was sponsored by Nancy Pyon of Huson, MT and embroidered with the sentiment "Born to Love - Trained to Serve - Loyal Always". K9 Cash's vest was sponsored by Julie Beauchamp of Advest Investment Group, Southington, CT and embroidered with the sentiment "Gifted by Advest Investment Group". K9 Machado's vest was embroidered with the sentiment "This gift of protection provided by Vested Interest in K9s, Inc."

The police department's K9 unit said the dogs are truly their partners and they need to be protected as much as the officers. These three vests will help protect the four-legged officers that run into any situation, without hesitation, in order to protect the citizens of Haines City," said Chief Greg Goreck.

*"I am very thankful for the support and generosity of individuals such as Nancy Pyon and Julie Beauchamp; as well the Organization that helped make this possible, Vested interest in K-9's Inc.*

K-9 Officer Joseph Elam has been paired with his Belgian Shepherd Cash for two years and nine months. Elam said it is an honor to have an extra layer of

protection donated to help Cash, who was once struck by a vehicle while trying to locate a fleeing felon.

"Cash is my best friend," he said. "I spend more time with him than any member of my family," Elam said.

K-9 Officer Ryon Green has been paired with his Belgian Malinois Machado for three years as a team. Green, who has worked at the police department for 8 years, five as a K9 handler, said he appreciates the vest donations because he wants Machado to return home safely.

"Every time I deploy K9 Machado, I am always concerned for his safety," Green said. "We both love coming to work to do our jobs."

Vested Interest in K9s, Inc., established in 2009, is a 501(c)(3) charity whose mission is to provide bullet and stab protective vests and other assistance to dogs of law enforcement and related agencies throughout the United States. This potentially lifesaving body armor for four-legged K9 officers is U.S.-made, custom-fitted, and NIJ certified. Since its inception, Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. has provided over 4,970 vests to K9s in all 50 states at a value of \$6.9 million, made possible by both private and corporate donations.

The program is open to U.S. dogs that are at least 20 months old and actively employed and certified with law enforcement or related agencies. K9s with expired vests are also eligible to participate. There are an estimated 30,000 law enforcement K9s throughout the United States.

Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. accepts tax-deductible contributions in any amount, while a single donation of \$985 will sponsor one vest. Each vest has a value of \$1,744-\$2,283, weighs an average of 4-5 lb., and comes with a five-year warranty.

**For more information, or to learn about volunteer opportunities, please call 508-824-6978. Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. provides information, lists events, and accepts donations at [www.vik9s.org](http://www.vik9s.org), or you may mail your contribution to P.O. Box 9, East Taunton, MA 02718.**