

MAGICVALLEY.COM

Canine Encounters Law Enforcement Training In Filer, ID

By Joy Pruitt – July 19, 2014



FILER, Idaho • Jim Osorio preaches what he practices.

Osorio encountered countless aggressive dogs on the job as an undercover cop in Indianapolis.

Now he and his German shepherd Coral are on the road teaching what he learned from experience.

Osorio's goal is to prevent dog shootings by law enforcement.

"This is a much needed training," he said as he took a break Saturday from teaching his course to a group in Filer.

Osorio runs Canine Encounters Law Enforcement Training out of Arlington, Texas, one of the few companies in the nation that offer hands-on training.

The training was mandatory for city employees who encounter dogs on the job. Mayor Rick Dunn ordered the training after "Hooch," a black Labrador, was shot and killed by a Filer police officer earlier this year.

Some folks — police officers included — fear dogs, Osorio said. "Coral's job is to mingle and get officers used to dogs."

Coral is a seven-year-old search and rescue dog, the same age as Hooch was when he was shot by Filer Police Officer Tarek Hassani. The shooting — captured by the dashcam of Hassani's cruiser — sparked a national outcry.

Joe Baratti, public works director for Filer, took Osorio's training Saturday at Filer High School.

Baratti has seen his share of aggressive dogs on the job.

"I've never been bit, but I've had some aggressive dogs come at me," he said. "I don't blame the dogs — they're just protecting their territory. It's a natural response."

Local firefighters, animal-control officers, police officers and sheriff's deputies — even an out-of-county narcotics officer — attended the training.

The narcotics officer, who asked not to be identified, said what she knows about dogs, she learned the hard way.

"Any breed of dog can be aggressive," she said.

She learned that when two German shorthaired pointers charged her while she was investigating a driveby shooting, she said. She shot one dog and wounded it.

"I know to this day I made the right decision," she said, "but I felt horrible about it afterward. It was very stressful."

Her department doesn't offer any guidance in dealing with dogs on the job, she said, so she plans to teach what she learned from Osorio to others in her department.

“Officers want this training,” Osorio said. So do those outside of law enforcement.

“I’m taking the training because I’ve encountered some very aggressive dogs,” said Laurie Warren, an animal-rescue volunteer from Filer.

Her interest was piqued when Hooch was killed in her own town.

“We got gobs of emails when he was shot,” said Warren. She and her husband run a non-profit organization called Hardluck Hounds and Friends Inc.

While Osorio focuses his training on those who encounter dogs on the job, he insists that preventing bad encounters is the dog owner’s responsibility.

Things go bad “when dogs aren’t properly trained and socialized,” he said.

