



Free Police Training After Dog Shooting

By Lissa Guyton – May 4, 2015



WOODVILLE, OH – The police shooting of a family dog in Woodville last fall sparked a lot of heated debate and calls for change. Moses, the chocolate lab, was shot in the leg during a traffic stop. His leg was later amputated

Monday the village offered free training to more than 100 police officers and dog warden employees from around the region. The training session focuses on giving officers an alternative to lethal force when they are confronted by dogs on the job.

Coral the German Shepard is part of the training session. She helps demonstrate some of the non-lethal options alongside her owner Jim Osorio who is a former police officer, "If an officer doesn't have the proper training for dealing with these kinds of situations the first thing they'll do is pull out their gun and shoot."

Osorio says the training is about the safety of officers, dogs and the community, "Shooting an animal is a lot different than shooting a person, they are low to the ground and they are weaving everywhere. A lot of officers have a lot of stray shots when shooting at animals and that's when people can get hurt too."

He's trained more than 20,000 officers in the last decade about alternatives to deadly force when it comes to aggressive dogs, "Most officers carry batons, sprays, tasers all kinds of less lethal tools they can use on a dog. The problem is that they are not trained to use those tools on dogs, they are trained to use them on people."

Ohio could be the next state to make dog training mandatory for officers. Legislation has passed the state House and is now before the Senate. Bill Reineke is the State Representative from the 88th District. He voted in favor of measure, "This allows the Ohio Attorney General to require training for peace officers in dealing with canines. Education is an important piece in keeping the community safe."

Two officers from the Cuyahoga County Metropolitan Housing Authority made the trip to Woodville. Both say they learned a lot of options other than deadly force that they will take back to their entire department. Officer Li Hopkins is a dog lover, "We learned today that there is so much to learn from the behavior of a dog. You have to watch body language. If he comes to you, if he won't come to you, how he barks, if he is protecting his domain." Sgt. James Neal says he and his officers are faced with dogs on a regular basis and none of them want to have to use deadly force, "We're engaging with a canine in just about every house we go into. Understanding how to handle those situations, this is a real eye opener in training for law enforcement across the board."

The free training session was paid for by the Mayor of Woodville