



MEDIA RELEASE

Homeland Security

Ohio Homeland Security • Richard C. Baron, Executive Director
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John R. Kasich, Governor

John Born, Director

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OHS Contact: Dustyn Fox (614) 466-3640
OSU Contact: Dan Hedman (614) 292-7672

OHIO HOMELAND SECURITY PRESENTS EXPLOSIVE DETECTION CANINE TO THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY POLICE DIVISION

COLUMBUS – The Ohio State University has enhanced safety on campus and in the surrounding area with the introduction of Rita, the university’s newest explosive detection canine. Funding for the canine and its ongoing care is provided by a federal grant through Ohio Homeland Security (OHS), a division of the Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS).

“In an effort to keep Ohio and its citizens safe, I am pleased that Ohio Homeland Security is able to offer this valuable resource to Ohio State and the central Ohio area,” said ODPS Director John Born. “I am confident that the efforts of Officer Shaul and Rita will help to contribute to a safer Ohio.”

After 10 weeks of training, Rita, a female German shepherd, is ready to patrol Ohio State alongside her handler, Officer Joanna Shaul. A four-year veteran of The Ohio State University Police Division (OSUPD), Officer Shaul spent the past five weeks training with Canine Rita in Columbus. While her primary duty is on the Ohio State campus, Canine Rita is available to assist local law enforcement if called upon.

“Canine Rita joins an experienced canine program in the Police Division,” said Ohio State University Police Chief Paul Denton. “The addition of a third team will enhance the safety of our campus community, adding to our comprehensive public safety presence. Our number one priority is the safety of our students, faculty and staff and we want to thank Ohio Homeland Security for providing OSUPD with this resource.”

In addition to Ohio State, Bowling Green State University and Youngstown State University were selected to receive canines based on their geography and whether other explosive detection canines are in the area. OHS created the pilot program this year to aid in response to potential bomb threats at Ohio universities and their surrounding communities.

Existing federal grants through OHS cover the expense of the purchase, training, veterinarian bills and other equipment necessary for the program’s success. The cost for each canine is \$12,767.

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