

County OKs K-9 memorial

By Lydia Statz, Daily Union staff writer | Posted: Tuesday, March 4, 2014 9:39 am

JEFFERSON — Some of Jefferson County's most popular law enforcement officers will be memorialized with a permanent monument.

The Jefferson County Board of Supervisors Infrastructure Committee on Tuesday gave the go-ahead for the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office to construct a memorial to the department's fallen K-9 officers.

The memorial will remember the five dogs who have served the county and passed away, reaching their "end of watch." Those dogs include labrador retriever Redman and German Shepherds Jahn, Deuce, Ahron and Jasko.

Each currently is remembered on a wall inside the sheriff's office, but the memorial will be constructed outside the courthouse in a more visible location.

The office also had a bloodhound, Ellie Mae, now retired.

Located on an island of greenery in the courthouse parking lot, the memorial will consist of a concrete statue of a German Shepherd in front of a wall of both blank and engraved bricks. The engraved bricks will contain the memorial information for the dogs who have passed away, while the blank bricks will allow room for adding names in the future.

The entire memorial will be surrounded by plantings.

Jefferson County's K-9 program began in 1991 with then-Detective Sgt. Paul Milbrath and his labrador retriever, Redman. Milbrath was elected Jefferson County sheriff in 2002.

Redman served until 1999, but the department did not have a formal K-9 unit until then-Sgt. Jeff Parker submitted a proposal to formally begin one in 1998. Jahn, a German Shepherd, was the first K-9 deputy to serve under that program, along with his handler, Deputy Greg Jansen. Since then, the office consistently has had three K-9 deputies at a time.

Currently, the department is served by Harlow and handler Deputy Jason Behm, Mink and handler Deputy Scott Gukich, and Falkos and handler Deputy Jansen.

The dogs typically perform duties ranging from drug detection, tracking, area searches, building searches, evidence searches and apprehension to handler protection.

Today, the K-9 program is funded almost entirely by private donations. Chief Deputy Parker noted that recently, a local business donated food for all three of the department's dogs for the rest of the year.

The sheriff's office intends to make use of some of those surplus donations to fund the construction of a memorial outside the courthouse this summer. Approximately \$2,000 in private donations will go toward its construction, with deputies also donating their time to erect it.

Note: An earlier version of this article previously misstated the amount of private donations that will go towards

construction this memorial as \$10,000 instead of \$2,000. The amount has been corrected.