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Prosecutor Announces Opening of the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office K-9 Training Facility

Prosecutor Angelo J. Onofri announced today the opening of the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office K-9 Training Facility in Ewing, NJ.

"After speaking with many of the K-9 handlers in the area, we discovered that a quality training facility was needed. However, none of the individual departments had the necessary space or funding," Onofri said.

The year-long project totaled approximately \$30,000 and was paid through federal forfeiture funds. All Mercer County police departments with a canine program use the patrol and scent dog training grounds, including the prosecutor's office, the sheriff's office, Ewing, Lawrence, Princeton, Robbinsville, Trenton and West Windsor. It is also utilized by several other departments within the state.

Highlights of the training grounds include:

- The United States Police Canine Association (USPCA) standard agility course, which consists of hurdles, catwalk, broad jump, A-frame and crawl.
- Six suspect search area boxes. These boxes are utilized to hide "suspects" so that the K-9 team can sniff them out.

- A scent pit for narcotics and explosive canines. The pit is made of pea rock/gravel. The canines have to locate either the narcotic or explosive scent secreted within the scent pit.

Onofri expressed his thanks to Aaron T. Watson, deputy administrator/director of the Mercer County Department of Transportation & Infrastructure, and Ewing Mayor Bert Steinmann for facilitating the location for the training grounds. He credited Prosecutor's Detective Sergeant Joe Angarone for leading the project and the Mercer County Building & Grounds Division for their assistance. Onofri also thanked Mercer County Executive Brian M. Hughes and the Board of Chosen Freeholders for their support of this important project.

Last year, Angarone and his narcotics K-9, Bela, competed in the USPCA National Scent Trials where they placed seventh overall out of 38 teams from across the United States.

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