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For more information, please contact:

Dawn Caldwell

Assistant Village Manager

(815) 886-0279

[dcaldwell@romeoville.org](mailto:dcaldwell@romeoville.org)

**Meet Spike, Romeoville's Police Dog**

The Romeoville Police Department consists of brave men, women, and one dog. Meet Spike, a male Belgian Malinois from Nijnsel in the Netherlands. He came to the U.S. in 2011 and, in June of 2012, when he was 19 months old, was paired with officer John Allen and sent to the K-9 academy. In the 5 years Spike and officer Allen have been patrolling Romeoville, they've had a string of successes. Spike has been a part of numerous drug seizures and criminal apprehensions and has even found seven guns. His biggest catch, both in terms of monetary value and total weight, however, came in June of 2013 when he discovered 2,750 pounds of marijuana, valued at \$7.3 million. When he's out in the field, Spike responds to commands from officer Allen in Dutch. "There are eight commands we use on a regular basis," said officer Allen. "We use Dutch to prevent confusion. If there is someone else who sounds like me in the field, the Dutch will prevent Spike from following the wrong person's orders."

When Spike isn't sniffing out drugs or chasing bad guys, he resides at home with officer Allen. Spike loves to swim and enjoys popcorn, apples, and raw corn on the cob. "Spike knows when it's time to work and when he can be more relaxed and friendly. He's very obedient," said officer Allen. He will be 7 years old come October and is still in great shape. Officer Allen hopes to keep him in the field for another 4-5 years. Once it's time for retirement, Spike will be able to transition from officer Allen's full time partner to his full time pet. Unlike your typical officer, however, Spike will not receive a pension and medical bills for retired police dogs can be very high. That's why officer Allen has helped to create MARK-9, or Medical Assistance for Retired K-9s. The organization gives financial support to retired police dogs to help cover some of those medical bills. If you'd like to contribute to the cause, the organization will be holding their third annual golf outing on June 16 at Carriage Greens Country Club in Darian.

"Officer John Allen and Spike are both very valuable members of the department," said Police Chief Mark Turvey. "We are very proud of their police work as well as their community work."