



Division of Capitol Police News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New K-9 introduced by Capitol Police

RICHMOND -- The public and the media are invited to come to the Capitol on Thursday, March 8, to meet Denis, the newest member of the Virginia Division of Capitol Police K-9 Unit.

Denis and his handler, Officer Brian C. Alexander, will be at the pedestrian plaza at 10th and Bank streets from 9 a.m. to noon. Also on hand will be Atos, the K-9 who is “retiring” from the Capitol Police force and being replaced by Denis.

Atos, an 8-year-old brindle German shepherd from Marburg, Germany, has served with the division since July 2011 and is certified by the Virginia Police Work Dog Association. Atos has been used in counter-terrorism prevention, bomb-threat response, proactive security sweeps, evidence searches and demonstrations.

Denis, whose duties will be similar to those of Atos, is a 3-year-old Belgian Malinois who was born in Brazil and most recently worked in Afghanistan with a private security contractor.

Denis (pronounced Denny) will become the 10th dog in the history of the Division of Capitol Police K-9 Unit, which was established in December 2000. Denis will join Gunner, another Belgian Malinois, and Lucy, a chocolate Labrador retriever, as active members of the K-9 Unit.

“Atos has been an extremely productive member of the division and a great ambassador, and everyone around the Capitol Complex is going to miss him,” said Col. Anthony S. Pike, chief of the Capitol Police. “Denis has some big paws to fill, but we look for him to be a good fit.”

The Capitol Police K-9 Unit, certified through the Virginia Police Work Dog Association, is available 24 hours, seven days a week and responds to calls for service throughout the downtown Richmond state government complex. The division's Explosive Detection K-9 Teams consist of three K-9s and three handlers.

When the dogs reach their age and service limit, they are retired and allowed to remain with their handlers as "private citizens."

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