

For Immediate Release

Canine Sniffs out Cell Phones for the IDOC

Indianapolis, Indiana (October 8, 2008)—Training dogs to search for drugs and weapons in facilities is not uncommon in the Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC). However, as cell phones become items that are increasingly being trafficked into facilities, the IDOC has found someone to help solve this problem.

His name is Dexter, a 2 year old, black Labrador Retriever. Dexter came from the Kosciusko County animal control and began his training with IDOC trainers in August 2008. The trainers began by teaching Dexter basic obedience, in order to create a bond with him. Once Dexter learned how to sit on command, this command became the method by which he would signal finding a cell phone.

IDOC trainers went through six phases while training Dexter to locate cell phones: Presenting the odor, Targeting, Nosing Around, Location and time, Distraction, and Proofing. Trainers use cell phones of different sizes and brands while training the dogs. In about seventy-five hours of training with Dexter, trainers recorded that he found the hidden cell phones 110 times, without missing.



Dexter, accompanied by a correctional officer, searches for cell phone contraband in a cell.

“Because cell phones are becoming a trafficking problem in our facilities, beginning to train dogs to discover the phones in searches is a valuable tool. Although Dexter is the first dog in Indiana trained to sniff out cell phones, my hope is that as he is successful, more dogs can be trained like him,” stated IDOC Commissioner Edwin G. Buss.



For the time being, Dexter resides at the Indiana State Prison.

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