

# News Release - Manitoba

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## MANITOBA INVESTS IN K-9 UNIT TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY SAFETY IN WINKLER AND SURROUNDING REGION

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### **Specialized Equipment Funded Through Criminal Property Forfeiture Fund: Stefanson**

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WINKLER—The Manitoba government will invest more than \$87,000 through the criminal property forfeiture fund to renew Winkler’s K-9 unit and ensure it can rapidly respond to situations where a police service dog’s unique skills can support investigations and community safety, Justice Minister Heather Stefanson announced here today.

“Our government is excited to be able to support the expanded role of a K-9 unit for the Winkler Police Service,” said Stefanson. “Access to the right equipment and a properly trained dog can make all the difference when responding to a call for help. We look forward to the positive impacts this investment will have on Winkler and nearby communities.”

Manitoba’s Criminal Property Forfeiture Fund will be used to cover the costs of a new police service dog including specialized training for the animal and its handler. Its training will allow the dog to detect drugs and track people including suspects or missing people. Provincial funding will also be used to purchase a dedicated vehicle for the K-9 unit and outfit it with a kennel and other standard equipment. The K-9 unit will also provide support to other police agencies in the region as needed.

Winkler’s first police service dog, Tika, was trained to detect drugs. She retired in 2016 after serving the community for seven years. The police agency has not previously had a dedicated vehicle for its K-9 unit.

“Manitoba’s Criminal Property Forfeiture Fund continues to play a major role for police services in their fight against crime,” said Rick Hiebert, chief, Winkler Police Service. “The ability to seize criminals’ assets and turn that into grants for equipment, tools and training is of huge benefit, especially for our smaller police agencies. We look forward to putting every aspect of the new K-9 unit into service.”

The minister also announced new resources for other police services in the region today. Altona Police Service will receive nearly \$6,700 to purchase five protective vests and helmets, to be used by officers responding to potentially dangerous situations. Morden Police Service will receive more than \$27,000 to upgrade its outdoor firearms range, which is used for training by several police agencies serving the region.

More than \$1.5 million will be distributed this year through the criminal property forfeiture program, helping police across Manitoba fight crime in their communities. There are currently 120 active forfeiture files being pursued by the province, involving vehicles, property, cash and other assets.

For more information about criminal property forfeitures, visit: [www.gov.mb.ca/justice/safe/cpf/index.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/safe/cpf/index.html).