



DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dale J Schmidt Sheriff Scott Smith Chief Deputy

Sheriff's Column

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Topic: Tactical Vests for Sheriff's Deputies

The sheriff's office has a responsibility for keeping you and your family safe. Everyday we work very hard toward that goal. In fact, safeguarding your life is the very first thing listed in our mission statement:

"The Dodge County Sheriff's Office will safeguard the lives, property and constitutional rights of our citizens through honest, ethical and professional service to the community."

Did you know that just our simple presence in the community is one method we use to keep you safe? When people see a deputy walking around in uniform they bring a sense of safety and security. When a squad car is seen driving down the road, it is a reminder to obey the traffic laws and drive safely.

The sheriff's office is not only there as a deterrent, but also to respond at a moment's notice to protect you and your property. Deputies respond to any and all emergencies they are asked to. While everyone else runs away from danger, these brave men and women will run toward it to resolve the incident and restore peace and public order as quickly as possible. They put themselves in harms way to protect your family knowing that they risk not going home to theirs.

These deputies that put their lives on the line everyday are my responsibility as Sheriff. I must do everything in my power to ensure that at the end of the day they can return home safely. Often times we wait for tragedy to strike before taking action. While we can never predict every dangerous situation that may arise, we try to identify deficiencies and address them in the most responsible manner possible.

Did you know that in the last 12 years, two officers were shot and killed in neighboring counties? One was in Green Lake in 2003 and the other in Fond du Lac in 2011. Both were shot by high powered rifles at long range and were wearing bullet resistant vests. Due to the type of firearm used, their vests were unable to provide adequate protection to the officers. Furthermore, we have seen mass shootings throughout the nation in schools, churches and businesses that are increasing at an alarming rate.

As a result of these incidents, I have identified an area that we can better protect our deputies. Following the shooting in Fond du Lac, officers raised money to purchase tactical vests that contain rifle resistant plates. These vests protect the vital organs of their officers from those high powered rifles and give them a fighting chance at survival. I have investigated purchasing similar vests for our deputies to utilize in these dangerous situations. The quote I received to outfit our agency was about \$24,000. I was able to negotiate with the vendor and was able to bring that cost down to just under \$17,000.

Now I must answer the question of how to pay for these vests. These vests are not in the 2015 budget as the budget was finalized before I took office. As a result, I am asking for the community's help in raising money to purchase these vests and outfitting our deputies as soon as possible.

In coming weeks I will be showing these vests to local business owners and citizens who may want to help. If you are interested in seeing one of these vests or making a donation, please contact me. I truly believe that with the availability of these vests, my deputies can continue to keep your families safe, while being better equipped to return safely home to their own.

Sheriff Dale J Schmidt