

## Rookie Handler of the year nomination:

To: WLECHA Awards Committee

I am writing to nominate Deputy Nathan Birkholz for rookie handler of the year. Deputy Birkholz started with the Fond du Lac County Sheriff's office in July 2017 working in the jail. In 2019 Deputy Birkholz was given the keys to a squad and started patrolling Fond du Lac County. October 2022, Deputy Birkholz was selected to be a canine handler and was partnered with K-9 Rip. Deputy Birkholz and K-9 Rip trained at Jessifany Canine Services, graduating in December 2022 and hit the ground running. In the first 7 months on patrol Deputy Birkholz and K9 Rip have been deployed 61 times for drug K9 deployments, 14 patrol function deployments with 6 civil apprehensions and 1 apprehension.

The following are some highlights of Deputy Birkholz and K9 Rip's first year on the road.

On January 04, 2023, Deputy Birkholz conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle at the location of Interstate 41 northbound and Hickory Street in the town of Fond du Lac in Fond du Lac County, WI. Deputy Birkholz deployed K9 Rip on the vehicle for a free air sniff and a positive alert was indicated on the passenger side. A search of the vehicle yielded **473g of Marijuana** and **436g of Cocaine** which was located in the trunk of the vehicle. As deputies were attempting to take a male into custody, he made resistive comments and displayed resistive behaviors, K9 Rip was showed to the male subject and he was taken into custody without further incident.

On February 12, 2023, Deputy Birkholz conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle at the location of Interstate 41 northbound and Lost Arrow Road in the township of Byron in Fond du Lac County, WI. Deputy Birkholz deployed K9 Rip on the vehicle for a free air sniff and a positive alert was indicated on the passenger side. A search of the vehicle on the passenger side seat yielded **18.61g of Cocaine (38 baggies)**, **15.33g of Methamphetamine (9 baggies)**, **11.88g of M-30's**, **12.46g of Marijuana**, **2g of Fentanyl** and **1 digital scale with residue**.

On March 13, 2023, Deputy Birkholz was requested to assist Wisconsin State Patrol for a free air sniff on a vehicle at the location of Interstate 41 northbound and Johnson Street in the town of Fond du Lac in Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin. Deputy Birkholz deployed K9 Rip on the vehicle for a free air sniff and a positive alert was indicated on the driver side. A search of the vehicle yielded a **Kilo of Cocaine (1200g)** in the trunk that was wrapped in cellophane, motor vehicle grease and aluminum foil. **3g of Fentanyl** was located on the driver's person upon arrest.

On March 21, 2023, Deputy Birkholz and K9 Rip assisted in a vehicle pursuit where K9 Rip was displayed to the lone occupant and driver of the vehicle after the suspect vehicle crashed after pursuit. Strong verbal commands given to driver and driver taken into custody on civil apprehension. Deputy Birkholz deployed K9 Rip on the vehicle for a free air sniff and K9 Rip pulled Deputy Birkholz towards the driver side, jumped into the driver seat and placed his nose

on a black duffle bag behind the passenger seat. Located in the black duffle bag was approximately **437g of Methamphetamine, 12g of Cocaine, digital scale, drug paraphernalia and \$2,448 in US Currency.**

On April 04, 2023, Deputy Birkholz conducted traffic stop on a vehicle per MEG unit request at the location of Interstate 41 northbound and CTH B in the township of Byron in Fond du Lac County, WI. K9 Rip was deployed on the vehicle for a free air sniff where a positive alert was indicated on the rear passenger side door seam. Search of the vehicle yielded **451g of Methamphetamine** in a backpack on the back seat.

On April 15, 2023, Deputy Birkholz conducted traffic stop on a vehicle at the location of Interstate 41 northbound and USH 151 in the township of Byron in Fond du Lac County, WI. Deputy Birkholz deployed K9 on the vehicle for a free air sniff and a positive alert was indicated on the driver side open window. A search of the vehicle yielded **72g of Marijuana, 32g of Cocaine, 60g of MDMA and \$955 in US Currency.**

On April 26, 2023, Deputies were dispatched to 310 S. Helena Street in Village in Campbellsport in Fond du Lac County, WI for a disturbance call with a man with a gun. Deputies arrived on scene and were confronted with a male who was suicidal and threatening others with the gun. SWAT team was deployed and an arrest plan was formulated. K9 Rip was deployed on suspect by giving bite command, Rip ran around a car and bushes that were obstructing his view and lost visual of suspect. Deputy Birkholz redirected Rip to the suspect and he was observed running to the north portion of the residence. As Rip was jumping to apprehend suspect, the suspect was removing the firearm from his vest and displayed the firearm. K9 Rip apprehended suspect momentarily by biting suspects left arm and then let go. Suspect refused to follow commands and refused to drop the gun. K9 Rip was recalled as SWAT team approached suspect and were giving strong verbal commands. Suspect was hesitant in dropping the firearm and was then observed going down to his knees as directed. The suspect threw the firearm down at his feet less than 3 feet from him. K9 Rip was again deployed for an apprehension bite due to the suspects erratic, unpredictable, uncooperative behavior, the firearm being within lunge distance of the suspect and to prevent the possibility of injury for the SWAT arrest team. K9 Rip ran towards suspect and engaged in a full mouth bite on suspects left elbow, pulling suspect down to the ground away from the firearm. After suspect was pulled down to the ground, K9 Rip released from the bite and recalled back to Deputy Birkholz location. Suspect was taken into custody without further incident.

On May 01, 2023, Deputy Birkholz conducted traffic stop on vehicle at the location of Interstate 41 northbound and Johnson Street in the town of Fond du Lac in Fond du Lac County, WI. As Deputy Birkholz was attempting to remove the lone occupant/driver of the vehicle to conduct a free air sniff of the vehicle, the driver fled from the traffic stop and a pursuit ensued. Suspect vehicle was located a short time later crashed and suspect taken into custody without incident. Deputy Birkholz deployed K9 Rip on the vehicle for a free air sniff and a positive alert was

given on the passenger side. **1.99g of MDMA** located inside of vehicle and **111g (over 1,000 pills) of M-30's** located in field close to crashed vehicle.

On May 02, 2023, Deputy Birkholz was requested by City of Fond du Lac Police Department to assist with taking a male suspect into custody on Felony charges of Domestic and felony warrant at the location of 290 Gillet Street. Deputy Birkholz and K9 Rip were apart of contact team 2 maintaining perimeter on the front door as contact team 1 was making entry through the back door. Male suspect observed running out of front door and into the street where Deputy Birkholz gave strong verbal commands to the male suspect to get down or he would be apprehended by K9. Deputy Birkholz approached male suspect with K9 Rip while continuing to give commands where he was later taken into custody without incident.

On May 31, 2023, Wisconsin State Patrol was involved in a high speed pursuit with a vehicle and the male suspect fled on foot near the area of Interstate 41 and USH 151. Deputies gave foot chase to male suspect but lost visual as he entered a tree line. Deputy Birkholz deployed K9 Rip on a track where K9 Rip tracked through freshly plowed farm field for approximately 430 yards, a drone was utilized and confirmed visual of male suspect less than 30 yards for K9 Rip and Deputy Birkholz. Male suspect taken into custody by arrest team without incident.

If you follow the Fond du Lac County Sheriff's Office on Facebook I am sure you are no stranger to the positive posts featuring Deputy Birkholz and K-9 Rip. But if you follow the scanner pages in Fond du Lac County you definitely see the outpouring of support and celebrity for K-9 Rip, making this team what I believe to be the K-9 Handler Rookie of the Year!

Thank you