

# Dog Tales: Aurora police dogs, canine film star share movie screen

Lt. Rick Robertson, supervisor of APD's Special Operations K9 unit, detailed Aurora police dog operations in theater seven at Cinemark Tinseltown movie theater in North Aurora. Despite subzero temperatures, about 50 people attended.

Robertson spoke before an 11 a.m. screening of "A Dog's Way Home," a Jan. 11 release about Bella, a rescued pit bull mix on a mission to find her human master 400 miles away.



Sponsor was Aurora Bank and Trust Co. in Aurora, a branch of St. Charles Bank and Trust Co. The event was part of a series of free, bimonthly community meetings featuring a film and guest speaker. Registration and continental breakfast in the theater lobby opened the offering.

Using projected photos and video clips, Robertson described APD K9 services, the unit's role and how dogs are used in an hour-long presentation.

Aurora's K9 unit, founded in 2014, comprises Kato with officer Rick Rodarte, Akroy and officer Matt Bonnie, Rex and officer Aaron Spooner and Beny and officer Mark Carey.

K9 services, Robertson said, include officer protection, suspect apprehension, public relations and locating narcotics, articles of value, missing persons, fleeing suspects and suspects in buildings. Generally, service dogs are not used to apprehend armed subjects, only to locate them.

Police dogs are special, Robertson said, because:

- They can identify and locate amounts of an odor at the source.
- They are the only tool that can independently warn an officer of an impending danger.
- They are the only force option that can be recalled after being deployed.
- They are the only force option that cannot be taken away from an officer and used against him.

Robertson also detailed characteristics of a good police dog, mind of a dog and anatomy highlights.

Aurora Bank's Lorena Valencia, movie meeting hostess, awarded door prizes and reviewed bank services. She said March's meeting and speaker will be announced. Call (331) 684-9199 for more information.

**PHOTO:** A dog being trained for police service is pictured during Lt. Rick Robertson's presentation on the Aurora Police Department's K9 unit Tuesday, Jan. 29, at Cinemark Tinseltown movie theater in North Aurora. (Al Benson photo)