

OAKLAND COUNTY

Michigan Mounted Police participate in inaugural parade

The recent announcement from Michigan Horse Council was short and sweet. It read that "Confirmation has just been received. The Michigan Multi-Jurisdictional Mounted Police unit has been selected to participate in the 2013 Presidential Inaugural Parade to be held on Jan. 21."

"This is indeed a great honor," said Marilyn Graff, board member of Michigan Horse Council. "This unit is truly representative of both Michigan and the Michigan Horse Council. We are proud of those participating in the Inaugural Parade."

The idea for the combined group of officers originated about 12 years ago with Lorenzo Veal of Ypsilanti, now a retired Michigan State Police officer. Today, the 20-member Multi-jurisdictional Drill Team and Color Guard is made up of 10 different mounted units from across Michigan including two friends from the Toronto, Canada mounted. There will be approximately 30 horses. At the beginning of the process, there were over 2,800 applications from groups interested in participating, but only 43 groups were chosen. To view the complete list of participants, visit <http://2013pic.org/about/parade>.

The officers have all been involved in the Color Presentation over the last few years at the Michigan Horse Expo that is held every March at the MSU

Livestock Pavilion in East Lansing. The Michigan Multi-Jurisdictional Mounted Police unit will perform at this year's event, March 8-10. To view a schedule, visit www.MichiganHorseExpo.org.

Representing Oakland County are four members of the Oakland County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) — Mounted Unit; Deputy Terri Lokuta of Rose Township, Deputy Kevin MacRitchie of Rose Township and Deputy Nina Kowalski of Flint Township led by Sgt. Kimberly Paulson-MacRitchie of Rose Township. The four are leaving on Friday evening Jan. 18 from the Michigan State University Pavilion off Farm Lane. Housing has been arranged for both officers and their mounts once they reach Prince George's Equestrian Center in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. For more information, visit www.showplacearena.com.

"Kimba" MacRitchie has been with the Oakland County Sheriff's Office for 12 years and has been preparing for this trip her entire career. She has trained with her 18-year-old Quarter Horse-Arab cross, Buddy, in various ways including trail riding, desensitization, obstacle courses, ground work, socialization and trail blazing, all of which instills confidence in herself and her equine partner.

"We know that our job is not only about crowd control, public safety, public relations and crime prevention," she explained. "Anything can happen at any time, and we must be prepared to perform our duties. It is also a time to support our government and to learn professional protocol on a national level for such a momentous occasion."



Four members of the Oakland County Sheriff's Office Mounted Unit will participate with the Michigan Multi-Jurisdictional Mounted Police in the 2013 Presidential Inaugural Parade on Jan. 21 — Deputy Terri Lokuta of Rose Township, Sgt. Kimberly Paulson-MacRitchie of Rose Township, Deputy Kevin MacRitchie of Rose Township and Deputy Nina Kowalski of Flint Township.

Her husband, Kevin MacRitchie, agrees, adding, "This experience also offers us the opportunity to learn from other units so we can share what we have learned with our command and improve our performance for Oakland County."

Lokuta joined the mounted unit 12 years

ago and will be riding her 12-year-old liver chestnut Saddlebred-Arab cross horse, Motorola. "It's excit-

FYI

For more information, to donate or to sponsor, contact Lorenzo Veal at 313-842-1688 or Lvii@aol.com or Marilyn Graff at 231-821-2487 or m.marilyngraft@frontier.com. Make checks out to Michigan Horse Council and mail to Michigan MJ Mounted Drill Team, c/o Michigan Horse Council, PO Box 22008, Lansing, MI 48909-2008.

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SGT. KIMBERLY PAULSON-MACRITCHIE
Rose Township

ing to be part of this historic event," said Lokuta. "We work very hard with our horses exposing them to parades, marching bands, floats, balloons, loud noises and crowds so the public is able to interact with calm, quiet and responsive horses."

Riding her 10-year-old chestnut Arabian, Nina Kowalski is confident that she has developed a bond of trust through extensive training. "I hope to gain more knowledge about protecting the public for my horse and myself to bring back to Michigan," she said.

Traveling any distance with a horse is expensive. The cost for transportation and housing for each participant is about \$1,500 per person and horse.

Horse Council hopes that businesses and individuals will help support the trip. With such little time for

fundraising, donations and sponsorships are appreciated. Michigan Horse Council is a 501c3 nonprofit and all contributions are tax deductible.

The four are grateful to both Sheriff Michael Bouchard and Captain Douglas Molinar of the Oakland County Sheriff's Office for the chance to serve in this capacity. Beyond hoping for good weather, they have several major goals in mind for their trip — to represent their Oakland County and Michigan team professionally, to excel in their performance, and to have a safe trip for all horses and humans.

Kimba MacRitchie added, "Then we can smile the entire trip stress free."

Send horse or farm information, events or comments to sharonlgreene@hotmail.com.

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