

Cops use taxpayer resources for photo op outside SLT



Ricci by his handler's vehicle at Emerald Bay. Photo/SLTPD

By Kathryn Reed

Instead of patrolling the streets of South Lake Tahoe an officer drove out to Emerald Bay and onto the sands in front of Vikingsholm for a photo shoot.

The reason, according to Police Chief Brian Uhler, "To provide a nice photo to Ms. [Lisa] Maloff who donated over \$100,000 to the police K-9 program."

Officer Scott Crivelli's dog Ricci is sitting next to the police vehicle with Emerald Bay in the background. A non-sworn member of the police department took the photo.

Emerald Bay is not in the city limits. This is also State Parks property. Uhler did not explain why the photo shoot wasn't done in South Lake Tahoe.

Ricci was authorized to do this by "ranking staff", which Uhler said he considered "justified".

When asked if the officer was on overtime, Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*, "It was justified, so no answer required for your question."

Marilyn Linkem, head of the Sierra District for California State Parks, did not return a call or email.

"TRPA code generally does not allow vehicle use on beaches or off-road in stream environment zones," Tom Lotshaw with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency told *Lake Tahoe News*. "That said, there have been exceptions allowed in the past for non-environmentally harmful vehicle-use and equipment on beaches on a limited case-by-case basis."

Uhler said a park ranger unlocked the gate for the officer to get to the beach.

Uhler said this use of city resources – personnel and vehicles – was a good idea because: "It's good to promote our organization in a positive way. Community outreach is vital to any police organization."