

ALASKA DRE AWARDS

The Drug Evaluation and Classification (DEC)/Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) program is an international program intended to equip law enforcement officers with the knowledge and skills required to distinguish between impairment caused by drugs other than alcohol and impairment caused by other reasons. Alaska joined the DEC/DRE program in 2004 and is one of 45 states with an active program.

The Alaska DRE program is made up of state and municipal officers from around Alaska. Currently Alaska has 28 certified DREs. A big part of Alaska's DRE program is community outreach and training. In order to recognize DREs for outstanding service an awards program was instituted January 2012. Three award categories were created:

Training Outreach Award: This award is provided to the DRE who handled the most training for fellow officers through the Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Evaluation (ARIDE) course and to the community through the Drug Impairment Training for Educational Professionals (DITEP) course. Both require extensive time and sacrifice to accomplish beyond normal duty.

Community Outreach Award: This award is provided to the DRE who went above and beyond to engage a local community through schools, businesses and other governmental agencies in order to help people understand what the DRE program is and why it is an important tool, ultimately expanding the influence of the Alaska DRE program.

Award of Excellence: This award is provided to the DRE who maintains proficiency in overall DRE duties conducts community outreach, training outreach and participates in many other activities throughout the year that goes beyond what other DRE's have done throughout the year in an effort to expand the influence of the Alaska DRE program.



On Feb. 22, 2012, Palmer Police Officer Pete Steen, Anchorage Police Department Officer Derek Sitz, Anchorage Police Steve Dunn and Juneau Police Investigator Brandon Lawrenson received awards for their dedication to the Alaska DRE program.

Alaskan Law Enforcement Agencies Participating in DRE Program

- Anchorage Police Department
- Alaska State Troopers
- Fairbanks Police Department
- Juneau Police Department
- Wasilla Police Department
- Soldotna Police Department
- North Pole Police Department
- University of Alaska Fairbanks Police Department
- Unalaska Department of Public Safety
- Alaska Army National Guard

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Officer Steve Dunn with the Anchorage Police Department was awarded the DRE Award of Excellence.

Officer Pete Steen with the Palmer Police Department who is assigned to Alaska Bureau of Highway Patrol was awarded the Training Outreach Award.

Investigator Brandon Lawrenson with the Juneau Police Department was awarded the DRE Community Outreach Award.

Through the awards process it is not uncommon to identify other DREs who have represented the DRE program well. This year two additional DREs were recognized and provide a written commendation for outstanding service:

Officer Derek Sitz with the Anchorage Police Department was recognized for outstanding service during trial in a case where a very low level of marijuana was detected in a defendant. The level was so low had it been any lower the lab would not have been able to test for the substance, yet Officer Sitz was able to determine the proper impairing substance during his initial evaluation and was able to provide valuable testimony during trial to secure a conviction in this case.

Officer Christopher Ritala with the Anchorage Police Department was recognized for outstanding service through outreach to local prosecutors. Officer Ritala was praised by several prosecutors for being extremely approachable and willing to take time to help them better understand the DRE program for more effective prosecution.

For more information regarding the DRE program visit:

<http://www.dot.state.ak.us/highwaysafety/DRE.shtml#>



Anchorage Police Officer Derek Sitz in the field utilizing his DRE skill.

