

# Dogs to the rescue

## Man sees increase in demand to train search-and-rescue dogs after Sept. 11

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Dogs have long been called man's best friend. We rely on them for companionship, protection, physical guidance and more, yet they ask for little in return.

These days we are asking even more of our four-legged friends in direct response to the events of Sept. 11, 2001. A surge in requests to train dogs for search and rescue may be just one indicator of society's concerns, said Matthias Zehfuss, a canine trainer in Lawton.

"Before 9/11, people asked me about dogs; now, they hold the dog on a higher standard," Zehfuss said. "Before 9/11, I did little search-and-rescue training; now, a lot of people are asking for it."

The terror attacks have triggered a change in the way things are done in America. Fear of future terrorist attacks have caused the nation to heighten security in airports and other places, but search-and-rescue skills are most often required after an attack or a disaster have occurred.

Certain dogs can be very helpful in finding lost people, sniffing out bombs and helping in rescues, but those skills still require some fine-tuning. That's



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**Matthias Zehfuss marks a scent for his German shepherd during search-and-rescue training near his home in northwest Lawton. The demand to train dogs for the skill has increased since Sept. 11, 2001.**

where people like Zehfuss come in. His ability to train dogs has become a valuable asset.

Beyond the simple "sit" and "stay" com-

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