



PARAMOUNT GROUP LAUNCHES DEDICATED ANTI-POACHING TRAINING AND K9 ACADEMY

Rustenburg, 25 November 2014 – The Paramount Group, Africa's largest privately-owned defence and aerospace manufacturer has today unveiled an Anti-Poaching Skills and K9 Training Academy in Magaliesberg, South Africa.

The Anti-Poaching Training Academy showcases the merits of up-skilling Conservation Officers with on-the-ground training and the impact effective K9 solutions can have in combatting poaching activities across the continent.

After three years of active involvement by the Ichikowitz Family Foundation and Paramount Group in anti-poaching activities this is a further commitment of its resources to the establishment of an on-the-ground training facility.

One of the largest of its kind in Africa, the Academy will address the ever increasing need for training of Conservation Officers in anti poaching activities, wildlife contraband detection, specialist K9 solutions and Ranger K9 handler training – all of which have proven success rates in combatting and apprehending poachers and their activities.

The centre has been established to provide comprehensive training solutions to assist in curbing the current surge in rhino and elephant poaching. These solutions include specialised anti-poaching reaction unit training, training of handlers and detection dogs at points of access to game reserves and borders, tracking dogs for field rangers, and training special operation dogs for rapid deployment teams, among others.

Says Eric Ichikowitz, Director Ichikowitz Family Foundation: “The last few years of involvement in the war against poaching has taught us that there is no better solution than well trained boots on the ground to effectively combat the wave of poachers that continue to flood into National Parks across the Continent.

“Conservation Officers have to be up-skilled and provided with the necessary training and support in order to effectively combat the increased levels of poaching that is taking place. All the technology in the world is ineffective if you don't have well-trained anti-poaching units on the ground to back it up. These units equipped with specialist K9 solutions have proven to support existing efforts and are highly effective in tracking down poachers and ultimately leading to effective apprehensions.

“In addition we are seeing great results in placing detection dogs at strategic access points where smugglers are moving contraband across borders,” said Ichikowitz.

The facility with 40 adult dogs, breeding stock, and over 50 puppies varying in ages from five weeks to five months is designed to manage in excess of 120 K9's at various stages of development. The facility provides training for up to 20 specialist rangers per training course. Training courses dependent on requirements can be broken down into modules covered over an eight or ten week period.

The dog school specialises in breeding working Belgian Shepherd Dogs (Malinois) and German Shepherd Dogs (GSD) for anti-poaching, military and police, as well as any other specialised K9 solutions. Their breeding stock is selected from pure working bloodlines. The school also has working Rottweiler and Bloodhounds.



“At any one stage we have a large number of K9’s at various stages of development enabling us to develop on each K9’s unique capabilities as identified and tracked from infancy through adolescence. The large pool enables us to select optimal pairings between handlers and dogs, and to experiment with combinations,” says Ichikowitz

“The training protocols have been developed through experience gained in operational environments, working in close conjunction with the Kruger Parks special operations units. The training school in Magaliesberg is a custom developed anti-poaching facility developed to train anti-poaching rangers into specialised K9 handlers and to engage the handlers in the protocols of working with dogs in a wildlife environment,” adds Ichikowitz.

This is the latest initiative from Paramount Group and the Ichikowitz Family Foundation to bolster the response to rhino poaching in South Africa and other African countries, where wildlife populations are under severe threat. The Group’s anti-poaching programmes include the donation of surveillance aircraft and other military equipment to national parks, and the provision of combat training programmes to strengthen the capabilities of counter-poaching units.

The programme has already provided training for game rangers from a number of leading game reserves and national parks across the country, and from the continent. The parks and game reserves include Addo Elephant National Park, Timbavati, Marikela, Loskop/Manyeleti and Gabon National Parks. The programme also has a very close working partnership with SANParks, Stop Rhino Poaching and the Endangered Wildlife Trust.

According to statistics published on SaveTheRhino.org, released by the Department of Environmental Affairs on 5 November 2014, 969 rhinos have been poached, while 336 arrests have been made in South Africa in 2014.

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Paramount Group

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Ichikowitz Family Foundation

Ichikowitz Family Foundation is founded upon the belief that Africa’s potential can be unlocked through education, the respect for human rights, a better understanding of Africa's dynamic history and the conservation of its rich biodiversity. In terms of environmental programmes, the Ichikowitz Family Foundation works to promote personal, communal, and corporate best practice in matters affecting the environment, including the sustainable utilisation of natural resources, conservation of Africa’s unique biodiversity, especially building capacity and support for anti-poaching operations.

Ichikowitz Family Foundation initiates, funds and runs its own projects.

Please visit www.ichikowitzfoundation.com for further information

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