

## News

# KCSO settles dog bite case for \$2 million

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A Bakersfield woman attacked by a Kern County Sheriff's Office K-9 has been awarded \$2 million in what her attorneys said is the largest settlement for a dog bite case against a public entity in California.

Attorneys at Chain Cohn Stiles said in a news release that 21-year-old Erin Casey was attacked by a K-9 while outside a restaurant in north Bakersfield on July 21, 2013.

A deputy responding to a domestic dispute got out of his patrol vehicle and began walking toward Casey when the K-9 left the car, ran toward Casey and attacked her for 60 to 90 seconds, the news release said. She suffered major bite wounds to her leg.

Attorneys Matthew C. Clark and Neil Gehlawat sued the county on her behalf.

Assistant County Counsel Mark Nations said Thursday it was never the deputy's intention for the dog to leave the car.

Nations said the settlement was agreed to because Casey suffered complications from her injuries and will need ongoing medical treatment.

"It was a negotiated result and represents the medical expenses that she's going to incur for the rest of her life," Nations said.

An investigation determined a



LEFT: The dog bite injury, after treatment, suffered by Erin Casey in 2013. ABOVE: The injury, before stitches. CHAIN COHN STILES

mechanical defect inside the car allowed the K-9 to escape its holding kennel, the Chain Cohn Stiles news release said.

The deputy told investigators the dog then did not obey his commands and continued to attack Casey.

"Law enforcement K-9s are capable of inflicting serious injuries, including death, which is

why it is imperative that they only be released when necessary, and in accordance with departmental protocols," Clark said in the news release.

Casey declined an interview request Thursday.

It was unclear Thursday as to whether the K-9 was still in service with the Sheriff's Office.

**"It was a negotiated result and represents the medical expenses that she's going to incur for the rest of her life."**

— Mark Nations, assistant county counsel, Kern County

## BAKERSFIELD OBSERVED

A BLOG ABOUT LIFE, MEDIA, POLITICS & PEOPLE

### Richard Beene

#### CRIME

**Here is a scary scenario:** You are at home watching TV with your spouse on a rainy night and unbeknownst to you, a stranger is in your house rifling through your purse just a few feet away in the master bedroom. It happened this week at a home in the Bakersfield Country Club area and the intruders made off with a purse, jewelry, credit cards and driver's licenses. Said one of the homeowners who asked to remain anonymous: "I'll look great in all my costume jewelry; they were very discriminating criminals. We only turn on the alarm after we go to bed or leave the house. That will change." The theft happened well before 9 p.m. and the couple is now installing security cameras.

#### BREW PUB

**We are only a few weeks away from the opening of a new brew pub in town, this one a**



#### project by Imbibe Wine and Spirits owner David Dobbs and a few partners.

It will be called Craft Tap House and it will be located in the old Garden Spot building at the corner of Truxtun and Oak Street. Hobbs told me there will be craft beers, wine, mixed drinks and a menu modeled after what you might find at Eureka Burger or Moo Creamery.

#### SPOTTED ON TWITTER

**"True self control** is waiting until the movie starts to eat your popcorn."

#### GOOD FORM

**Faced with two ill dogs on New Year's day, Beth Ann Michaels found the phone number for Kern Mobile Vet services (Kern Housecall Veterinary Services) in the newspaper classified section and gave them a ring.**

"The doctors came out for a very nominal fee and examined my two ill dogs," she said. "He has a fully equipped van and all the medications my dogs needed. Another gift for the

animal lovers in Bakersfield."

#### BAD FORM

**Shame on the young blonde in the older gray Pontiac, belching smoke, who gunned her engine and floored it to run the red light at Columbus and Union Avenue and somehow avoided a truck that was going through the light on green.** In this town, it's always best to look both ways even if you do have the green light.

#### MEDIA

**More changes in the local media scene. The latest:** Leeza Starks has been named news director for the Scripps-owned KERO-TV 23. She joins the ABC affiliate from KFSN-TV in Fresno where she was assistant news director. She has previously worked in Columbus, Ohio; Jacksonville, Fla.; and Huntington, W.V. Starks replaces Todd Karli, who left last month to accept an anchor job in Salisbury, Md. Karli's wife, KERO anchor Jackie Parks, will join him in May.

#### LITTER

**Don Luvisi offered this note about**

**trash and litter:** "Those that are too lazy to properly dispose of their take out food containers/wrappers etc just throw them in the back of the pickup bed. They will be lifted right out in a few miles at freeway speeds. See this all the time, rarely see someone throwing litter out the window."

Email Richard Beene, Californian president and CEO, at [rsbeene@yahoo.com](mailto:rsbeene@yahoo.com). His column appears here on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays; the views expressed are his own. Read more on his blog at [BakersfieldObserved.com](http://BakersfieldObserved.com).

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