

MINNESOTA TROOPER

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MINNESOTA TROOPER

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- Quarterly District Association Meetings
- Hardship fund for members who experience a unique hardship such as a natural disaster, illness, or loss of home due to a fire
- Membership into the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association including the Legal Defense Fund
- Membership into the National Trooper Coalition
- A voice on the State Patrol Equipment and Safety Committee



Mike LeDoux • MSPTA President

President's Report

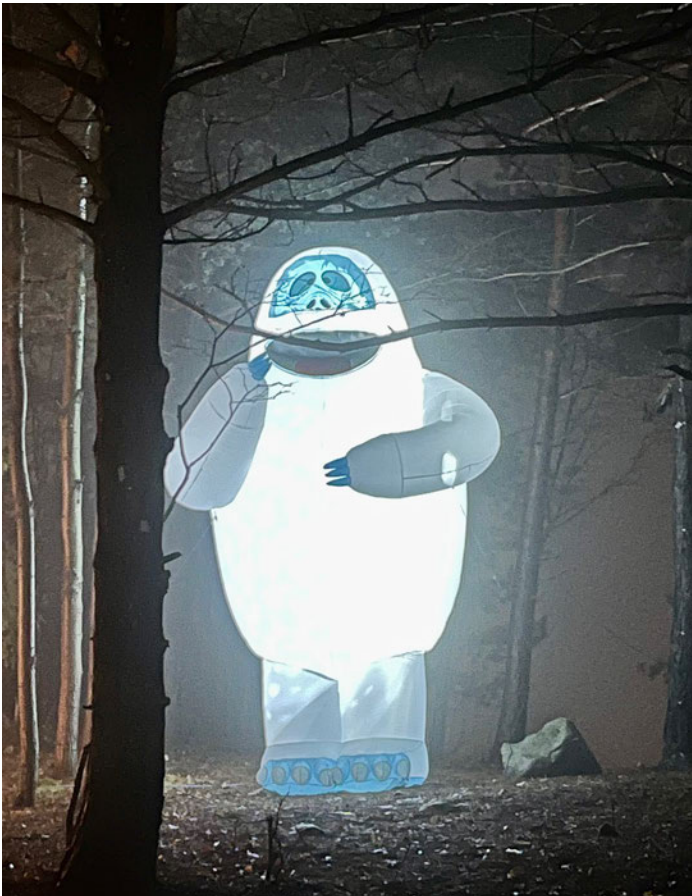
Reflecting on 95 YEARS of Superior Service



As we approach 2024, I reflect on the year coming to an end. 2023 will be remembered for its diverse weather—from abundant snow to an unusually warm and dry summer, a rarity in northern Minnesota. The consistent fall rainfall met our water-related expectations but also resulted in a wet season. This Christmas unexpectedly brought a touch of vitality to my lawn, leading me to reconsider whether stowing away the mower was a premature decision. However, reality reclaimed my attention yesterday as my partner and I responded to incidents of vehicles skidding off the road, a scenario mirrored by my colleagues across the state. Despite these challenges, I hope everyone found solace and enjoyed valuable moments during the holiday season with friends and family.

Regrettably, our attempt to negotiate a settlement for the contract that expired on July 1st with Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) proved unsuccessful on December 18th, leading us to pursue mediation. Despite this setback, I maintain cautious optimism that an agreement can be reached. The release of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) study in January is expected to shed light on the competitive job market we face, particularly compared to the 33-city group established by the legislature in 2020. Although the study will use 2022 wage data, it should underscore that we have fallen over five percent behind the average of the comparison group at the top wage, a gap expected to compound to nearly ten percent in 2023 due to the competitive market. This cycle will persist until we redefine how we determine appropriate compensation for state law enforcement officers.

State troopers are not average, so the expectation that we be paid at or above the average of the comparison group is a reasonable one. Reputation alone will not attract significant numbers of applicants in this challenging job market. Despite our best efforts to recruit and retain existing employees, the lack of job applicants for funded openings has reached historic lows. This trend will no doubt continue, evident in the 21 pages of current law enforcement job openings on the POST web page. The 586 individuals who passed the police officer licensing exam in 2023 don't begin to address the shortfall across the state.



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FARMINGTON MINNESOTA

I recently reviewed the annual actuarial value report for the State Patrol Retirement Plan conducted in July of 2023 by Gabriel, Roeder, Smith & Company (GRS). This report not only provides a clear picture of the financial status of the fund but also offers age-related data on plan membership. The plan had 979 active members in July, with 205 members reaching full retirement age in the next five years. The PERA Police and Fire Plan have 11,635 members, with 2,264 members reaching full retirement age within the next five years. This information emphasizes that our already strained public safety community is poised to deteriorate further unless we tackle the issue of insufficient new professionals entering our profession.

Given these factors, it becomes imperative to intensify recruitment initiatives and explore reemployment programs to retain seasoned state law enforcement officers who have reached full retirement age. This strategic approach not only addresses immediate needs but also facilitates the transfer of invaluable knowledge to the next generation. Many states and federal law enforcement agencies have successfully implemented such programs to ensure optimal staffing levels and address vacant positions. This option can be seamlessly integrated within the existing MSRS rules, specifically for State Patrol Plan members aged 55 and above, without necessitating extensive legislative intervention. The MSPTA is dedicated to collaborating with essential stakeholders to actualize this initiative for all state law enforcement officers desiring to extend their service to their communities.

The legislative session, scheduled to commence on February 12th this year, carries promising momentum due to the delayed start and the fall election cycle for House members. Despite bipartisan support, the Pattern Settlement Bill fell short in the previous session. I express gratitude to Representative Tabke, Speaker Hortman, Senator Howe, Senator Frentz, and others for their unwavering efforts in advocating for the passage of this common-sense legislation. The bill had advanced to the conference committee but curiously disappeared from consideration during the final days of the session. The legislature's lack of emphasis on the wage study legislation passed in 2020, aimed at determining proper compensation for troopers, remains a point of confusion. Despite setbacks, there were notable successes in other areas benefiting both active and retired members.

Particularly commendable is the achievement of a significant increase to 99% for members experiencing total and permanent disability. Additionally, retirees, frozen at one percent since 2014, will now receive a one-time, non-compounding cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). Moreover, the expiration date for supplemental employer contributions to the State Patrol plan was extended from one year to three

years when the plan is fully funded. Furthermore, we secured a \$10 million cash infusion into the State Patrol fund to address increased liabilities resulting from a rise in disability retirements. Notably, the tax bill includes a provision allowing a subtraction of \$25,000 for retired members meeting income requirements outlined on line 29 of the Department of

Revenue M1M form. This long-overdue retirement benefit subtraction highlights the active engagement of the MSPTA during the last legislative session.

Despite challenges, we remain optimistic about the future and are committed to continued efforts in advocating for the best interests of our members in the upcoming sessions.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the membership for reelecting me to the president's position. Serving as the representative for such a talented and dedicated group is truly humbling, and I eagerly anticipate advocating for the membership over the next two years. A warm welcome goes out to the new members joining the MSPTA board. Your presence injects fresh perspectives and energy into our collective efforts. I also want to express my deep appreciation to Delegates Danielson, Johnson, McClure, and McGrew for their invaluable service to the members as they transition off the board.

In 2024, the State Patrol proudly commemorates 95 years of dedicated service to the citizens of Minnesota. Approaching my 30th year of service, I feel privileged to have been part of this longstanding tradition.

Thank you all for your service and sacrifice on behalf of all Minnesotans. Wishing you good health and happiness in the coming year. ♦

Mike #88

PROVERB:
“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”



Colonel Matt Langer

Colonel's Message



THE YEAR AHEAD

It is amazing how fast a year goes by. Many parents are given advice similar to: The days and weeks crawl by, but the years fly by. The same can be said for our careers. Every retiree seems to remark at how fast the years went by, often while standing in a room full of people at our customary coffee/cake gathering. If we listen to their words, it means we also should not wish our lives away by racing to be older.

When I think about 2024, I am very impressed with your work toward our mission. The result of that effort was the recognition that traffic fatalities dropped in 2024. Many states are unable to say that. While a variety of factors played a role, I am of the belief that our focus on speed, lack of seat belt use, impairment, and distraction, most certainly was a major driver. In fact, our enforcement activity was up during the same period of time that traffic fatalities went down. I do not think we can discount that correlation.

Much has been said about traffic stops, with that conversation continuing into the future. They can often be criticized for a variety of reasons. At the same time, it is interesting that less energy gets placed on the positive outcomes that come from traffic stops. This could be a simple conversation that changes someone's driving behavior or choices for the better. That stop is often an educational opportunity, bringing someone's awareness to a problem. It could also result in an arrest that changes someone's life in a profound way, unlikely to occur without that traffic stop.

Focusing on the ways in which we can educate and enforce our way toward safer roads is who we are. It is why many of us signed up for this work and it is something we must believe in to be satisfied with our work. Minnesotans depend on us both on the road and at the Capitol. Like any other year, I'm sure 2024 will bring its share of challenge. At the same time, I am optimistic that 2024 will also bring great joy and a ton of opportunity. ♦

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REFLECTIONS & OPTIMISM

I recently visited with several of members of the Minnesota State Patrol leadership team at the commercial vehicle office in Mendota Heights. I talked with several leaders that I knew and met many others for the first time. My usual introduction includes a joke about my age or my inability to fully retire. I also mention the two things near and dear to my heart: my commitment to DPS and my desire to help uplift public safety.

Many in the room may not have known what to expect from me. Often, leaders are visiting when there is a problem or a request to be made. I had neither. I just wanted to meet more of you.

It's not a secret that we continually face challenges in our profession. The weight of our duties, responsibilities and those challenges is readily apparent. While our work may not always allow for a smooth ride, our successes far outweigh the challenges. I am, above all, optimistic, and I believe our future is bright as we continue to build on the proud traditions of the Minnesota State Patrol.

As your commissioner, I do not want to disappoint your leaders. I certainly do not want to disappoint you. We all have difficult jobs, and the decisions that we all make have consequences. I am keenly aware that it goes for me as well.

I often reflect on a police officer with whom I spoke with a few years ago during a leadership transition. I trusted that officer to tell me what he thought directly, but with compassion. When I asked what he was looking for from a police chief, and leaders in general, his response was pretty simple: "We just want to be proud of them."

To him, being a leader wasn't about being liked, making decisions that are always favorable to the troops or even about being a dynamic leader.

He wanted to respect the leaders' character. It was about confidently knowing what it was his leaders stood for. The officer simply wanted leaders that show they can be trusted to lead in good times and, just as importantly, in difficult moments.

I sometimes wonder if that officer knows that the wisdom he shared went far beyond the initial question. Those same characteristics are what we all should hope for from those who stand alongside us.

I am blessed on a daily basis when I get to come to work and serve with all of you and so many others at DPS who exhibit those very traits.

Most mornings, while my wife and I prepare for the day, we talk about the day ahead, our coffee in hand – hers in her favorite Minnesota State Patrol mug. Before I leave for any particular day's adventure, we take a moment to reflect on you and all those who are serving.

As I finished my first year as your commissioner, the pride I felt when I was chosen to be part of this team beside all of you has only grown. I look forward to 2024, knowing that we will face any challenges together. We will do so with calm and determination, and we will remember to celebrate our successes.

I look forward to meeting more of you. I will want nothing more than to meet you and to thank you. Minnesota is blessed to have you protecting them. ♦

**Minnesota is blessed to have you protecting them.
Thank you.**

DAYS ★ GONE ★ BY

The man behind this magazine

When members of the Executive Council of the Minnesota State Troopers Association were looking for someone to serve as magazine coordinator for the new *Minnesota Trooper*, they had to look no farther than the association's retired secretary-treasurer, Cedric N. Borgstrom.

Borgstrom was elected to serve as secretary-treasurer in 1962 and held that position until his retirement from the Minnesota State Patrol on November 30, 1983. As President Floyd Minnick says of Borgstrom, "Cedric did such an excellent job as secretary-treasurer all those years we knew we couldn't go wrong by choosing him as the magazine coordinator. His hard work has really gotten this project off the ground."

Borgstrom had completed 28 years and three months with the patrol when he retired from service. He entered the MSP as a recruit in June of 1955 and was first stationed in Brainerd. He transferred to Little Falls in 1966 and served there for 17 years, the last eight as station sergeant.

Borgstrom is Minnesota born and bred, the son of Della and



Cedric N. Borgstrom

Richard Borgstrom. His mother was a rural school teacher and his dad farmed. The family lived in Scandia Valley Township in Morrison County. Borgstrom graduated in 1942 from Motley High School.

He served in the navy during World War II and then returned to

the family farm near Little Falls. He spent some time managing the theaters in Little Falls and working as a special deputy for Morrison County. In 1954, he was hired as a regular deputy with the sheriff's department and served for a year as chief deputy until he was accepted, in June of 1955, as a highway patrol recruit.

Borgstrom and his wife, Louise, have been married for 32 years and are the parents of one son, Steven, who lives in New Hope with his wife, Terri. Steve is an instrumental music supervisor in the Osseo School District and Terri works as a secretary at Nortronics.

Since his retirement, Cedric has enjoyed helping his son and daughter-in-law fix up the house they recently bought. He also puts in some time fishing, gardening, and working the family farm he and his sister, Raye Gillson, inherited from their parents.

He belongs to the American Legion, the Disabled American Veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and St. Mary's church in Little Falls. But as his wife, Louise, describes it, "Cedric's greatest hobby is the association and the new magazine."

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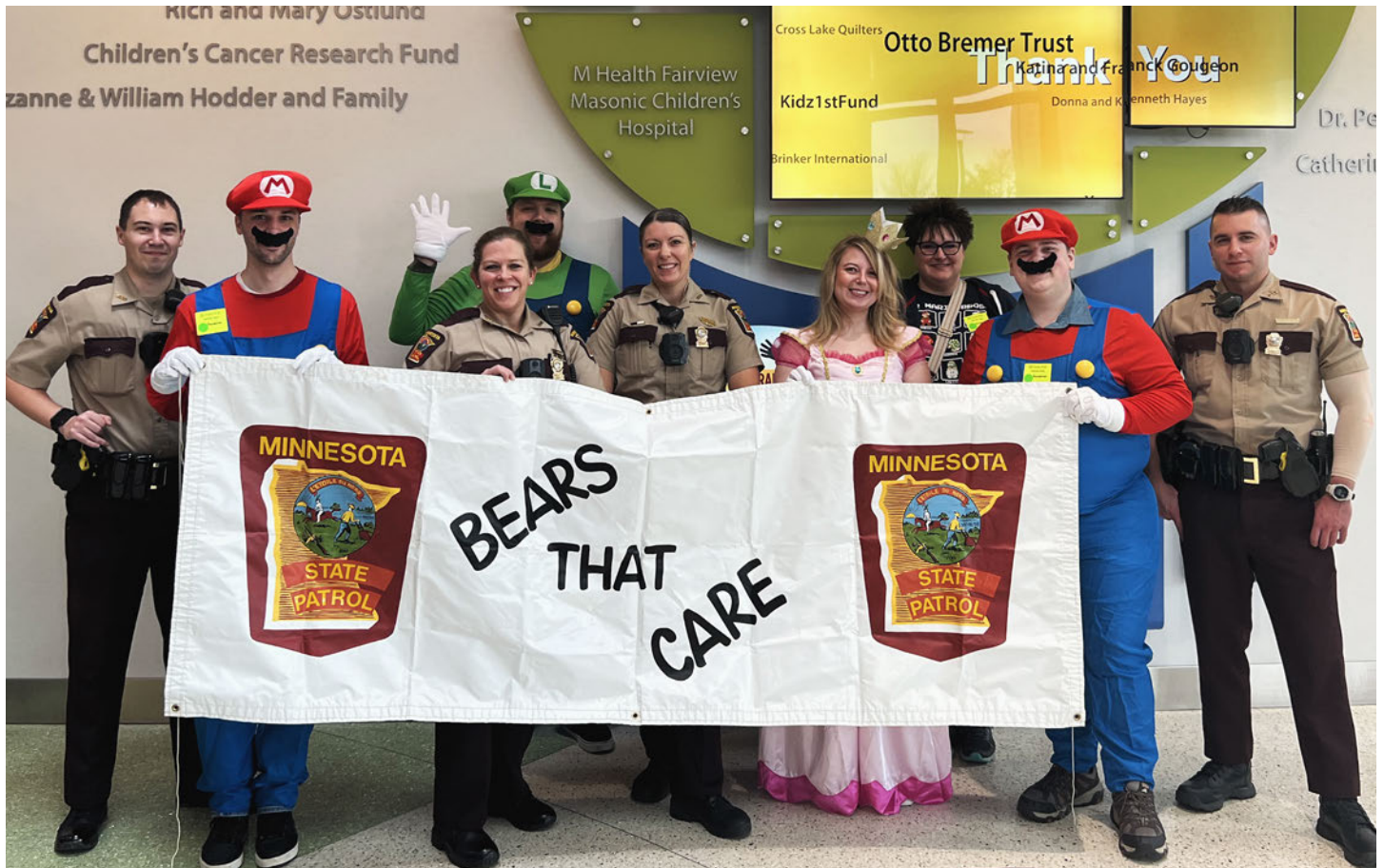
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WE'RE BACK!

Trooper Lisa Lorenzen

AFTER A VERY LONG HIATUS, BEARS THAT CARE IS BACK!

There has been some changes since the last Bears That Care update. The Shriner's Hospital moved their facility to Woodbury so we are not able to visit that location any more and just a name change for the Masonic Children's Hospital; M Health Fairview.

On October 24th a group of troopers and dispatchers went to M Health Fairview Masonic Children's Hospital. That also came with a little bit of change. We were not able to hand out stuffed animals (since they were not new) and we could not wear our character costumes. The dispatchers were able to dress as characters from Mario Brothers which was very well received by the children. The group was split into groups of two and each group had one floor to pass out goodie bags to the kids. I had several kids very excited about the State Patrol's K9 trading cards because they had pictures of "puppies."

Bears That Care was implemented back in 1987 and we have been visiting area hospitals around the holidays. It was created as an outreach program with the help of volunteer troopers and generous donors to provide a smile and a lasting memory to many children and their families dealing with health issues. Participating in the Bears That Care is something that all the volunteers enjoy and look forward to. Without the back of the Troopers Association, private donors, and the volunteers donating their time, Bears That Care would cease to exist. After each visit I hear from others on how much fun they had and cannot wait for the next event. To see the smile on their faces is heartwarming experience.

Since we can no longer accept gently used toys we are looking to order custom stuffed bears. If you would like to donate, go to WWW.BEARSTHATCAREMN.ORG and in the dropdown menu click on **DONATE**. Network For Good directly deposits the check into the Bears That Care account. We appreciate any amount. ♦



Linda Johnson

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URBAN SAFARI: THE MINNEAPOLIS COUGAR ADVENTURE

In the early morning hours of Dec. 4, a Minneapolis Lowry Hill neighborhood became an unexpected host to an unusual visitor. A home surveillance camera documented a cougar calmly striding down an alley, capturing the attention of residents who spotted the big cat on their security cameras and noticed fresh paw prints in the snow. This intriguing incident quickly became the talk of the town, drawing warnings from both the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Minneapolis Animal Care and Control. Parents were advised to keep a close eye on their children and supervise small pets outdoors.

However, the story took a tragic turn on Dec. 6 when the sightings abruptly ceased. West metro troopers responding to a crash on Interstate 394 at Theodore Wirth Parkway discovered a large cat, later confirmed as a cougar, dead in the roadway. Trooper Luke Moren, after speaking with the 53-year-old driver, learned that the driver was unharmed, but his SUV suffered severe damage. The evidence suggested that the driver had collided with the cougar and then with the wall while attempting to avoid the animal. Moren removed the cougar from the road and transported it to the DNR with the assistance of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT).

DNR analysis revealed that the 133-pound cougar was a 2-year-old male tagged in Nebraska in 2021 as a cub. Astonishingly, the tracking data indicated that the cougar had traveled 650 miles from Oglala National Grasslands in northwest Nebraska to Minneapolis. The motive behind this long journey was likely a search for food, territory and a mate.

A DNR expert confirmed that the cougar killed in the crash was likely the same one spotted earlier, as cougars are exceedingly rare in that area. Prior to the first week of December, Hennepin County had not seen a cougar in nearly two decades.

In a noteworthy decision, the DNR plans to transfer possession of the cougar to the Minneapolis Park Board. The park board intends to commemorate the incident by creating an educational exhibit featuring the cougar, to be displayed at Minneapolis recreational centers. However, preparing the cougar for display is a meticulous process that could take up to a year, with an estimated cost of \$11,700. The park board plans to fund this endeavor using its budget, along with public donations, for the taxidermy and display, turning a tragic incident into an educational opportunity for the community. ♦





MEMBER OF
FEEDING AMERICA



December 11, 2023

Mike LeDoux
Minnesota State Patrol Troopers Association
1131 Mesaba Avenue
Duluth, MN 55811

Dear Mike:

Thank you for making the holidays brighter for children, families and seniors who are facing food insecurity right here in our Northland communities as part of your \$500.00 donation to "Have a Heart, Help a Neighbor."

As part of the "Have a Heart, Help a Neighbor" event you helped us raise \$4,847 and 90 pounds of food—the equivalent of 14,613 meals for families, children and seniors in NE Minnesota and NW Wisconsin.

As you know, your contributions put meals on the table for our Northland neighbors experiencing hunger not only at the holiday season but all year long.

We thank you for your generous support and wish you a wonderful holiday season and joyous New Year!

Happy Holidays,

Shaye Moris

Shaye Moris
Executive Director

*Thank you, Mike!
We are so grateful for
all of your support
over the years! You'll
again feed many!*

P.S. If you'd like to leverage additional meals for our neighbors this holiday season, please consider providing a gift in the enclosed envelope. Thank you!

No goods or services were provided in consideration of this donation.

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FUNERALS

On December 7, 2023, Trooper Tony Kaiser and I had the honor of attending the funerals of two fallen heroes of the Nevada State Patrol. Nevada State Patrol Trooper Felix and Sgt. Abbate were both killed by the same impaired driver on November 30th 2023.

Troopers had responded to the report of a “slumper” who was passed out in the driver’s seat of the vehicle on the interstate. While on foot on the side of the roadway, both troopers were struck and killed by a passing vehicle that subsequently fled the scene.

A search ensued and the alleged suspect (driver) of the fleeing vehicle was found to be barricaded inside the suspect’s apartment complex. A short time later the suspect was arrested for DUI and the murder of Trooper Felix and Sgt. Abbate.

The community mourned the deaths and joined a mass of law enforcement officers in showing great support for the fallen heroes and their agency. A church in Henderson, NV hosted the separate funerals for each trooper. Both services were bursting at the seams as the attendees paid their last respect and the troopers were laid to rest. ♦ Trooper Jason Theel

SERGEANT MICHAEL ABBATE (BADGE #304)

had a love for motorsports and grew up in the auto racing community. Sgt. Abbate was very successful throughout his racing career and won championships at both the local and national levels. In 2013, he joined the Nevada Highway Patrol and was very accomplished in his mission. Shortly after joining the agency Sgt. Abbate was placed in charge of the EVO program. A natural in the field, Sgt. Abbate found his true calling and shared his passion with members of the department. He truly enjoyed getting behind the wheel and sharing his knowledge and expertise with his fellow troopers. Recently, Sgt. Abbate represented the Nevada Highway Patrol for the Battle of the Badges interagency auto racing competition and was crowned the 2023 Champion for his efforts. Sgt. Abbate was survived by his wife, Vanessa and three year old son, Vince. He will be forever missed.



TROOPER ALBERTO FELIX (BADGE #502)

was a retired member of the United States Air Force. Not yet done with his service to the country and his community, Trp. Felix joined the Nevada Highway Patrol in 2019. Trp. Felix was known as a “father figure” to his academy classmates and was found to be full of knowledge. As one of the oldest members of his class, Trp. Felix shared his wisdom and life’s learnings with others. He was described as, “an all-around great guy who wanted everyone to succeed.” Trp. Felix was well regarded within the agency and earned the respect he deserved as a leader in DUI enforcement. Trp. Felix worked “dogwatch” over his short career and was revered as a great partner to all. Trp. Felix was survived by his wife, Arlene, and three children, Aries (8), Angeliyah (11) and Alyssa (20). Alyssa proudly spoke of her father at his funeral.



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UNIFIED SPECIAL OLYMPICS NIGHT SHINES!

Trp. Nick Otterson (2800) referees high school basketball in the Brainerd Lakes Area. On January 18, Pillager High School hosted a Unified Special Olympics night during a boys high school basketball game. Youth in local Special Olympics chapters participated in a game. ♦



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37th Annual MSPTA Trooper/Guest



Golf Tournament

LOCATION: New Ulm Country Club; 1 Golf Drive; New Ulm, MN 56073

DATES: Monday July 22nd & Tuesday July 23rd

TIME: July 22nd – 10:30am tee time (2 person best ball)

July 23rd – 9:30am tee time (4 person scramble)

COST: \$150/person – Includes 2 rounds of golf, cart, use of range, 2 course lunches, banquet dinner on the 22nd, hospitality room 21st & 22nd.

Trooper/Guest: _____ Active: ___ Retired: ___

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Trooper/Guest: _____ Active: ___ Retried: ___ Guest: ___

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Twosome you want to be paired with on day one: _____

- Please mail registration form in by June 1st.
- Make checks payable to MSPTA Golf and mail to Kenny Dellwo, 130 Windsor Drive, Le Sueur, MN 56058.
- After June 1st registration will be opened to any allied agencies that wish to participate.
- Maximum of 144 golfers.

Tournament is open to all active or retired troopers, supervisors, RCOs, CVIs, support staff, capitol security officers, and their guests.

A block of rooms are available for a discounted rate at the Best Western Plus in New Ulm. The rooms will be held until June 21st. Rooms are under Minnesota State Patrol Troopers Association Golf Tournament. Phone – 507-359-2941 or use the following link to book online:

https://www.bestwestern.com/en_US/book/hotel-rooms.24142.html?groupId=H55NN5H4

Feel free to call/text 952-220-7103 or email Kenneth.dellwo@gmail.com and I can send you the link directly if that is easier.

There are also several campgrounds in the area for anyone with a camper or RV. The nearest is Flandrau State Park, which has campsites available and is located immediately adjacent to the golf course.

Practice rounds will be available on Sunday, July 21st for a discounted rate. Call the New Ulm Country Club at 507-479-2739 and ask for the State Patrol discount.

Check-in/Registration at the golf course will be from 8:30-10:00am on July 22nd.

If you would like to purchase an additional banquet dinner for any guests that will be non-golfers, the cost will be \$30. Please either indicate on registration form or call/text/email me (952-220-7103 / Kenneth.dellwo@gmail.com) if you will be bringing a non-golfing guest so that I can get an accurate head count.

A shuttle service between the golf course and the hotel should be available the evening of the 22nd for those who desire to make use of it.

MOBILE RESPONSE TEAM (MRT) SHOWCASES TACTICAL TRAINING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT CADETS

On Dec 6, 2023, MSP District 3100 personnel gave a short hands-on instruction/demonstration of our Mobile Response Team (MRT) to Law Enforcement Cadets at the Hibbing Community College. The Cadets were instructed and participated in MRT crowd control movements, given a hands-on introduction to the tools used by CART team members, and given a live demonstration

in defeating a sleeping dragon protest device by Extraction Team members. We completed this session with a donation of \$150.00 from the MSPTA to the Hibbing Community College Law Enforcement Club used for community engagement projects. ♦

Trooper Travis Pearson #418



REMEMBER & HONOR



MINNESOTA RETIRED PEACE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

REMEMBERS THOSE RETIRED PEACE OFFICERS WE'VE LOST IN 2023



**DONALD ELMER
JOKINEN**

August 27 2022
Age 89
MSP 1957-1967
SP 52



**RUBEN
HOFFMAN**

March 21 2023
Age 96
MSP 1954-1985
SP 73



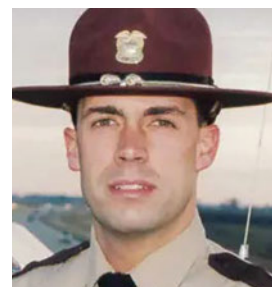
**ALLEN
KASTNER**

April 9 2023
Age 75
MSP 1982-2001
SP 192



**ROBERT "BOB"
WATKINS**

April 27 2023
Age 94
MSP 1954-1985
SP 6



**BARRY
CARLSON**

June 14 2023
Age 52
MSP 1994-2005
SP 177

Always
WITH US



**JAMES "JIM"
CHARLES**

June 5 2023
Age 100
DNR 1956-1982
K 2



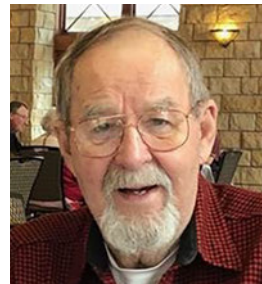
**EUGENE
ZAPPA**

July 1 2023
Age 91
MSP 1957-1987
SP 297



**PAUL
LIVINGSTON**

August 1 2023
Age 76
MSP 1970-1980
SP 407



**JOHN
GREENE**

July 31 2023
Age 85
MSP 1967-1992
SP 104



**PETER LAWRENCE
JENSEN**

October 25 2023
Age 71
DNR 1982-2000
K359



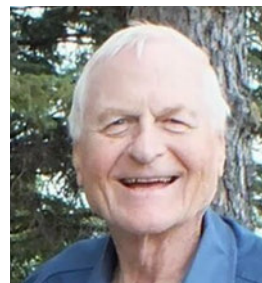
**ANTHONY "TONY"
KOZOJED**

October 29 2023
Age 82
MSP 1967-1995
SP 346
Chief 1991-1993



**SAMUEL JAMES
BOE**

November 24 2024
Age 81
MSP 1966-1997
SP 181



**MITCHEL DONOVAN
JOHNSON**

November 25 2023
Age 90
MSP 1957-1988
Lieutenant



Kelly Phillip (D2000) with members of the Italian State Police.

TROOPERS UNITE: INSIGHTS FROM THE NATIONAL COALITION MEETING IN ATLANTIC CITY

By Trooper Kelly Phillips SP 435

At the beginning of October 2023, Mike LeDoux, Kelly Phillips, and Eric Bormann attended the National Troopers Coalition meeting in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Several states were in attendance to discuss issues occurring around the country and how they plan to address

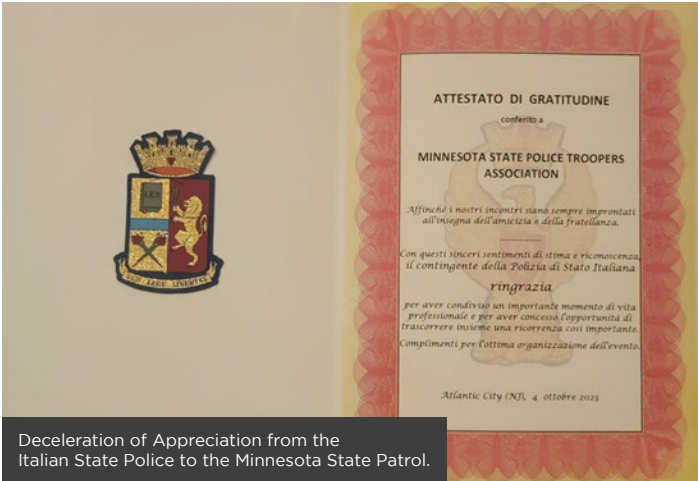
them or have addressed them. The New Jersey State Police also hosted members from the Italian State Police. Many new friendships were made through google translate throughout the week! All in all, it was a very informative week! ♦



Mike LeDoux (President), Eric Bormann (D2100), and Kelly Phillips (D2000) standing with members of the New Jersey State Police



MSPTA with Wisconsin State Patrol on the boardwalk



Deceleration of Appreciation from the Italian State Police to the Minnesota State Patrol.

“BY THE
DAWN’S
EARLY
LIGHT”

Photo courtesy of Sgt Mike LeDoux
SP 88 - 2730 station.



1930 Harley-Davidson MHP Replica



RETIRED TROOPER DAY

TUESDAY
AUGUST 6, 2024

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NEW STATE PATROL RECRUITING MARKETING CAMPAIGN TAPS EXTERNAL EXPERTISE

As those in law enforcement know firsthand, record-low recruitment and officer shortages are affecting agencies nationwide, including in Minnesota. According to a recent KARE 11 news story, half of Minnesota's 400+ police departments are understaffed, with the state currently short more than 1,000 officers. In the last two years, police departments in four rural Minnesota towns have disbanded, due primarily to issues with officer recruitment and retention.

The Minnesota State Patrol (MSP) is not immune to the same staffing issues affecting other law enforcement agencies. Expected and ongoing trooper retirements and smaller trooper recruitment pools and classes have increased the need for MSP to more aggressively recruit new troopers. To that end, in late spring 2023, MSP embarked on a first-ever search for an external marketing partner to assist MSP in sharing the agency's multiple attributes and more effectively reaching potential trooper candidates.

MSP distributed nationally a request for proposal (RFP) for a partner to support "a statewide and regional marketing initiative to reach and attract persons who have potential interest in pursuing a professional law enforcement career with the MSP. The RFP also noted MSP's desire for "new and refreshed marketing of the Minnesota State Patrol." MSP-specified desired services included the ability to conduct market research and data analysis, develop and conduct a comprehensive, statewide marketing campaign using all forms of traditional and social media, and deliver multi-media production and ad buy capabilities.

Hitting the Ground Running

In June 2023, after vetting multiple candidates, MSP contracted and began working with Twin Cities-based Mod & Company (Mod), a full-service advertising, design and traditional and social media marketing firm. According to MSP, Mod stood out in its bid due in part to its prior experience working with other state agencies and its familiarity with conducting

statewide marketing campaigns. To meet MSP's specific needs, unique among other law enforcement agencies, Mod also engaged additional staffing resources with expertise in research, marketing strategy and public safety.

"We were impressed with Mod's experience, examples and success in developing and executing marketing campaigns across Minnesota, including for difficult-to-reach audiences, the knowledge of their agency principals, and their evident passion to assist MSP," said Maj. Chris Erickson, a member of the RFP selection committee and primary MSP point of contact for the marketing contract. "It was clear Mod not only understood what makes the Patrol unique, but also has what it takes to effectively execute on our agency's behalf."

From the outset of its work, Mod has emphasized the need to establish and convey what distinguishes MSP



NOT JUST A JOB. A CAREER.
The Minnesota State Patrol.



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from other law enforcement agencies in the state -- a tough task, given the attributes of these other agencies, but necessary given that all agencies are competing for the same limited pool of talent. To differentiate MSP, Mod began by emphasizing research-driven decision-making: marketing decisions for MSP based on sound research and analysis, not potentially flawed assumptions. Through research, for example, Mod would be better able to understand career path decisions among current troopers, and thus more cost-effectively create and design marketing messages and visuals to potentially influence others in making a similar career decision.

As with other careers involving considerable knowledge and training, Mod knew an individual decision to become a law enforcement officer, including a trooper, is typically not made overnight.

“We know that major life decisions, like a career choice, are made in stages, and can involve multiple influences and influencers,” said Sean McDonnell, Mod account manager for MSP. “Our work for MSP is based on behavioral decision-making, which emphasizes incremental steps and trial phases. Just as you likely would do a test drive and comparative research before buying a car, a trooper recruit will likely want to talk to some troopers, do a ride-a-long, and talk to friends and family, before pursuing an MSP career. Our marketing will emphasize chances to ‘try’ MSP, as with ride-alongs and other means.”

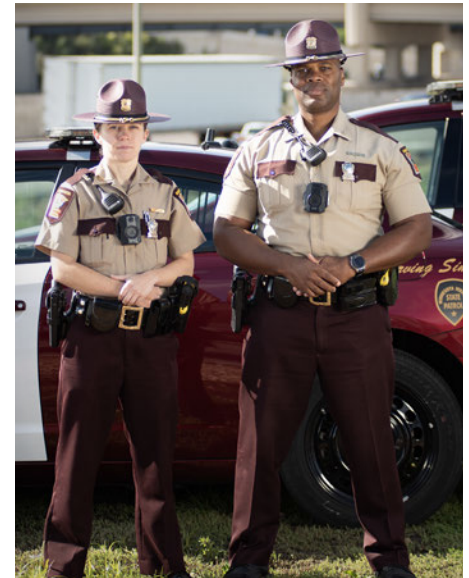


Implementing the Plan

The recruiting marketing plan Mod has developed for MSP is divided into three distinct phases, as detailed below:

- **DISCOVERY** – Review prior MSP marketing materials and e-communications; survey MSP troopers and Minnesota civilians; conduct comparative research of MSP with other state patrol agencies; participate in MSP ride-alongs.
- **STRATEGY** – Based on the Discovery phase, create an overarching marketing strategy, including recommendations on optimal approaches toward recruitment marketing (e.g. advertising, social media, etc.), key messages and key distribution channels and events.
- **IMPLEMENTATION/ADJUSTMENT** – Based on the Strategy phase, create, design and place targeted MSP marketing and advertising, coordinated to MSP’s recruiting timeline and needs. As the campaign continues, monitor and make adjustments, as needed, to enhance marketing messages and visuals.

The Discovery phase of Mod’s work, conducted during the summer and early fall of 2023, verified some beliefs about MSP’s needs, as well as some surprises. For example, Mod’s survey of 392 troopers and 408 civilians revealed the need for MSP to begin its recruiting marketing outreach earlier in young people’s lives than previously thought. More than



Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) for MSP to appear at season-end sports tournaments in the 2023-24 school year. The goal is to get MSP in front of high school students and their families, elevate the MSP brand, and provide career path information for future consideration. Through this partnership, MSP ads appeared in tournament programs for the state volleyball and football tournaments, at Xcel Energy Center and U.S. Bank Stadium, respectively, and troopers appeared at designated MSP booths during these tournaments. MSP anticipates further MSHSL tournament participation in the winter and spring of 2024.

Looking Ahead - Implementing Plans

Based on the Discovery phase, Mod and MSP are working on finalizing recruiting marketing plans, messaging and visuals. By late winter 2024, Mod will begin rolling out new marketing messages and creative materials to promote MSP recruiting, such as to promote the sign-up period for the Law Enforcement Training Opportunity (LETO) program, open to applications from March 1-29, 2024.

Further into 2024, Mod will be identifying key opportunities for MSP to participate in events and initiatives that puts the agency in front of teens and young adults in potentially new and novel ways, with supporting MSP advertising. For example, the Mod civilian survey revealed widespread common interest among young adults in attending live music concerts of all types.

“We consider the staff at Mod to be the marketing experts, and we’re looking to them for ideas that help us get word out about MSP in new and interesting ways,” Erickson said. “As our team has told Mod, the reality is that to recruit the next generation of troopers, we need to stay true to our roots and culture, but also attract recruits who reflect the increasingly diverse demographics of those we serve.” ♦

half of troopers reported deciding on their career path in or even before high school. The civilian survey, as well as trooper ride-alongs, showed the need for MSP to emphasize “protection” as a focal point of its work, versus traditional messages around “enforcement.” Discovery also revealed opportunities for MSP to increase its marketing outreach toward women and people of color.

As Mod was conducting its Discovery phase, it also knew of multiple other time-sensitive marketing needs for MSP. For example, to update the MSP photo library, Mod conducted four separate full-day photography sessions of troopers and vehicles, providing 1,000+ new professional photos for MSP use. Mod put these photos to immediate use in targeted social media campaigns to promote MSP’s windows for traditional applications, in August, and experienced traffic safety officer (ETSO) applications, in September.

Mod also spearheaded a new partnership for MSP with the

THE RED FLAG LAW— FROM A TROOPER’S PERSPECTIVE?

By Mark Schneider

Effective January 1, 2024, a chief law enforcement officer, their designee, a city or county attorney or any family or household member of an individual, may petition the court for an Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) directing the subject individual to forfeit weapons in their possession. *Minn. Stat. §624.7171*. A court may issue an ERPO on an emergency basis if the court determines there is probable cause that the individual “poses a significant danger of bodily harm to other persons or is at significant risk of suicide by possessing a firearm and that the individual presents an immediate and present danger of either bodily harm to others or taking their life...” *Minn. Stat. §624.7174(c)*. An emergency ERPO may issue on an ex parte basis without notice to the individual. An emergency ERPO is valid for 14 days unless a hearing is scheduled. *Minn. Stat. §624.7174(e)*. An ERPO must be served personally upon the individual unless service other than personal service is allowed by the court in the event the individual is avoiding service by personal service. *Minn. Stat. §624.7171, subd. 4(i)*.

In the event the individual subject to the ERPO does not voluntarily relinquish possession of their firearms to a federally licensed firearms dealer or law enforcement agency within 24 hours from the issuance of the ERPO, the court must issue a search warrant to the local law enforcement agency to take possession of the firearms as soon as practicable upon a finding that there is a risk of an immediate and present danger under *Minn. Stat. §624.7172, subd. 2(f)* and there is probable cause to believe the individual possesses firearms. Further, “only if the respondent refuses to voluntarily comply with the order to surrender the respondent’s firearms shall the officer or officers tasked with serving the search warrant execute the warrant.” *Minn. Stat. §624.7175(d)*.

The spirit behind the “Red Flag” law makes sense. If an individual poses a threat to others or themselves, removing firearms from that person’s residence is appropriate. Similarly, a process to petition a court to seek removal of firearms from an individual who is a threat to others or themselves, is a



rational means by which to alleviate the threat to others. But what about the threat faced by officers in the event they are required to execute a search warrant when the individual fails to voluntarily turn over their firearms to a federally licensed firearms dealer or a law enforcement agency?

As we know, *Minn. Stat. §609.066* was amended in 2020 to set parameters on an officer's use of deadly force when dealing with an individual suffering from a mental illness. By requiring officers to execute a search warrant directed a person proven to be a threat and suffers from a mental illness, places officers in an untenable situation. *Minn. Stat. §609.066, subd. 2(b)* prevents an officer from using deadly force against a person who poses a danger to themselves if that person does not pose a threat of death or great bodily harm to the peace officer or to another. However, the bases for an ERPO requires a showing that an individual either currently poses a threat of death or great bodily harm to others or themselves. In addition, the fact that the officers executing a search warrant know of the individual's mental illness increases the uncertainty and may alter the analysis of when the use of deadly force is appropriate depending on the circumstances confronted by officers when executing the warrant.

The prospect of being held liable, criminally or civilly, is a valid concern given the position officers will face when executing an ERPO search warrant. The uncertainties and increase risks resulting from application of the "Red Flag" law are apparent. This is especially true in the instance when the individual has failed to voluntarily relinquish possession of their firearms resulting in the need for a search warrant

directing law enforcement officers to obtain possession of those firearms.

To some extent, it appears the legislature recognized the difficult situation officers are placed in when either serving an ERPO or executing a search warrant. The legislature provided liability protection in *Minn. Stat. §624.7178, subd. 3* as follows:

A peace officer, law enforcement agency, and the state or political subdivision by which a peace officer is employed has immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, for harm caused by a person who is the subject of an extreme risk protection order, a search warrant issued pursuant to section 624.7175, paragraph (d), or both, after service of the order or execution of the warrant, whichever comes first, if the peace officer acts in good faith in serving the order or executing the warrant.

While the liability immunity extends to harm caused by the person subject to the ERPO, it does not fully address immunity from liability for harm caused by the law enforcement officer in serving the ERPO or executing a search warrant when needed. As a result, while the spirit of the "Red Flag" law is understandable, the risks placed on law enforcement to enforce the law are problematic given the limits on the legislation and current statutory law regarding use of deadly force. If you have questions about the "Red Flag" law, what it means and how it will be applied by your agency, please contact your union representative. Stay safe and thank you. ♦



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THE TROOPER ROB FRISBY AWARD

THE TROOPER ROB FRISBY AWARD WAS STARTED BY THE MOUNDS VIEW POLICE DEPARTMENT IN 2018 - WHY YOU ASK?

Trooper Rob Frisby SP247, better known as “Friz”, started his MSP career in 1990 and was the guy you wanted to know, listen to and learn from. He was witty, positive about life, extremely knowledgeable about the job and usually made you laugh. Rob worked 4550, 4560, metro dogwatch and was an SRT member, but quickly became an informal leader, relationship builder and friend to many. Rob later moved into the canine program for 15 ½ years and worked with two detector K9’s (Nikki and Beans).

After transferring back to the 4560 station in 2015, Rob quickly formed those same close relationships with the Mounds View Police Department as he had earlier in his career.

In 2017, Rob was diagnosed with an aggressive form of soft tissue sarcoma and went through four types of chemotherapy with limited, or no response and was starting to see cancer growth in other areas.



L-R: Jen Frisby (Rob's wife), Sgt. Knitter, Sgt. Arredondo, Robert Frisby Sr. (Rob's dad), Ellie Frisby (Rob's daughter), Kris Frisby (Rob's sister), Carol Frisby (Rob's mom).

better person. You have honesty and integrity running through your body like the blood in your veins. You have the courage to own your mistakes and strive not to repeat them. These are my friends, family and co-workers. Surrounding myself with people like you makes life easy. ”

Rob retired in 2017 at the age of 50, with over 31 years in law enforcement, 27 years with the State Patrol. Rob's positive persona and attitude was infectious, and is easily noted in a portion of a letter he wrote to the district prior to his retirement:

“I've had several opportunities with the patrol that I am very grateful for. People have told me I'm such a great guy. It makes me smile because I'm great because of them. You want to be a great person, surround yourself with great people. People that are better people than yourself, people you look up to. People that treat you with respect, would do anything for you and who you would do anything for. Those are my friends, family, and co-workers. You all are the great people, I'm just riding your coattails.

You treat others with respect. You treat others the way you'd like your family to be treated by someone. You demand excellence from yourself and in everything you do, at work and in your private life. You are your own worst critic and you constantly strive to make yourself a

Rob passed away in 2018, but the positive culture and impact he left with the Minnesota State Patrol and Mounds View Police Department lives on through the Trooper Rob Frisby Award.

This award was created by the Mounds View Police Department who wanted to continue recognizing the positive impact Rob had on their department and its members!

The Trooper Rob Frisby Award is given every two years to the Mounds View Police Officer and the West Metro 4560 District Trooper who exemplifies Rob's Core Values of:

- Teamwork
- Espirit de corps
- Knowledge
- Respect
- Integrity
- Courage
- Honor

The 2022 Trooper Rob Frisby Award recipients Sgt. Andrew Arredondo & Sgt. Ben Knitter with the Frisby Family at the awards banquet on October 5, 2023.

The Frisby Family are strong supporters of the State Patrol and first responders and are grateful for the relationship we share today. Reflect on the positive things in life, the impact you have at work each day and be grateful for those around you - this is what "Friz" would want. Be safe. ♦

By Captain Jason Bartell

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