

MINNESOTA TROOPER

Volume 37 · Number 2 · June 2022





- Windshield Replacement & Calibration

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Tuesday August 2, 2022

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MINNESOTA TROOPER

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2019-20 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

President

Mike LeDoux
mj55804@gmail.com

Secretary

Rick Harjes
rickharjes@hotmail.com

Southern Delegate-at-Large

Jason Theel
jtheel00@yahoo.com

District 2000

Kelly Phillips
khillips435@msn.com

District 2200

Kenny Delwo
district2200mspata@gmail.com

District 2400

Blake Cederstrom
ceder02@yahoo.com

District 2600

Lee McClure
mspata2600@gmail.com

District 2800

Kelly Johnson
kraj3@gmail.com

District 3100

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tpearson21@yahoo.com

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Mark Baker
bbuck239@gmail.com

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msptavice@gmail.com

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richard.orpen@gmail.com

Northern Delegate-at-Large

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darcyweinrich@yahoo.com

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Eric Bormann
ericbormannsp382@gmail.com

District 2300

Andrew Larson
andrew_larsen_03@hotmail.com

District 2500

Nick Hanson
nickwhanson@yahoo.com

District 2700

Mark McGrew
msp373@gmail.com

District 2900

Gerald Hanson
gthanson@hotmail.com

District 3200

Jack Danielson
mspata50@paulbunyan.net

What does the MSPTA do for its Members?

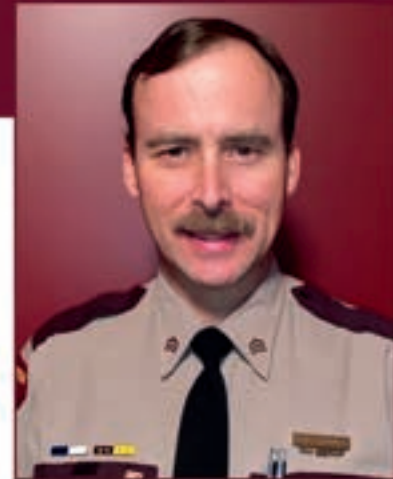
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- The *Minnesota Trooper* Magazine
- Quarterly District Association Meetings
- Hardship fund for members who experience a unique hardship such as a natural disaster, illness, or loss of home due to a fire
- Membership into the Minnesota Police and 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



Challenges

As I write this article, I await the results of the contract vote. My thanks to the members of the negotiating team for their tireless commitment to the membership. The new members of the team have a greater appreciation of the challenges of the process. During this round of negotiations, I had the privilege of being the Chair of the Minnesota Law Enforcement Association (MLEA). This was my last opportunity to hold this position before I retire. I wish future chairs well and hope that continued progress is made to correct the wage disparity issues. I look forward to the day when the pattern settlement plague is erased from the negotiation process. This practice has done immeasurable harm to state law enforcement officers and their families for most of my career. We must remain focused on the three P's; pay, pensions, and protections during negotiations and in the legislature.

This legislative session has been a busy one for the MSPTA. We were given the opportunity to testify on several occasions on issues important to the membership. These issues ranged from pay and pensions to recruitment and retention. Refunding instead of defunding law enforcement has become a common theme nationwide. The results of reactive versus proactive law enforcement have proven to be disastrous.

Once again, pattern settlement language was introduced in the Senate (SF3241) and two versions in the House (HF3778/

"If you do not take an interest in the affairs of your government then you are doomed to live under the rule of fools"

-Plato

HF4730). This legislation would strengthen the salary survey language of 299D.03 and provide much needed legislative oversight for ten years to assure that this wage disparity is eliminated so we can continue to recruit, retain, and retire dedicated public safety professionals. The criticism of this legislation lacks merit, and merely shows the refusal to acknowledge the problem or to take meaningful steps to address it.

As predicted, we have more openings than qualified applicants because of retirements and resignations statewide. The State Patrol had funding for an academy of approximately 75 but currently has only 12 cadets in it. The skewed, and often inaccurate depictions of our profession in the media have no doubt impacted recruitment. We must all do what we can to correct this mischaracterization in our communities. In Minnesota, law enforcement officers are retiring and leaving the profession at unprecedented levels. If this trend continues, we will experience a public safety crisis not experienced in our lifetimes. I come from a proud law enforcement family which began their service in 1923, starting with my great grandfather. I can assure you that after 99 years of service in the profession, this current crisis is unprecedented. As of July 2021, approximately 1,707 PERA Police and Fire members fall between the ages of 50-54 and 147 MSRS State Patrol Plan members fall in this range. The question is not will these members retire but when?

The challenge for management is to maintain staffing and standards with a limited applicant pool. Future decisions will have to be based on knowledge not numbers. The MSPTA is committed to working with management and elected officials to find solutions to the recruitment crisis. We choose to be better not bitter. ♦

Mike #88

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Colonel Matt Langer

Colonel's Message



Take time to REST

The calendar and our weather just haven't been in sync this year. While we endured a true Minnesota winter, it also feels like the spring that just will not happen. Hopefully by the time you receive this edition of the Trooper magazine, golf courses are packed, people are fishing from boats in Northern Minnesota, and the grass is growing.

I am glad that we have been able to fulfill our goal of providing training on sleep and financial wellness. Hopefully you took something away from both seminars. During a recent training session at the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association conference, I had the opportunity to provide some of the insights I've learned over the years in terms of resiliency. One of the concepts I spoke about was rest. It is so important. Sleep is certainly one way that we gain rest. Our ability to cope with stress and trauma while sleep deprived is just so much more difficult than when we are rested. Focusing on rest is a good thing!

There is an old saying about rest that resonates with me, "There are two types of tired: one that requires rest and one that requires peace." Over the past couple of years, we have had to work hard to find peace. The kind of rest we all probably need is more than what a sleep cycle can provide.

Getting away from work, intentionally turning off the noise, and focusing on rest (peace) is one hope that I have for you this summer.

There are so many things that might be causing stress within our profession right now, certainly more than can be articulated in this brief passage. As you reflect on what is running through your mind, I encourage you to objectively assess which things you can control and which things you cannot. The wisdom to know the difference between the two allows you to let go of that which you cannot control. Easier said than done, if your mind is wired like mine. Our ability to turn our mind off and rest increases when we are not obsessing about anything - especially things we cannot control.

Our mission is critical. It is perhaps more critical now than at any time in the history of our state. But, we will not be successful in our mission if we do not take care of ourselves and each other. As we enter the summer months, please take time off to rest. Strive to let go of what you cannot control. A combination of the two might just be what is needed to be invigorated for the future. I hope to see you soon. ♦

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Remember when

In 1972, 857 men applied for the Minnesota Highway Patrol Candidate School. Twenty candidates were selected for the 23rd Candidate School and were paid \$3.08 an hour for the 12 weeks of training. Eighteen candidates graduated from the class; 12 of them went to work immediately and the six remaining graduates were placed within seven months.

There were only two promotions in 1972. Norris Sletten was promoted to captain on January 12, and Jack Murray was promoted to captain on August 30.

On April 4, 1973, James Crawford was promoted to the position of chief highway patrol officer. Gerald Kittridge assumed the position of assistant chief. Other promotions in 1973 included Harlan Fredeen and Arnie Waldron to the rank of major. Wes Paulus was promoted to an exempt rank captain on October 3.

October 15, 1973, is sadly remembered as the date Trooper Donald Ziesmer was shot to death. Don Ziesmer met his untimely death in a shoot-out during a traffic stop on Highway 61 near Tofte.



36/MINNESOTA TROOPER

Deaths of Patrolman, Chicagoan Investigated

Dispatch News Service

GRAND MARAIS — Grand County and state authorities today were investigating the deaths of a state highway patrolman and a Chicago man who apparently died in a shootout on U.S. Highway 61 near Tofte Monday.

The victims were identified as Patrolman Donald Ziesmer, 46, Grand Marais, and George Aho, 46.

COOK COUNTY Atty. Norris Hystad said a woman identified as Aho's wife was present at the scene and is being held in Cook County Jail at Grand Marais. She has not been charged with a crime in connection with the deaths, he said.

Ziesmer's patrol car and Aho's 1973 Dodge van were found parked near each other with the officer's sidarm and a 22-caliber semi-automatic. Earlier reports said Ziesmer had stopped the van around 2:40 p.m. and had returned to his patrol car when a shot was fired at him through the windshield to spark the shooting exchange.

DETAILS by the incident were not available today, but the Cook County sheriff's office could not be reached for further details.



In Memoriam.
Trooper Donald Ziesmer was shot to death on October 15, 1973, in a shootout near Tofte.



Minnesota Highway Patrol pilot Larry Presnall picks up blood for emergency air transport.

Remember When



Dan Prischmann and Clarence Nylund on graduation day, September 1, 1972



Denny Landborg studies for exams.



The 1972 recruit class

GONE ★ BY



Tom Anthony and Dan Prischmann after one of their shaving cream fights



Dan Prischmann studies at night for A.I. exam.



Dennis Landborg and Roger Waleski on graduation morning



The 1973 pistol team: Front row, Bob Kind, David Ninneman, Richard Abraham and Gene Abraham. Back row, E. Saign, Mel Dahlberg, Lyle Wright, Don Keepers and Roger Lenz.

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TEAMWORK – An Overview of the State Patrol Body- Worn Camera Deployment

Submitted by Captain Jeremy Geiger

Through bi-partisan support, a bill was signed into law in 2021 by Governor Tim Walz that appropriated over \$7 million dollars to acquire, install, and train all members of the Minnesota State Patrol with body-worn cameras and integrated squad video systems. This funding was a significant commitment that also included ongoing financing to support the systems into the future. Almost immediately after the bill was signed, a project team was developed in April 2021 and work began to accomplish the daunting goal of outfitting over 700 members with these new systems.

The MSP Body-Worn Camera Project Team included Major Sean Meagher, Captain Jeremy Geiger, Captain Jason Bartell, Lieutenant Nate Danley, Lieutenant Jason Hanson, and Sergeant Rick Harjes. In addition to this team focused on the actual body-worn and squad-car camera deployment, members of the State Patrol IT Staff worked diligently behind the scenes to ensure the technology structure was in place and make certain these new programs communicated seamlessly with our current systems. Although just about every person with MSP IT had some hand in the deployment, Steve Bluml, Brent Jaeger, and Pat Pueringer put in many hours to make it successful.

After the required contracts were signed and purchasing agreements solidified, cameras, Tasers, and all other associated equipment was ordered in August 2021 and it started to arrive in September. In October 2021, a team from the Axon Company



came to Minnesota to fully train the members of the Project Team along with 15 troopers (identified as Power-Users) around the state. The Power-User group included Garrett Bondhus (2100), Ben Madsen (2200), Andrew Larson (2300), Scott Schneider (2400), Brett Hoy (2400), Lt. Paul Stricker (2500), Nick Hanson (2500), Jim Brings (2600), Keith Erickson (2700), Travis Koenen (2800), Cody Kisor (2900), Alan Ryan (3100), Jesse Herding (3200), Jason Theel (4600), and Warren Schroden (4700).

In November 2021, these 'Power-Users' were issued body-worn cameras and their squad cars were equipped with new equipment; they became the first members of the State Patrol to utilize this new technology and their role was essential to the upcoming successful statewide deployment of these systems. After each shift, the 'Power-Users' were required to provide general feedback on the use of the cameras, where improvements could be made, and what needed to be included in training the rest of the organization. In short, this honest feedback was essential to the ultimate success of this large-scale deployment and it could not have been accomplished without their input.

On December 1, 2021, the statewide deployment of Axon body-worn and fleet camera systems began in District 2500 with the main instructor cadre of Sgt. Rick Harjes, Lt. Jason Hanson, and Captain Jeremy Geiger. From that date forward, this team of instructors traveled to each district across the state to provide the training. Traveling with the State Patrol instructors were employees from EATI; these employees were responsible for outfitting squad cars with the new camera systems. The 'Power-Users' in each district assisted with the set-up of cameras and continue to be a resource to their partners. While this was happening around the state, troopers were provided the same training if they picked up a new squad car at EATI. Lt. Nate Danley provided this training along with assistance from Captain Jason Bartell and Lt. Paul Stricker.

On May 5, 2022, the statewide deployment of cameras concluded with non-sworn members of Districts 4600 and 4700. In total, there were approximately 100 training sessions conducted over a 5-month period; 77 User Sessions (65 in the districts and 22 at EATI), 13 Supervisor/Admin Sessions, and 1 session at the state patrol academy. In all, there were 705 body-worn cameras (613 to sworn members and 92 to non-sworn members) and 644 squad car cameras issued during that timeframe.

Furthermore, there were also other pieces of equipment which were also acquired to work in conjunction with the body-worn cameras. This included new Tasers and also signal sidearm technology which activates cameras automatically if



a Trooper turns on their Taser or the handgun is removed from the holster. The issuance of this equipment and training for these items fell to Sgt. Halvorson and Sgt. Jon Wenzel at the Training Center along with their group of dedicated firearms and Taser instructors. This team provided 23 separate 8-hour sessions that included scenario-based training at Camp Ripley and AHATS. In all, 592 troopers were trained on these pieces of equipment from January through May 2022.

This was large-scale project that required collaboration from many areas of the organization. It was a true example of how teamwork and positive communication all came together to ensure a successful deployment. ♦

FUN FACTS

- With this new system, all video captured by each member is uploaded from the squad car to the cloud almost immediately after an event is concluded.
- On average, there are over 3,000 pieces of video evidence generated each day by members of the state patrol. This equates to almost 100,000 videos and 20,000 hours of content per month.
- In the near future, smartphones will be issued to all sworn members of the State Patrol and it will be used for taking photographs and recorded audio statements (along with returning phone calls and other on-duty business needs).



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Rochester Minnesota, an incredibly unique city nestled amongst the cornfields of southeastern Minnesota. What makes Rochester so special? Looking across the skyline of downtown Rochester, you will see tall artfully designed buildings that contain one of the greatest, most innovative medical centers in the world - the Mayo Clinic. In 2020 and 2021 the Mayo Clinic was voted the best medical center in the United States. By many it is considered the best in the world. On average, over one million patients visit the Mayo Clinic each year. In any given 24 hour period, the Mayo Clinic sees an average of 14,000 patients, conducts 9,000 exams, and its physicians perform 300 surgeries. The Mayo Clinic's 4,700 physicians and researchers work together to maintain a cutting edge medical facility and research institution.

In 1883, Dr. William Worrall Mayo and his two sons Charlie and William Jr., along with the Sisters of Saint Francis founded the Mayo Clinic out of necessity after a very large tornado tore through Rochester injuring hundreds. What set this new



hospital/clinic apart was the patient first atmosphere and their forethought to practice collaborative medicine. Dr. William Mayo described Mayo's philosophy best, "The sum total of medical knowledge is now so great and wide spreading that it would be futile for any one man to assume that he has even a good working knowledge of any large part of the whole. The very necessities of the case are driving practitioners into cooperation. The best interest of the patient is the only interest to be considered, and in order that the sick have the benefit of advancing knowledge, union of forces is necessary."

Today the Mayo Clinic is driven by three overarching ideas. They are faith, hope and science. Currently, approximately 40,000 people in and around Rochester are employed by the Mayo Clinic. It's no wonder Mayo's patient first philosophy and culture have positively affected its population and area businesses, by promoting an environment of hospitality and service.

The Rochester Police Department and the Olmsted County Sheriff's office are no exception in demonstrating hospitality and providing support and hope to others. In 2008, Rochester Police Officer Don Bray (now retired) along with the Rochester Police Benevolent Association founded the House of Shields. The House of Shields is a non-profit organization that provides free lodging to law enforcement officers anywhere in the world (active or retired), and their immediate family members who seek medical treatment at the Mayo Clinic. There are three rooms available, "The Officer", "The Deputy" and "The Trooper." There is also a kitchen to share, a laundry, a secure entrance, and off street parking. As long as there is a room available, an officer or their family can stay as long as needed. The shortest stay is typically one night, the longest stay was eight months, and the average stay is ten days. Rochester Police Officer and House of Shields Vice-President Caleb Tesdahl stated, "We've had guests from all over the United States and even as far away as Israel. Our guests become our family and many return more than once for follow-up visits. We work hard to help those who selflessly work hard to help others." Tesdahl also shared that visitors typically come to Mayo Clinic for cancer treatment, heart disease, cardiac problems, transplants and many other medical issues. The House of Shields is located about six blocks from downtown Rochester where the Mayo Campus is located.

Since 2008 almost 1,200 officers and their families have stayed at the House of Shields. Last year there were over 80 officers and families who stayed at the House of Shields, which resulted in an 85% occupancy rate. The annual budget to operate the House of Shields is around \$29,000 per year. The House of Shields operates on donations; 100% of the money donated to the House of Shields goes towards rent, insurance and upkeep for items in the rooms. The officers and deputies who manage the House of Shields do so on a voluntary basis only.

If an officer needs a room while they visit the Mayo Clinic, they can do so online at the House of Shields website, Facebook Messenger or by calling 507-993-7364. The House of Shield's phone number is answered 24 hours

a day, every day of the year, for those who need a room. If an officer or their family arrives in Rochester and need a room, there are about 40 Rochester Police Officers and Olmsted County Deputies trained to respond while on duty to let someone into a room if available.

Those interested in donating to the House of Shields can donate on their website, Facebook page or by sending a check to P.O. Box 911, Rochester, MN 55903. Looking into the future, the House of Shields' board is saving money to build a large house near downtown Rochester, so they will have a permanent presence to serve those who serve others.

Hopefully no one reading this will need to visit the Mayo Clinic because they are in poor health or suffering from a life altering illness. However, if the need arises, be assured you will have a place to stay as long as you need at the House of Shields, and you will receive world class patient care at the Mayo Clinic. ♦

To learn more about the House of Shields visit their website. To learn more about the Mayo Clinic watch the PBS's Documentary "The Mayo Clinic" by Ken Burns.

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EXPLORERS

Submitted by Lisa Lorenzen

The weekend of April 21st-24th, the MN Law Enforcement Explorer Association hosted the 47th Annual State Police Exploring Conference in Rochester, MN. We are proud to announce that the MSP Explorer Post Teams competed against 37 other posts from Minnesota, North Dakota and New York. We collected seven awards!

1st place in Traffic Crash Management

1st place in Traffic Stops

1st place in DWI Enforcement

1st place in Street Decisions

1st place in Interview and Interrogation

1st place in Digital Safety

4th place in Intro to Narcotics

The explorers at this year's conference were divided into four-person teams and were randomly assigned to participate in four law enforcement related events. The assigned events at this year conference came from a list of 12 pre-approved event categories that were recently re-structured and modernized.

This year, the MSP explorer post took home more first place awards than we ever have in the past 47 years!

Congratulations to the eight explorers who competed and the advisors who worked tirelessly to make this team so successful. ♦











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Pictured L-R Colonel Matt Langer, TDS Support Staff Sarah Robinson, Sgt Rick Harjes, Trooper Gustavo Culbeaux, and Captain Jason Engeldinger

Meritorious Awards

Meritorious Citizenship Award:

This award is presented to individuals who have assisted the State Patrol in providing a significant service to the public.

Craig Otto

Nov. 19, 2020 – Craig Otto was driving on Interstate 94 when he saw a car pull away from a traffic stop and noticed the trooper was not in his squad. He spotted the trooper in the ditch and pulled over to assist. The traffic stop suspect had assaulted and injured Trooper Darren Athey after being told he was under arrest. Otto assisted Trooper Athey until responding officers arrived.

Vincent Williams

Jan. 3, 2021 – At a crash scene on Highway 252 in Brooklyn Center, Vincent Williams witnessed the suspect driver assaulting Trooper Tyler Regenscheid, pinning him to the ground. The suspect was trying to gain control of the trooper's holstered firearm. Williams physically restrained the suspect and verbally commanded him to release the firearm. With William's assistance, Trooper Regenscheid gained control of the suspect until other officers arrived.

Elijah Andrys-Akins and Rashaad Marks

Jan. 20, 2021 – Elijah Andrys-Akins and Rashaad Marks stopped on Maryland Avenue over I-35E after seeing a young male attempting to jump off the bridge and take his own life. Andrys-Akins and Marks pulled the male over the rail and off the bridge until troopers arrived.

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Life Saving Award: *This award is presented to State Patrol members who distinguish themselves by performing acts that prevent the death of another.*

Trooper Zachery Fay (District 2100- Rochester)

Dec. 20, 2020 – After meeting a woman at the district office to release items from a vehicle, Trooper Zachery Fay noticed the vehicle she arrived in remained in the parking lot for several minutes. He found the male driver unconscious and the woman trying to wake him. Trooper Fay called for an ambulance and administered Naloxone. After the male stopped breathing, he administered a second dose and began rescue breathing. The driver was transported to the hospital and was later discharged.

Trooper Blake Cederstrom (District 2400- East Metro)

April 25, 2021 – Trooper Blake Cederstrom responded to a medical call on Interstate 94 in Newport. The victim had pulled over after accidentally discharging his firearm while driving. The bullet struck the man in the hip, and caused heavy bleeding. Trooper Cederstrom packed the wound and applied direct pressure to control the bleeding while keeping the man calm until medics arrived.

Trooper Tyler Crabtree (District 2100- Rochester)

June 29, 2021 – Trooper Tyler Crabtree responded to a call for assistance from Rochester police. A man was sitting on an overpass railing and threatening to jump onto Highway 52. As officers distracted the man, Trooper Crabtree approached from behind, grabbed him and pulled him to safety.

Trooper Brandon Prowatzke (District 2600- St. Cloud)

July 11, 2021 – Trooper Brandon Prowatzke responded to a complaint of a vehicle crossing the center line and striking construction barriers. He found the driver and passenger slumped over and unresponsive on an exit ramp. Trooper Prowatzke administered Narcan to the passenger and used a bag valve mask to help them breathe until medics arrived. The driver woke up and was arrested for DUI.

Trooper Nick Otterson (District 2800- Baxter)

July 25, 2021 – A speeding vehicle approached Trooper Nick Otterson, with the driver honking the horn. The driver and her daughter informed Trooper Otterson that her husband, the passenger, was not breathing. Trooper Otterson performed CPR and administered AED shocks until a pulse returned and medics arrived. He then took the women to the hospital remained in contact until the man regained consciousness.

Trooper Alexander Johnson (District 2400- East Metro)

Aug. 20, 2021 – Trooper Alexander Johnson responded to a call of a pedestrian walking in traffic on Highway 36. He watched the woman run up the ramp and sit on the concrete barrier. She then told him she was going to jump into the traffic below. While Trooper Pedro Ortega talked with the woman, Trooper Johnson wrapped his arms around her and pulled her over the barrier to safety.

Troopers Megan Brynell and Kendall LeMay (District 2400- East Metro)

Sept. 15, 2021 – Trooper Megan Brynell responded to a medical call with a vehicle off the road. The woman inside was unconscious. Trooper Brynell broke a window to get inside and pulled the woman from to an embankment with the help of a bystander and officers. The woman was not breathing and had no pulse so Trooper Brynell began CPR and administered Narcan. Trooper Kendall LeMay arrived on scene and assisted with chest compressions until medics took her to the hospital

Commercial Vehicle Inspectors Daniel Hoesly and Michael Tester (District 4700)

Sept. 15, 2021 – Commercial Vehicle Inspectors (CVI) Daniel Hoesly and Michael Tester were at the Daytonport Scale in Ramsey when a vehicle with two people inside asked for help. They believed their friend overdosed. The victim was unresponsive and not breathing, so Sgt. Ted McCollor called for an ambulance while CVI Tester started chest compressions. Sgt. McCollor administered a dose of Narcan. CVI Hoesly successfully opened an airway. The victim began to breathe and was monitored until medics arrived.



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Trooper Ben Barker (District 2500- West Metro)

Oct. 10, 2021 – Trooper Ben Barker responded to a medical emergency after a man fell out of a moving vehicle and was run over. Trooper Barker noticed the man lost a significant amount of blood and was actively bleeding. He applied a tourniquet to the man's leg and stopped the bleeding before medics arrived.

Troopers Mitchell Johnson, James Lee and Ben Lockman (District 2400- East Metro)

Dec. 17, 2021 – Troopers Mitchell Johnson and James Lee responded to a vehicle that swerved into a ditch off of Interstate 694. They found the man inside unresponsive so they broke the window and removed him. The man had no pulse so they started CPR. Trooper Ben Lockman arrived on scene and the three rotated administering CPR. The troopers gave him two doses of Narcan before he regained consciousness.

Lt. Heath Dienger and Trooper Shane Roper (District 2100- Rochester)

This presentation is combined with a Meritorious Citizenship Award for Dr. Sam Economou.

Dec. 18, 2021 – A driver was taking his wife to the hospital when she became unresponsive. He pulled over and Dr. Sam Economou stopped to help. He performed chest compressions for 15 minutes in below freezing temperatures before Lt. Heath Dienger arrived and began rescue breathing. Dr. Economou continued chest compressions while Trooper Shane Roper took over rescue breathing and Lt. Dienger attempted to open the woman's airway. The woman was listed in stable condition the following day.

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Chief's Commendation Award – Communications/911:

This award is presented to radio communications operators (RCOs) who provide vital, life-saving services that lead to the rescue of a person, provide outstanding performance during a special event, or provide a consistent, sustained high level of customer service.

RTMC Dispatchers (Statewide Communications – RTMC) RCS (radio communications supervisor) Justin Dejarlais

RCS Katie Webb

RCO Sheldon Carlsted

RCO Abby Jaskowiak

RCO Martin O'Hehir

RCO Charles Sexton

July 6, 2021 – RTMC dispatchers received several 911 calls reporting a vehicle off the road on I-694. A vehicle pulled next to a driver and his teenage son. The person inside fired a gun. When officers arrived, they found the driver with a life threatening gunshot wound to the neck. The dispatch team reviewed traffic camera video to identify the suspect vehicle, determine its last known location, and document the incident. Their efforts ultimately led to the recovery of the vehicle and arrest of the suspects.

RCO Chris Daas (Statewide Communications – RTMC)

This presentation is combined with a Meritorious Citizenship Award for Dana and Laura Fontaine and Travis and Todd Wheeler.

Sept. 5, 2021 – RCO Chris Daas received a 911 call of a rollover crash with injuries. Citizens Dana and Laura Fontaine and Travis and Todd Wheeler found an overturned vehicle on Highway 84. The man inside was unresponsive and was gasping for air. RCO Daas directed Travis and Todd to remove the man from the vehicle and perform CPR as Laura relayed information about his condition. Medics transported him to the hospital and he was later released.



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Meritorious Service Award:

This award is presented to employees for acts involving personal risk posing hazards which could lead to serious injury or loss of life to the employee.

Trooper Steve Quern (District 2600- St. Cloud) and Trooper Daniel Ryan (District 2500- West Metro)

Nov. 29, 2020 – Trps. Steve Quern and Daniel Ryan responded to an active shooter in Albert Lea. The shooter fired more than 90 rounds in a neighborhood, at cars, and at law enforcement which injured a local police officer and two citizens. Trps. Quern and Ryan deployed as a sniper team. Trooper Ryan acted as the spotter while Trooper Quern delivered one shot at the suspect. The shooter surrendered and was arrested.

Sgt. James Brings (District 2600- St. Cloud)

Feb. 9, 2021 – Sgt. James Brings assisted Buffalo police with an active shooter at the Allina Clinic. At risk of serious injury, Sgt. Brings used his squad car as cover so law enforcement could enter the clinic. Once inside, Sgt. Brings navigated around a known undetonated bomb, directed an arrest team to the shooter, searched for victims and treated the injured.

Trooper Rich Pender (District 2700- Duluth)

This presentation is combined with a Chief's Commendation Award – Communications/911 for RCO Michelle Bustrak.

Oct. 16, 2021 – Trooper Rich Pender was dispatched to a double homicide when he spotted the suspect's vehicle. Trooper Pender pursued the vehicle while waiting for additional squads. During the pursuit, the suspect called 911 and said he was going to the police department to commit suicide or force suicide by cop. Once assisting agencies arrived, Trooper Pender performed a PIT maneuver to end the pursuit. The suspect died from a self-inflicted gunshot.

By proactively relaying relevant information to supervision and coordinating assistance with other agencies in a developing situation, RCO Michelle Bustrak helped bring this incident to an end.

Exceptional Service Award:

This award is presented to employees who have provided extraordinary service in the performance of their duties.

Sgt. Phil Jergenson (District 2500- West Metro)

Sgt. Phil Jergenson is the West Metro District Investigator, the assistant team leader on the Special Response Team (SRT), and serves as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army National Guard. Sgt. Jergenson used that experience during an SRT call for an active shooter on Nov. 29, 2021. A man with a high-powered rifle shot an Albert Lea police officer and two others and had entered an apartment building. Sgt. Jergenson organized his team, relayed critical information and led a tactical approach to evacuate residents. As the team came under fire, Sgt. Jergenson issued clear directions in a calm manner until the suspect surrendered.

Sam Kunjummen (MNIT/CAD Group)

During Operation Safety Net, Sam Kunjummen was an invaluable asset to the Statewide Communications team. He quickly assembled CAD equipment, responded to urgent requests for technical assistance and developed timely solutions to service interruptions. Sam answers his phone day or night and is willing to help or show up when needed. When CAD stations need attention, Sam is quick to remote in or stop by to fix the issue. He sees the job through and never accepts anything less than success.

Trp. Ryan Marthaler (District 2200- Mankato)

As a member of the Special Response Team (SRT), Trooper Marthaler holds the position of team leader. This is a demanding position requiring excellent organizational skills and the ability to meet high expectations. In addition, Trooper Marthaler displays a strong work ethic within district operations. He often leads district functions while seamlessly managing SRT duties. He leads with compassion and fairness, taking care of his people to ensure the mission is complete.

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Lt. Andrew Martinek (District 2500- West Metro)

In addition to his supervisory duties in the downtown Minneapolis station, Lt. Andrew Martinek manages the district's Field Training Program, serves as the agency's Traffic Incident Management Coordinator, teaches DWI/SFST training at the Trooper Training Academy, and created the agency's arrest and booking procedures during civil unrest. Lt. Martinek consistently accepts new challenges when tasks are time sensitive or high priority. He identifies creative solutions for creating efficiencies to seek higher success.

Heidi Ostlie (District 2900- Detroit Lakes)

In addition to her regular full-time duties, Heidi Ostlie volunteered to provide support services to the Mobile Response Team and quickly became the team's primary timekeeper. Heidi worked extra hours to accomplish the task during numerous deployments while serving as a resource for other districts. Due to Heidi's extensive knowledge, experience and high-quality work, she was asked to manage the Special Response Team's time keeping duties as well. She accepted the additional duties without hesitation.

RCO Danielle Wressell (Statewide Communications- RTMC)

On Memorial Day morning, RCO Danielle Wressell received a call from Dakota County dispatch of a stranded driver on Interstate 494 with a disabled trailer. After dispatching a trooper to assist, she learned the driver was a member of VFW Post 9024 and was hauling equipment to a Memorial Day commemoration at Woodbury City Hall. RCO Wressell made arrangements to personally incur the cost of the tow service.

Eagle Squadron Award: *Each year, the Eagle Squadron Award is presented to the Minnesota State Patrol trooper who arrested the greatest number of impaired drivers the previous year.*

Trooper Gustavo Culbeaux (District 2500- West Metro)

Impaired driving enforcement continues to be job number one for every State Patrol trooper. Aggressive enforcement in this important area saves countless lives and injuries each year. In 2021, Trooper Culbeaux arrested 142 impaired drivers.



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Leadership Award: *This award is presented*

yearly to the employee who consistently exhibits outstanding leadership and excellence in public safety through their personal actions, guidance, direction and professional involvement.

Captain Jason Engeldinger (District 3100- Virginia)

Captain Jason Engeldinger embodies leadership and steadfast commitment in his role as Mobile Response Team (MRT) Commander. He works closely with allied agencies and stakeholders on a well-constructed plan to ensure the best possible outcome when MRT is deployed, even working early mornings or late at night. Captain Engeldinger is a confident and assertive leader who is conscious of his team's safety. He is present at nearly all MRT deployments. If not at the scene, he actively plans and monitors events. Captain Engeldinger provides the highest level of support and mentorship leading to measurable results.

Civilian Employee of the Year:

This award is presented to the non-sworn employee who best demonstrates outstanding work performance, initiative, leadership and effective interpersonal relations.

Sarah Robinson (Training and Development Section)

Sarah Robinson is tasked with numerous duties and achieves them all with excellence. Sarah's logistical expertise is heavily relied on – from Trooper Training Academies to Mobile Response Team (MRT) deployments. She willingly answers the call day or night, and doesn't stop working until the job is done. Sarah's skill and determination are on full display in rapidly changing, fluid situations. In addition to her regular work, she tracked all expenses related to the Line 3 project including equipment, meals, lodging, supplies and overtime. Her attention to detail and organizational skills were a key contribution to this large project.



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Trooper of the Year:

This award is presented to the trooper who best demonstrates outstanding work performance, initiative, leadership and effective interpersonal relations.

Sergeant Rick Harjes (Training and Development Section)

Sergeant Rick Harjes played a significant role in several large scale projects resulting in the delivery of critical and vital information to agency members.

Operating an academy during a pandemic is a challenge. To avoid a potential delay or shutdown due to COVID, Sergeant Harjes researched and implemented alternate curriculum delivery methods that would allow a quarantined cadet to safely participate in class via live stream.

Sergeant Harjes also developed training on the new Use of Force statute and Taser Awareness. Sergeant Harjes worked with supervisors to develop training on the new Intrepid app. He also worked with the Department of Corrections on training their staff on the new CAD system. Once these projects were accomplished, Sergeant Harjes was tasked with training the entire agency on the body worn and fleet camera implementation.

Sergeant Harjes took on all of these challenges in addition to teaching, and serving as a staff officer in the 62nd academy. His commitment, perseverance, positive attitude and excellence in delivering this large volume of work is admirable. ♦





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Minnesota State Highway Patrol Duty Disability Basics

By Attorney, Pete Ocel

As a State Highway Patrol Officer you have agreed to serve your community and perform duties that are considered inherently dangerous. If through your dedicated service to the community you sustain an injury or illness that was incurred while performing these inherently dangerous duties specific to a State Highway Patrol Officer you may be eligible for Duty Disability benefits. These injuries could be physical injuries or mental injuries, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), that result in disability that prevent you from

performing the essential functions of a State Highway Patrol Officer for a period of one year or more.

You have taken care of your communities and you have personally contributed to a plan that is in place to protect those that have protected Minnesota. Every paycheck you have earned through your service has accounted for these benefits that are in place to protect you and your family financially. When you qualify, these Duty Disability benefits are paid at a minimum base rate of 60% of your high-five salary and are a non-taxable benefit. If you have earned more than 20 years of service time, that base rate would increase to the tune of an additional 3% per year of service over 20 years. For example, if you have 23 years of MSRS service, your benefits would be payable at a rate of 69% of your high-five salary. In this situation, the first 60% of the benefit would be non-taxable, however, the additional 9% over the base rate of 60% would be subject to applicable taxes. Once you reach the age of 55, these benefits would then convert to a regular retirement pension

at the full rate of 69% and be fully taxable. If the numbers are confusing or intimidating, please reach out to our office. It is our goal to make sure every State Patrol Officer has full and accurate information about the benefit structure of the disability benefit system.

To assert your rights to the disability benefits you have earned through your dedicated service, the Minnesota State Retirement System (MSRS) has a precise application process. This process includes an application for benefits, employer certification, medical statements (2) completed by licensed practicing physicians as well as other personal records MSRS have indicated are needed for proper benefit administration. This completed paperwork must be submitted in "good order" within 18 months of the date you terminate state employment under Minnesota law. If the forms are not submitted in "good order" or within the applicable time limitation MSRS will likely deny the application for the disability benefit.

Established in 1990, Meuser, Yackley and Rowland, P.A. is comprised of a team of attorneys who have dedicated their practice to exclusively focus on the integrated practice of workers' compensation, PERA/MSRS disability and personal injury laws. Unlike firms that focus in just one area, our firm has a depth of knowledge in these often closely tied areas of



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law to ensure that your interests are fully protected. We manage your case with a full understanding of all three areas to coordinate to ensure that you receive every benefit and all the compensation you are entitled to under the law.

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