

MINNESOTA TROOPER

Volume 40 • Number 2 • June 2024



Trooper of the Year:
Trooper Nick Diederich (2800)



Civilian Employee of the Year:
Sam Kunjummen (HQ)



Leadership Award:
Major Jeremy Geiger



Eagle Squadron Award:
Trooper Gustavo Culbeaux (2500)

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Inside

President's Report 4

Colonel's Message 8

Commissioner's Corner 9

Days Gone By 12

Minnesota State Legislature 21

State Patrol Awards 22

House of Shields Donation 33

Remembering Loren Kalal 33

Wear-And-Tear Injuries 36

NTC Spring Meeting Highlights 37

Honoring Mark McGrew 41

Youth Movie Night 42

MINNESOTA TROOPER

Minnesota Trooper is published three times annually by the Minnesota State Patrol Troopers Association.

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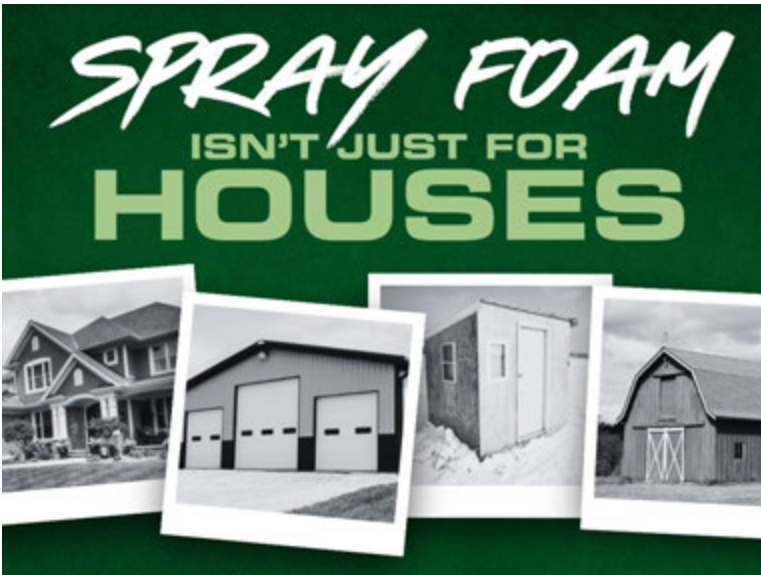
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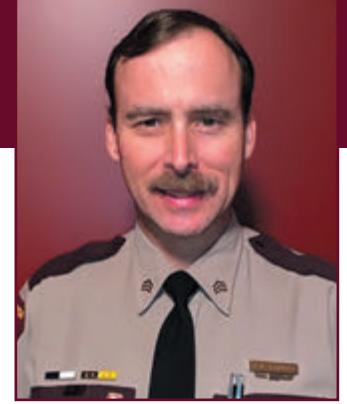
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Mike LeDoux • MSPTA President

President's Report



Burnsville's BRAVEST

A State in Mourning: Reflecting on Tragedy and Celebrating Service



On February 17th, camaraderie and advocacy filled the air as colleagues from across the state gathered in Rochester, Minnesota, for the MPPOA Legislative Conference. Little did we anticipate that the following day would cast a shadow of profound sorrow over our community.

As the morning sun rose, it illuminated a community shattered by tragedy. Burnsville, Minnesota—a place of tranquility transformed into a scene of unimaginable loss. A solemn text message delivered the news: three first responders, pillars of our community, lost in the line of duty. Disbelief gripped our hearts as we grappled with the weight of this loss, felt deeply not only within the law enforcement community but throughout our entire state. Personally, delivering the news to my wife was a surreal and heartbreaking moment, prompting reflection on the inherent risks of our profession and the sacrifices made by our loved ones every day. The simple act of removing my vest at the end of a shift brought her comfort and reassurance—a reminder of the fragile balance between duty and family.

Amidst the darkness, glimmers of heroism and hope emerged. Officer Elmstrand, Officer Ruge, and Firefighter Finseth's selfless actions saved lives on that fateful day, embodying the true essence of bravery and service. Their swift response ensured the safety of seven children—a testament to their unwavering dedication to the communities they served.

As we navigate the aftermath of this loss, unity becomes our solace. Our law enforcement family stands together, bound by a shared commitment to honor the memories of those we've lost. Their legacy serves as a poignant reminder of the risks inherent in our profession and the resilience required to confront them.

In the face of tragedy, we must not only mourn the fallen but also celebrate their lives. Elmstrand, Ruge, and Finseth leave behind a legacy of courage, sacrifice, and unwavering dedication to duty—a legacy that will forever inspire and guide us.

May their memory serve as a beacon of light, guiding us through the darkness as we continue to uphold the values they held dear.

Honoring Colonel Matt Langer's Dedication

After nearly 25 years of steadfast service to the Minnesota State Patrol, Colonel Matt Langer leaves an indelible mark as he embarks on a new chapter as the director of global policing for the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Colonel Langer's career with the State Patrol began in 1999, defined by his commitment to traffic safety and public service. Rising through the ranks, he served as chief for the past decade.

His tenure is defined by remarkable achievements, including his advocacy for crucial legislation such as the hands-free bill, the establishment of vital support systems for troopers, and a relentless focus on preventing behaviors that lead to fatal crashes.

continued on page 6



MN 100 Club Blackout Plates: Support First Responders!

State Troopers have no doubt seen the new State of Minnesota blackout license plates. These plates are eye-catching and appealing to many people who do not want the standard Minnesota license plates.



What the blackout plates are not is unique. Since September of 2022, the MN 100 Club has been promoting and selling black license plates. This specialty plate features the Club's shield logo on a grayscale background of the American Flag with plate numbers and letters in white. Red, white and blue stripes that represent First Responders cross the bottom of the plate.

The most unique feature of the license plate, however, can't be seen. Proceeds from the sale of these plates do not go back to the State coffers—every dime of the \$40 contribution from the sale of these plates goes to the MN 100 Club to support families of First Responders.

The MN 100 Club is a not-for-profit organization that was founded in 1972 with the goal of providing immediate financial assistance to families of First Responders who are killed or

critically injured in the line of duty. Since it was founded, the Club has supported over 500 families when they've needed it the most. In 2023 alone, fourteen families received over \$220,000 in financial support from the MN Club. That amount is already over \$175,000 for 2024. This support means that surviving family members don't have to worry about going to work or paying for a funeral while they are experiencing some of the most difficult days of their lives.

Over the years, the maximum benefit payment that the MN 100 Club has made has risen from \$1000 to \$50,000. This is made possible because of the support from thousands of Minnesotans who stand behind First Responders and show it through making annual membership contributions, participating in special events, and now, buying and renewing license plates. They have made the MN 100 Club license plate one of the best-selling specialty license plates in the State.

So the next time you see someone who asks what they can do to help First Responders, please consider telling them to get a MN 100 Club license plate. It's the easiest thing they can do to show their support every day and to make sure the MN 100 Club can all be there for the next family who needs us.

More information about getting a MN 100 Club license plate can be found at www.mn100club.org. ♦



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continued from page 4

As Colonel Langer bids farewell, the Troopers Association extends its gratitude for his leadership and service.

Welcoming Colonel Christina Bogojevic's Leadership

As Colonel Langer concludes his tenure, we warmly welcome Colonel Christina Bogojevic, as she assumes her new role of chief. With her unwavering commitment to public safety, we have confidence in her ability to lead the State Patrol with distinction.

We eagerly anticipate collaborating with Colonel Bogojevic as we uphold the proud traditions of our agency. Together, we will continue striving to make the State Patrol the preeminent agency it can be, safeguarding the lives and well-being of all Minnesotans.

As we bid farewell to one leader and embrace another, let us reaffirm our steadfast dedication to service.

Standing in Solidarity with Trooper Londregan

I was profoundly moved by the resolute solidarity displayed at Trooper Londregan's court appearance yesterday, as both active and retired law enforcement officers stood united in unwavering support. Witnessing this outpouring of solidarity, alongside the presence of citizens and elected officials, was truly heartening. The image of over 300 individuals, many adorned in maroon t-shirts symbolizing their steadfast backing of Trooper Londregan, painted a poignant picture of unity. One reporter accurately likened the scene to a sea of maroon, vividly capturing the sense of solidarity.

However, this case transcends mere legal proceedings; it embodies a troubling trend of political promises and grandstanding, rather than a genuine understanding of the inherent risks associated with our profession and the alarming increase in assaults on officers.

Equally commendable was the courage displayed by our colleagues who stepped forward to provide declarations refuting the fabricated facts presented by the county attorney, intended to construct a false narrative against our trooper. Despite the prosecution boasting the largest and most seasoned team of attorneys in the state, the case has been handed over to four attorneys from outside Minnesota, underscoring the gravity of this injustice.

The decision to charge Trooper Londregan, despite the clear applicability of the standards outlined in *Graham v. Connor*, only exacerbates the injustice he faces. Trooper Londregan deserves a fair and impartial evaluation of his actions, guided by the principles enshrined in *Graham v. Connor*, which acknowledge the complexities and dangers inherent in law enforcement work. Anything less would compromise the very foundation of our justice system.

Ultimately, this case not only jeopardizes Trooper Londregan's well-being but also constitutes a grave assault on the integrity of our entire profession. The Troopers Association remains steadfast in its commitment to vigorously defend our unjustly charged colleague! ♦

Mike #88



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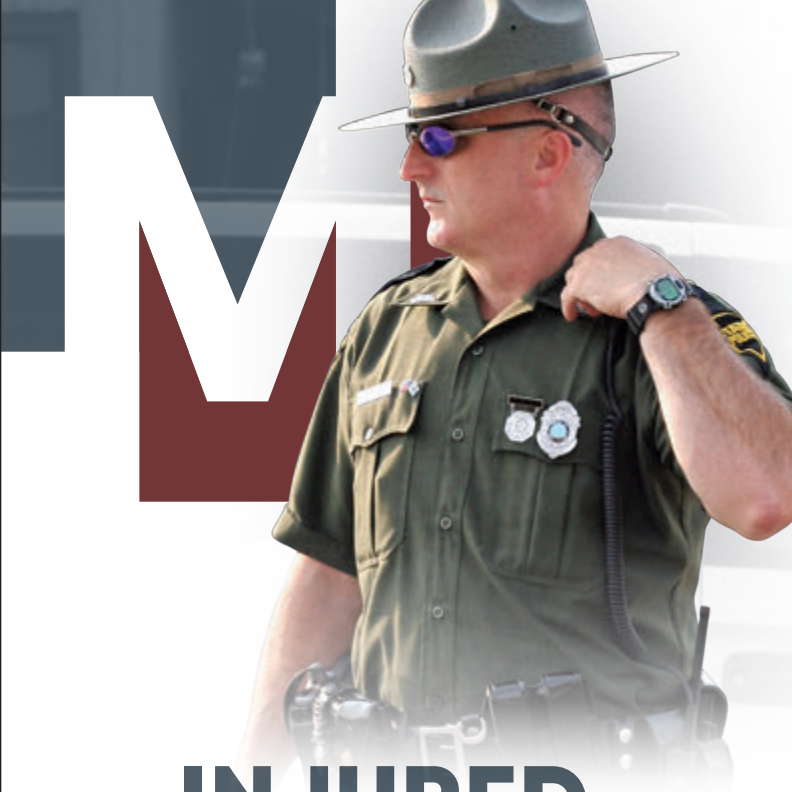


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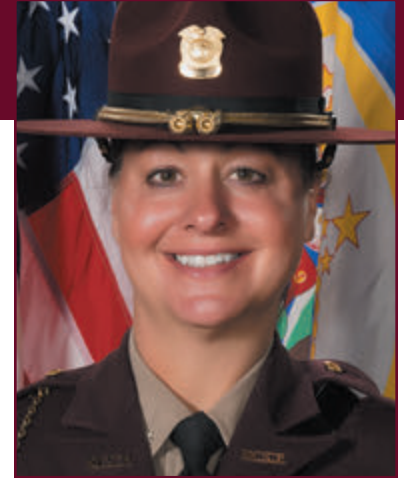
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Colonel Christina Bogojevic

Colonel's Message



NAVIGATING CHANGE

CHANGE.

I've been thinking a lot lately about the word and what it means to me both personally and professionally — and what it means for you.

CHANGE IS POWERFUL.

It can make us nervous and uncomfortable because of the unknowns that come along with something new. A new leader. A new focus. A new job. A new direction. Change can feel disruptive, unsettling or destabilizing.

Change can also bring with it new experiences, challenges, and possibilities that can enrich our lives and broaden our perspectives. Change can push us outside of our comfort zones and help us grow. Given this, we should welcome these kind of changes into our professional lives.

Although Change is inevitable, our mission remains consistent and the work we do is more important than ever.

Each one of you provide a service to the state of Minnesota that you should be proud of. You are mission driven, and together make a difference in the lives of other people every day. That never changes.

Last year we accomplished a decrease in fatal crashes after a continual increase from poor driving behavior that became evident in 2020. This year, however, there is an increase in traffic fatalities of almost 45 percent — a change we never want to see.

Many, outside of the work we do, have never been impacted by a fatal crash and do not understand that this number represents people — people who will not be enjoying summer with their families. In fact, 35 more families have lost a loved one this year than during this same time period as last year. As we enter into the deadliest time on the roadways, I ask

you to remain constant, resilient, and mission driven. With our collective work and dedication to traffic enforcement and education, this upward trend in fatalities will also change in a positive way, and I am grateful to you for that.

You have my support. That also will not change.

Through all of this, don't lose sight of the support around you. During times of change and challenge, I am in awe of the support you provide to each other and the allied agencies we work alongside. Those who travel on our roadways support you.

New, innovative ideas come from those who are doing the work every day. I look forward to summer district visits, listening to strategies that have been successful for each of your areas around the state. I also look forward to discussions on recruitment as the process for the 70th academy has started, and we must look at new and innovative ideas for the future.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not express how honored and humbled I am to serve with you as a Minnesota State Trooper. We are anchored in our traditions, striving to innovate, and supporting each other along the way. As we navigate change and move forward together with that simple foundation, I am excited for the future of the Minnesota State Patrol. ♦





CELEBRATING TRADITION

I was honored to attend the graduation ceremony on April 19 for our 68th and 69th academy classes. The academy was clearly excited to have achieved the goal of becoming a Minnesota State Patrol trooper.

It was obvious, however, that their excitement wasn't the only emotion electrifying the ceremony. The families loudly cheering on the accomplishments served as rousing salutes to the troopers' accomplishments. It struck me that it is that kind of support — clear, loud and unwavering — that carries troopers through their careers.

What also came to me was that this was a unique mix of new beginnings, with the path forward for this class paved with respect for the long-held traditions of the State Patrol. The new troopers represented diverse backgrounds, ages and experience levels. While they and their loved ones brought in this fresh energy and new perspective, the newest troopers adhered to the training, traditions and long-held high standards of the State Patrol.

My specific thanks to the training staff for the academy. I know that the training tasks are not easy, but this dedication to training to a high standard has and will serve us and the entire state well now and into the future.

At a time when many law enforcement agencies are concerned about how they will recruit candidates, I believe it is the consistent work done to adhere to the high standards that makes a difference in the Minnesota State Patrol.

Col. Christina Bogojevic and I had the opportunity to visit the academies at Camp Ripley one week prior to their graduation. What became apparent to us when we talked with the class was that many joined the State Patrol because of the culture and high standards.

They all may have had numerous other choices, but they chose to join your ranks because of your history, traditions and your future built upon a strong foundation. Many had specific examples of interactions with current troopers and were impressed by your actions, your conduct and your dedication. You, our current and retired troopers, are among the best recruiters we have to continue the legacy of service and professionalism.

Another transition taking place is signified by us recognizing and saying goodbye to outgoing Col. Matt Langer and welcoming Col. Bogojevic. As with our new troopers, this opportunity to seamlessly transition is in part due to a culture built around leadership. We recruit excellent candidates, we train to high standards, we retain high expectations throughout a career, and we mentor for continued and future leadership positions.

With much the same exuberance shared by the graduating academies and their families, I am excited for Col. Bogojevic, the State Patrol, and the State of Minnesota. We have a very bright future ahead. ♦

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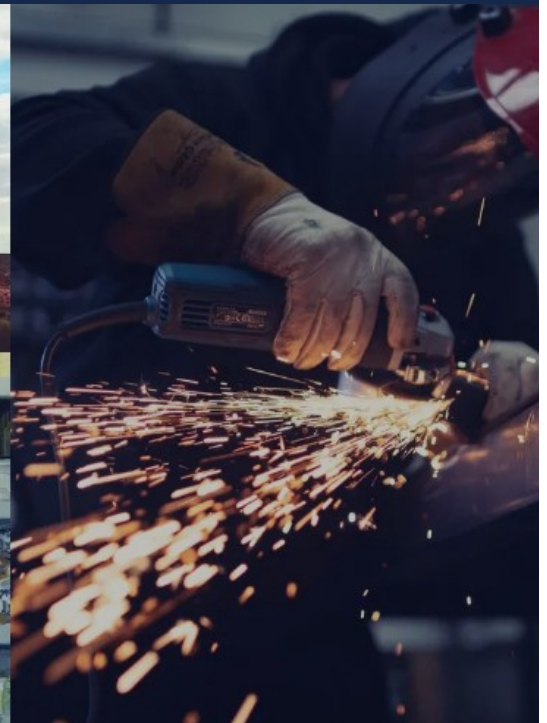
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JAMES C. CRAWFORD

James C. Crawford was living in Forest Lake when he joined the Navy at the end of World War II. He married his high school sweetheart, Barbara Hall, in 1950. They raised three children – sons James Jr (Jay) and Jeff, and daughter Jodie. Barbara’s father, Garnet Hall, was an inspector with the Minnesota Highway Patrol.

Jim joined the Patrol in 1951 and attended the Patrol school in October 1951. He was issued badge No. 149. He was assigned to the 2430 station, which included Forest Lake and was where he and his family lived.

Following is the story of the O’Kasick brothers and Jim’s involvement with them on Sept. 14, 1957. At the time, among Jim’s partners were Connie Erickson, Fritz Fredeen, Ted Martinson and Kenneth Cziok. The Patrol pilot Robert Buckman also lived in Forest Lake.

The O’Kasick brothers were born and raised in a red brick tenement across the street from the Phillips Junior High School in Minneapolis. There were nine children in the family. Their father, Michael, was a career criminal and at the time of the shooting he was wanted for parole violation. Their mother cleaned houses just to keep food on the table. The brothers all quit school at age 16 and

all had criminal records that included various crimes.

On Aug. 17, 1957, the three O’Kasick brothers were on their way to hold up a Red Owl supermarket when they were chased by two Minneapolis Patrolmen. The chase ended with a gun battle between the O’Kasicks and the Patrolmen. Patrolman Robert Fossum was killed, and Patrolman Ward Canfield was wounded. They drove over Canfield as he lay wounded on the street and drug him beneath the wheels of their stolen car for 20 feet up 39th Street.

The O’Kasicks first hid out in the Ely area and then returned to the metro area and camped out in the Carlos Avery Game Preserve just west of Wyoming in Anoka County. The trio had lived in their 1950 Oldsmobile since the Fossum-Canfield shooting. Minneapolis detectives had been searching for the three brothers for questioning as likely suspects in the shooting.

On Sept. 14, around 4:30 pm, they ran out of gas on Constant Road. Ronald O’Kasick walked to a gas station and was walking back to their car with a can of gas.



ONE ★ BY



Anoka County deputies James Sampson and Vern Gottwald stopped and offered him a ride to his car. Ronald tried to avoid attracting suspicion and three blocks short of where the other two were parked, he had the deputies let him out. There was a second car parked on the shoulder of the road that belonged to Bernard Bass, who was chatting with friends in a nearby field.

When Ronald started to get into the car, Bass approached and

protested. The deputies had then stopped behind the O’Kasick vehicle and Guttwald ordered them to get out of the car with their hands up. They responded by yelling, “You dirty coppers!” and then opened fire on the deputies. Ronald shot Sampson and crawled up the ditch to join his brothers.

The brothers then ran up the hill towards the home of Leonard Patchem. Mrs. Patchem, who had heard the shooting, locked her doors and barricaded herself in the bedroom with her two daughters and called the Anoka Police. The brothers ran across the



lawn to the Lindgren home and went inside. Moments later, they came out with Mr. Lindgren and left in his car. Mrs. Lindgren ran out of the house and collapsed in the yard. Meanwhile, Gottwald who was out of ammunition, radioed for help and concerned about his partner’s wounds, drove Sampson to the Anoka Hospital.

A general alarm was broadcast to all law enforcement agencies in the area. Highway Patrolmen James Crawford and Kenneth Cziok spread out in separate squads to head them off when they went through the game farm along their escape route. They called for a Highway Patrol airplane piloted by Patrolman Robert Buckman to join in the search.



About 5 miles west of Forest Lake, the O’Kasick car came towards Crawford at high speed and passed him. Crawford swung his squad around and gave chase, radioing his position. At one point, they lost the fleeing car near Coon Lake beach but were directed back onto their trail by Buckman. Cziok blocked the road with his squad. The brothers almost stopped, but then they hauled Lindgren into the front seat and held him as a shield. They roared past Cziok’s squad on the shoulder. Both Crawford and Cziok resumed the chase, but moments later, the brakes on Crawford’s squad failed on a turn and he narrowly avoided a crash. He abandoned his disabled squad and jumped in with Cziok to continue the chase.

Buckman radioed that the O’Kasick vehicle had gone into a ditch just ahead of the Patrolmen. When Crawford and Cziok pulled up, the brothers, with Lindgren, were running up the dirt



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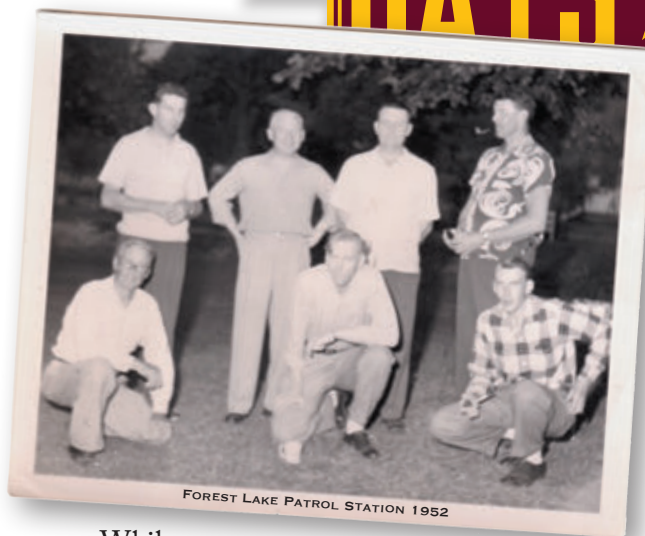
road. When they saw the Patrol car, they dove into a water-filled ditch.

Crawford and Cziok jumped into the ditch on the other side. Crawford then ordered the brothers to surrender, but Roger O’Kasick shouted back, “We’ve got a man here and we will kill him if you shoot.”

The terrified Lindgren also called to the officers, saying, “Don’t shoot. Let them go or they’ll kill me.” Just then Crawford, who was 20 feet away saw Roger O’Kasick shoot Lindgren between the eyes. When Crawford saw the hostage fall, he opened fire with his shotgun, but could not determine whether he had hit any of the three. Crawford and Cziok held their positions, keeping the O’Kasicks pinned down. Buckman radioed he could see two men, one in the ditch and another in some weeds farther away. He thought they were hiding, but both were dead. The third brother had run into a clump of willows in the swamp.

By this time, Paul Martz, Chief of the Minnesota Highway Patrol, was on the scene and began deploying the scores of officers who had arrived. Martz spread the 75 officers out to surround half a square mile. Martz led the officers through the swamp, calling for the brothers to surrender. “Come out with your hands up or we will come in and get you,” Martz called repeatedly. The line, as they converged on the willows to which they were directed by Pilot Buckman, found first Roger then Ronald O’Kasick lying dead.

When the circle of Officers had closed to within about 50 feet of the willow clump, a single shot was heard. In the willows, they found James O’Kasick with a self-inflicted pistol wound in the chest. He was taken to General Hospital in Minneapolis for treatment. Capt. Joseph Rusinko with the Minneapolis Police Department interviewed James while he was being prepped for surgery. He admitted shooting Minneapolis Patrolman Ward Canfield and said his brother Roger had Killed Patrolman Robert Fossum.



While surgeons sought to save the life of James O’Kasick, Canfield was recovering from his sixth surgery since being shot and was just down the hall from O’Kasick.

Police jailed O’Kasick’s 19-year-old sister Joyce, a reformatory fugitive, after she stormed into the hospital shouting that she was out to get the policemen who killed her two brothers. Michael O’Kasick was released from the Hennepin County Jail to attend his two sons’ funeral. He had recently been arrested for parole violations. James O’Kasick was sentenced to life in prison.

Later in his career James Crawford was promoted to Captain on July 3, 1970, and promoted to Chief of the Highway Patrol on April 4, 1973. He retired on October 12, 1980. James was active in the Army Reserves for over 30 years. He retired from the US Army Reserves as Brigadier General on June 15, 1988. James was active in the Forest Lake Masonic Lodge #344, a Shriner, and a member of the American Legion Business & Professional Post #450. James Passed away on December 10, 2005. I remember him when I was a Rookie Trooper, when he walked into a room you knew he was in charge. ♦

Jeff Crawford and retired Trooper Craig Hendrickson SP 154 contributed to this story.

Richard C. Smith – Retired State Patrol Archives Curator

DANIEL S. LONG

Daniel S. Long attended the 3rd Highway Patrol Training School located at Camp Ripley in 1933. Earl Brown had resigned as Chief of the Highway Patrol to run for Governor against Floyd B. Olson. The first two Patrol schools were at his farm in Brooklyn Center. Brown was defeated and Olson was appointed Governor on January 1, 1933. N. W. Elsberg was appointed Highway Commissioner. Elsberg appointed John. P. Arnoldy as Chief of the Highway Patrol. Our Training School was then moved to Camp Ripley.

Long had been a plumber by trade for 10 years prior to joining the Patrol.



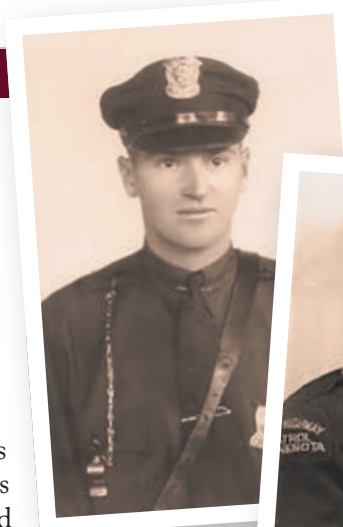
His father was a Minneapolis Policemen, and his two brothers Dick and Emmett were Orchestra Leaders. Long had 4 years' experience riding a motorcycle. He worked in the Hibbing area for a short time before transferring to Owatonna. H. C. Ochs was his partner for 21 years. Long had the longest Accident – free record of the Officers listed – a total of 19 years. The one blemish on his record was in 1935. He was helping at the State Fair and as the result of traffic congestion, he was crowded onto the streetcar tracks in Minneapolis and spilled. He was uninjured and the damage to the cycle was a broken, red-tinted light lens.

He lived in the Owatonna DOT Barracks until he married Mildred F. Bringgold. I met his daughter Kathy more than several years ago. Her husband Richard Jarvi is a retired Steele County Sheriffs Deputy. She was very proud of her dad and I wish I had got this story out before she passed.

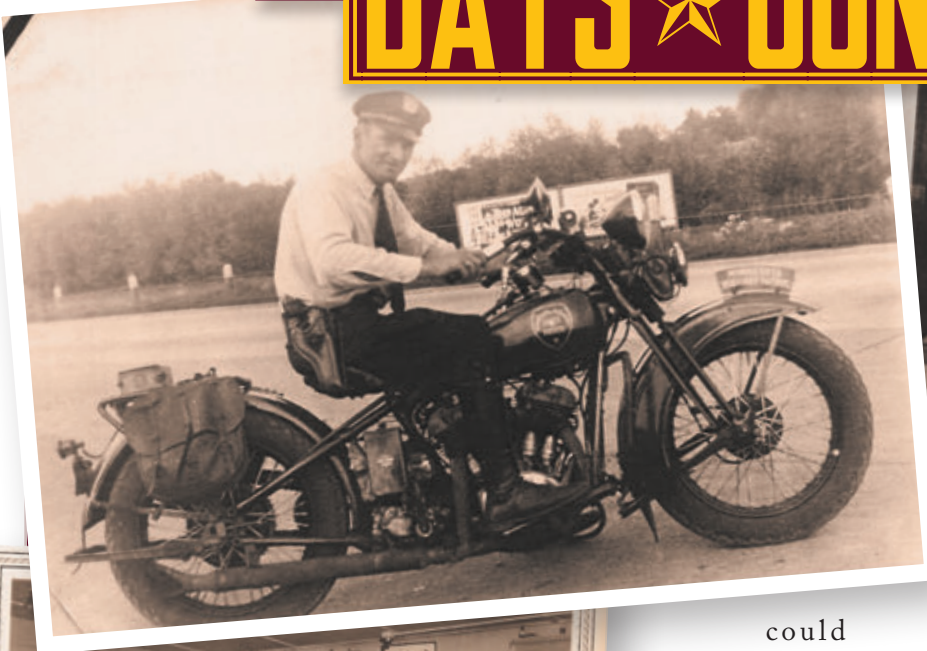
Notes from Kathy Jarvi:

I remember dad talking about working in heavy snow. Seems the windshield wipers couldn't keep up with the snow, so either dad or his partner Officer H. Ochs took turns sitting on the front fender and signaling the driver so they could stay on the road.

I remember him talking about driving to the cafes along his route so he



DAYS ★ GONE ★ BY



motorcycle was a Indian. My Mom struggled with the military creases in his shirts. It was next to impossible to get the wrinkles out.



could get his messages. I also remember him talking about driving up certain hills so his radio would work. In heavy snow he put chains on his tires.

Dan was a collector of automobile name plates and Antique cars. He had a 1909 Maxwell, A 1912 Model T Ford touring car and a 1913 Hupmobile. Long used to own a 1914 Detroit Electric. It would go about 80 miles to a charge at a speed of about 16 miles per hour. He restored the first fire engine that Owatonna had. It took 20 years to finish it. The fire engine is now on display at the Fair grounds.

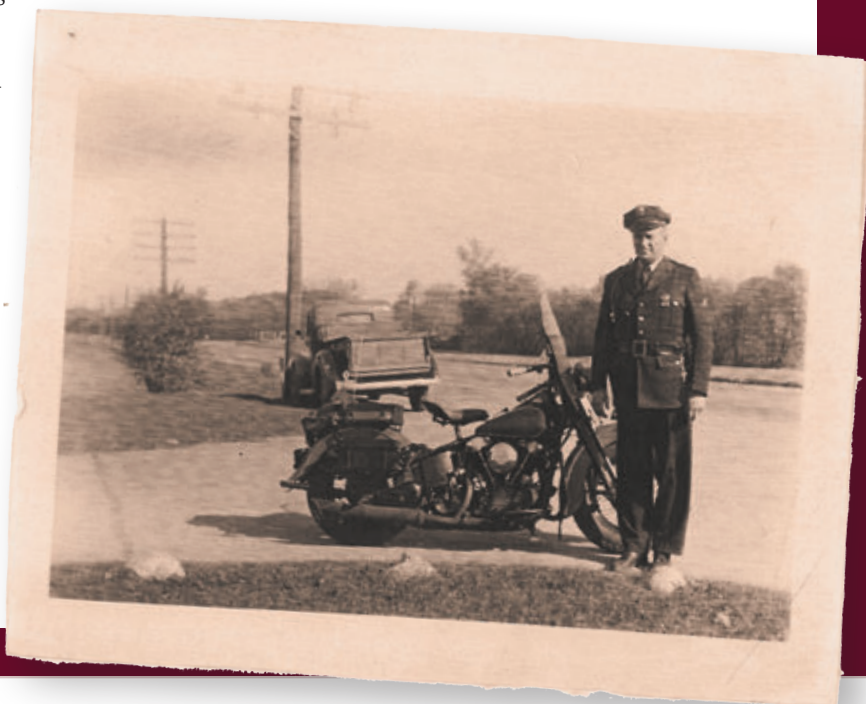
After 21 years on the Patrol Long resigned and owned and operated the Arnold Hotel in Owatonna from 1954 to 1984. He passed away on December 4, 1989. ♦

Richard C. Smith – Retired State Patrol Archives Curator

He always said he lost the hair on the top of his head from riding motorcycle and the top of his hat flapping up and down on his head.

The yellow Star was mounted on the front grill of his model A. It lit up as a

gold star when the headlights came on. His uniform was high maintenance – He was always polishing brass or caring for the leather or cleaning his gun or his Patrol car or Motorcycle. I think his first





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.

WELCOME TO THE MINNESOTA STATE LEGISLATURE:

2024 SESSION OPENING

Safety and Security is a priority as the Minnesota Legislature conducts business. The Minnesota Legislature is the lawmaking body for the State of Minnesota. The safety of members, staff, and all visitors are of utmost importance. The Minnesota State Patrol (MSP) is the primary law enforcement entity on the Minnesota Capitol Complex. The MSP presence is noted and greatly appreciated!

The Legislative Team, often referred to as the “Golden Ties”, assists in safety as an additional layer of professional service, bringing with them vast amounts of law enforcement experience.

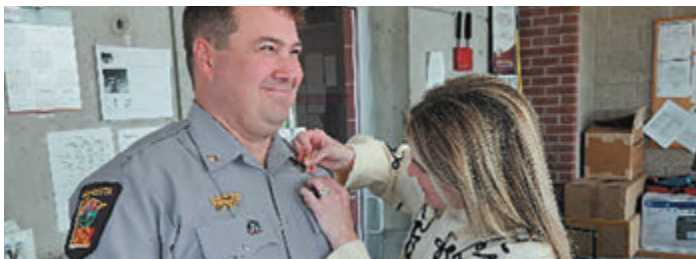
The Capitol Complex Law Enforcement Division is led by MSP Captain Eric Roeske, Lieutenants Dave Spivy, and Adam Flynn. Leading the legislative team is Chief Sergeant at Arms Lori Hodapp, and Deputy Chief Sergeant at Arms Keith Boser. ♦

Troopers: Left to Right - Josh Olson, Keenan Jones, Nick Hanson, Jason Theel, Eric Maikkula
Legislative Security: Left to Right - Retired LE's Tim Keese, (FBI) Dave Graham (Lake Crystal PD, Mankato PD, MSP) Kevin White (Eden Prairie) Paul Hayes (MSP) Lori Hodapp (MSP) Keith Boser (Tribal Police, Benton County, Foley PD, Airport) John Thompson (MSP) Tim Toyen (Airport) Bob Buth (Airport) Brian Polansky (Biwabik PD, MSP)



PROMOTION

Brett Syverson was promoted to Sgt on 4-10-24. Pictured are his wife Tabitha and Captain Schroeffer.



State Patrol Awards Ceremony

Feb. 8, 2024

Meritorious Citizenship Award: This award is presented to individuals other than State Patrol employees who have assisted the Minnesota State Patrol in providing a significant service to the public.

Jeremy Gerard and Jordan Larson

Feb. 4 – Trooper Alex Vukelich was attempting to arrest a suspect on a traffic stop when a physical struggle ensued. At one point, Trooper Vukelich was knocked to the ground with the suspect on top of him. Jeremy Gerard and Jordan Larson were driving by and heard Trooper Vukelich yelling for help. They stopped and helped gain control of the suspect. Jeremy and Jordan put their own safety aside to help Trooper Vukelich in what was potentially a life-threatening situation.

Benjamin Berg

July 21 – Ben Berg witnessed a personal injury crash and immediately notified 911. The at-fault driver ran from the scene, and Ben ran after him. While maintaining a safe distance, Ben relayed the suspect's description and location to dispatch. With this information, troopers were able to take the suspect into custody without incident. Due to Ben's quick thinking, the suspect was ultimately charged and held accountable for his actions.

Jerome Greene

Sept. 1 – A speed violator fled from a traffic stop, crashed into a ditch and fled on foot. Troopers located the suspect hiding under a semi-trailer at a local business. When they attempted to take him into custody, he physically resisted and ran again. Jerome Greene was working at the business and saw what was happening. He ran after the suspect, who was believed to be impaired, and detained him until law enforcement arrived. Jerome's actions were instrumental in holding the driver accountable for his actions.

Emily Kunkel

Dec. 6 – Emily Kunkel came upon the scene of a serious crash. Emily, who is a nurse, stopped and immediately offered assistance to troopers on scene and helped with CPR. After fire department personnel took over, Emily helped another victim with serious injuries and remained on scene until all of the victims were being cared for. By taking the initiative at a very chaotic scene, Emily Kunkel contributed to the victims' chances of survival.



Minnesota State Patrol Commendation Award: This award is presented to members of another law enforcement or emergency service agency who have assisted the State Patrol in providing a significant service.

Deputy Chris Majeski (Washington County Sheriff's Office)

June 17 – Deputy Chris Majeski responded to reports of a wrong-way driver that had crashed head on with a semi on Interstate 94. When he arrived on scene, both vehicles were on fire and the driver of the semi was unconscious. Despite the fire, he entered the cab of the semi and pulled the driver to safety. Shortly thereafter, the cab became fully engulfed in flames. Without Deputy Majeski's intervention, the driver would not have survived.

Deputy Nate Hanson (Rice County Sheriff's Office)

July 12 – Deputy Nate Hanson responded to an injury crash near Faribault. A semi-truck was on fire and heavy smoke was coming from the cab. People at the scene were attempting to pull the driver out of the cab without success. Deputy Hanson used a fire extinguisher in the driver's compartment, then pulled the driver's arm until he was able to dislodge him. He proceeded to drag the driver away from the burning semi and began treatment for life-threatening injuries. Although the driver passed away from the severity of his injuries, Deputy Hanson's actions were commendable.

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

Trooper Thomas Saunders (Marshall District)

This presentation is combined with a Minnesota State Patrol Commendation for Deputy Caleb Cihak of the Jackson County Sheriff's Office and a Meritorious Citizenship Award for Justin Warmka.

Dec. 27, 2022 – While helping with removal of a vehicle in the ditch, Trooper Thomas Saunders witnessed another vehicle roll over in front of him. Trooper Saunders and tow operator Justin Warmka removed five occupants from the overturned vehicle; one was not breathing. Trooper Saunders and Justin Warmka began CPR. Deputy Caleb Cihak arrived on scene and provided an AED. CPR was continued and the occupant began to breathe on his own.

Trooper Alex Molitor (Rochester District)

Jan. 15 – Trooper Alex Molitor had stopped at a restaurant when he noticed a man in the parking lot hunched over. He approached the man and noticed that he was having difficulty breathing and was choking. Trooper Molitor pounded on his back to clear the obstruction. When that didn't work, he applied abdominal thrusts which dislodged the obstruction.

Sergeant Patrick Fay (Commercial Vehicle Section)

Jan. 27 – Sergeant Patrick Fay was dining at a restaurant with family and friends when a female guest at his table began choking. She signaled that she was fine, but Sergeant Fay detected a slight wheezing and determined she was unable to breathe. He immediately applied abdominal thrusts. The obstruction was dislodged and she resumed breathing.



Trooper Andrew Kutz (Mankato District)

Feb. 4 – Trooper Andrew Kutz was off duty celebrating his birthday with family and friends when he witnessed a man collapse. He realized the man had gone into cardiac arrest and had no pulse. Trooper Kutz initiated CPR, then applied multiple shocks using an AED. Prior to EMTs arrival, the man regained consciousness and was talking.

Sergeant Nicholas Hanson (West Metro District)

April 8 – Sergeant Nicholas Hanson responded to a call of a woman sitting on a bridge over Interstate 94 with her legs hanging over the freeway. He noted the woman was in distress and attempts to communicate with her were unsuccessful. He swiftly grabbed her from behind and pulled her off the ledge. Trooper Hanson was on the scene roughly 20 seconds before seizing the opportunity to pull her to safety and prevent a tragedy.

Trooper Darcy Gagnon (Brainerd District)

June 9 – Trooper Darcy Gagnon responded to the scene of a head-on crash. A woman was trapped inside her vehicle with the passenger compartment crushed around her. Trooper Gagnon determined the victim had sustained severe trauma to her left leg. She reached into the vehicle and applied a tourniquet to stop the heavy bleeding. This action no doubt saved the victim's life. At last report, the victim was recovering and on track to gain full use of her leg.

Trooper Mark Schafer (Brainerd District)

June 14 – Trooper Mark Schafer responded to a medical emergency. An 85-year-old man was unresponsive and not breathing. Relatives had been attempting to administer CPR. Trooper Schafer activated his AED; however, no shock was advised. He took over CPR and continued chest compressions for over five minutes. Additional first responders arrived on scene and eventually, a pulse was reestablished.

Troopers Derrick Row and Andres Guerra (West Metro District)

June 18 – Troopers Derrick Row and Andres Guerra responded to a rollover crash. Trooper Row observed an unconscious man sitting in the driver's seat and pulled him from the vehicle. After evaluation, he administered a dose of Narcan. The driver's pulse deteriorated from weak to undetectable. Trooper Guerra arrived on scene and retrieved his AED and began CPR, trading off with Trooper Row until care was transferred to medics. The man was transported to the hospital where he later regained a pulse.

Trooper Josh Hall (Rochester District)

July 1 – Trooper Josh Hall responded to the scene of a shooting at a local business. A victim had suffered gunshot wounds to the femoral area and upper chest/shoulder and was rapidly losing blood. Trooper Hall quickly secured a tourniquet around the victim's upper leg to slow the bleeding and provided direct care to the chest/shoulder wound until medics arrived on scene. Trooper Hall's actions significantly increased the victim's chance of survival.

Troopers Justin Mathes and Cleopatra Nystrom (West Metro District)

July 7 – Troopers Justin Mathes and Cleopatra Nystrom responded to an injury crash. Witnesses reported the driver was in and out of consciousness. Troopers Mathes removed the driver from the vehicle. With Trooper Nystrom's assistance, CPR and other life saving measures were administered. The driver regained consciousness and was transported by ambulance for further care.



Trooper Ryan Luczak (Marshall District)

Aug. 12 – Trooper Ryan Luczak responded to the scene of a motorcycle crash. He found the victim lying in the ditch and a man was administering CPR. Trooper Luczak could not detect a pulse and took over CPR. When medics arrived, Trooper Luczak assisted with rescue breathing. After care was transferred to medics, he secured a landing zone for air care. The victim was flown to the hospital.

Trooper Matt Schmitz (St. Cloud District)

Sept. 5 – Trooper Matt Schmitz responded to a cardiac arrest. A woman was in full arrest and first responders were rotating through CPR. Trooper Schmitz performed multiple rounds of compressions and assisted in direct medical care at the scene. His fast response directly contributed to a successful outcome. The victim survived this event and reunited with Trooper Schmitz and other first responders at a local city council meeting where they were recognized for their actions.

Trooper James Lee (East Metro District)

Sept. 19 – Trooper James Lee responded to a vehicle that went off the road, crashed into a sound barrier and was engulfed in flames. Trooper Lee pulled the unconscious driver out of the burning vehicle and dragged him up a steep embankment to safety. He then proceeded to administer life saving measures until medics arrived. The driver eventually regained consciousness.

Troopers Sandy Barg and Sam Catlin (Brainerd District)

This presentation is combined with a Minnesota State Patrol Commendation for **Officer Zach Gowens and Officer Mitch Morse of the Little Falls Police Department.**

Oct. 6 – Troopers Sandy Barg and Sam Catlin responded to a medical call. A woman suffered a seizure and was not breathing. Troopers Barg and Catlin began chest compressions. After multiple rounds, Officers Zach Gowens and Mitch Morse took over. Trooper Catlin delivered breaths to the victim through a bag valve mask. Trooper Barg inserted an oral airway. After multiple shocks by an AED, a slight pulse was detected and the woman began to breathe on her own. Troopers Barg and Catlin and Officers Gowens and Morse continued lifesaving care until medics arrived on scene.

Trooper Brady Winter (Detroit Lakes District)

Nov. 25 – Trooper Brady Winter arrived at the scene of an injury crash. Citizens at the scene were assisting the occupants of a vehicle on its side in the median. Trooper Winter noticed the other vehicle involved had caught fire and smoke was coming from the engine compartment. A bystander confirmed there was a passenger still inside. Trooper Winter emptied his fire extinguisher on the flames and removed a woman from the vehicle and pulled her to safety. Due to his quick assessment of the scene and timely actions, the woman's life was saved.

Chief's Commendation Award – Communications/911: This award is presented to radio communications operators 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.

RCS Sarah Johnson (Statewide Communications – Regional Transportation Management Center [RTMC])

Aug. 8 – A Dakota County Communications Center dispatcher fielded a call from a person in distress. During the call, the person entered a lane of traffic and was struck by a commercial vehicle and fatally





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injured. Recognizing this as a traumatic event, RCS Johnson personally contacted the Dakota County dispatcher to check on her wellbeing and ensure she was receiving the assistance needed.

RCOs Amanda Dunkin, Mackenzie Marzolf, Will Persons and Charles Stoppel
(Statewide Communications – Southern Regional Communications Center [SRCC])

Aug. 19 – A State Trooper attempted to stop a vehicle for speeding near the city of Becker. The suspect vehicle continued to speed and rear-ended another vehicle occupied by three passengers. One passenger was killed and the two others were critically injured. The suspect ran from the scene. While law enforcement engaged in a dynamic scene, dispatchers provided the necessary elements to support and aid in the investigation that led to the apprehension of the driver, who was charged with third-degree murder and criminal vehicular homicide.

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

Lieutenant Aaron Struntz (Marshall District)

Dec. 25, 2022 – On Christmas night, a sprinkler pipe froze and burst, flooding a health care facility and requiring the evacuation of 35 residents. In frigid temperatures and extremely poor road conditions, Lieutenant Aaron Struntz led a convoy of vehicles through nearly impassable roads to transport the residents to another facility. Upon arrival, he shoveled the sidewalk and entryway of the receiving facility to make the transition of residents as safe as possible. Lieutenant Struntz consistently provides extraordinary service, going above and beyond to help those in need.

RCS Jamey Kime and RCOs Don Hakes, John Polz and Fabiola Rodriguez
(Statewide Communications – SRCC)

March 7 – Dispatch received notification that a murder suspect was believed to be en route from Nebraska to Minnesota. As information evolved, RCS Jamey Kime along with RCOs Don Hakes, John Polz and Fabiola Rodriguez worked with district supervisors, MSP Flight and county dispatchers, continuously updating and managing the event as it evolved. Their due diligence, planning and teamwork resulted in multiple suspects being safely apprehended.

RCO Jake Savat (Statewide Communications – SRCC)

May 30 – Deputies from the Blue Earth County Sheriff's Office and officers from the Mankato Police Department attempted a traffic stop on a suspect who was reported to be under the influence of a controlled substance and possibly armed. The suspect fled from law enforcement. RCO Jake Savat fielded a 911 call from an agitated man who he determined to be the suspect. He detected there was another person in the vehicle, possibly being held against her will. RCO Savat continued to monitor the call and relay all pertinent information and location updates to law enforcement. The suspect was ultimately apprehended.

Sergeant Jesse Anderson, Trooper Chad Kucza and Trooper Ed Stanek (Virginia District)

This presentation is combined with Minnesota State Patrol Commendations for:

Special Agent A.J. Morse – Bureau of Criminal Apprehension

Lieutenant Mark Weller, Lieutenant Kyle Curtiss, Sergeant Jake Olson, Deputy Nick O'Toole – Itasca County Sheriff's Office

Officer Ashley Moran – Grand Rapids Police Department



Meritorious Citizenship Awards for:

Holly Christensen – Holiday

Melissa Jewett – Cenex

Margie Schumacher – Cenex

Sept. 17 – Law enforcement responded to a fatal pedestrian hit-and-run. A deceased man was found at the scene along with two small pieces of car parts. Sergeant Jesse Anderson, Trooper Chad Kucza and Trooper Ed Stanek began an investigation. After extensive review of surveillance video provided by Holly Christensen (Holiday), Melissa Jewett and Margie Schumacher (Cenex), law enforcement began to actively look for two vehicles: an SUV and a pickup. Deputy Nick O’Toole located the pickup, but it evaded contact. Officer Ashley Moran later located the pickup at a residence. Special Agent A.J. Morse made contact with the pickup’s owner who identified the driver of the SUV as the party responsible for striking the pedestrian. Trooper Ed Stanek interviewed the SUV driver and observed damage consistent with striking a pedestrian. Multiple search warrants were executed for evidence by Lieutenant Mark Weller, Lieutenant Kyle Curtiss, Sergeant Jake Olson and Special Agent A.J. Morse. The driver of the SUV was charged with criminal vehicular homicide – hit and run. This case was solved due to the exceptional collaboration between law enforcement and community businesses.

Sergeant Dan Beasley (St. Cloud District)

Sergeant Dan Beasley’s extensive knowledge and experience in tracking evidence and evidence auditing were instrumental in the statewide deployment of the BEAST evidence software system. He traveled to each district to conduct inventory audits, conducted training sessions on multiple topics and assisted the project team with rollout. Sergeant Beasley continues to serve as a subject matter expert to districts across the state in all things evidence related.

Sergeant Eric Bormann (Rochester District)

Sergeant Eric Bormann is in his 26th year with the State Patrol and is a DRE/SFST instructor, phlebotomist, field training officer and a district delegate for the Trooper’s Association. He is passionate about detecting and arresting drug- and alcohol-impaired drivers. He is equally passionate about training other troopers, officers and deputies throughout the state in detecting impaired drivers. Sergeant Bormann is an exemplary trooper in all that he does, from enforcement and education to leadership and character.

RCS Sarah Johnson (Statewide Communications – RTMC)

Radio Communications Supervisor Sarah Johnson’s dedication to her role and commitment to the well-being of her colleagues is exceptional. She manages many critical administrative tasks and essential functions enabling the department to function effectively. Sarah is also committed to creating a positive and supportive work environment where employees can thrive. She regularly checks in with others and takes the initiative to ensure new staff feel welcome. Sarah is an inspiration to her colleagues and a true example of exceptional leadership.

Kathy Craft (Training and Development Section)

Kathy Craft has been an extremely valuable team member of the Training and Development Section for nine years. Kathy is responsible for the tracking and documentation of all training records, logistics and day-to-day administrative duties at Camp Ripley. Over the last year, Kathy has been an exceptional resource to a new lieutenant and a new EVOG and Firearms Coordinators at Camp Ripley, as well as taking on additional duties. Kathy is always willing to assist where she is needed, is extremely humble and positive in her role,



and demonstrates the core values of the agency on a daily basis.

Lt. Andrew Martinek (West Metro District)

Lt. Andrew Martinek exhibits outstanding leadership and excellence in public safety through his personal actions, guidance and initiative. Beyond leading the busy Minneapolis patrol station, he accepts new challenges within the district and agency such as developing and leading the Traffic Incident Management program and being intimately involvement in the Drug Recognition and Standardized Field Sobriety Programs and Field Training Program. Lt. Martinek's drive for success, passion to go above and beyond and dedication to traffic safety is exceptional.

Sergeant Chad Mills and Trooper Anthony Butler (Investigative Services)

In a typical year, Sergeant Chad Mills and Trooper Tony Butler may train two to three new K-9s and handlers. In 2023, due to the legalization of cannabis, they trained six new K-9s and handlers. In addition, they trained two dogs from the BCA and AGED, conducted three separate handler schools, and rearranged their personal schedules to make two short-notice trips to Pennsylvania to select the new dogs for the program. That training paid off. During the North American Police Working Dog Association K-9 certification, all dogs exceeded the minimum passing score of 91.6 percent, the highest in the nation, with many teams attaining a perfect 100. Sergeant Mills and Trooper Butler lead with excellence and are instrumental the success of the K-9 program.

Trooper James Noxon (East Metro District)

Trooper James Noxon has been an instrumental member of the street racing enforcement team. On his second year of patrol, Trooper Noxon worked the street racing detail every Friday and Saturday night during his regular shifts. Even on weekends off, he signed up for these shifts in the effort to remove these dangerous drivers from our roadways. Trooper Noxon dedicated countless hours at these street racing events to enforce the traffic laws and ultimately make our roadways a safe place for all.

Lieutenant Robert Zak (Investigative Services)

Lieutenant Robert Zak leads with excellence through collaboration, problem solving and innovation. Both the K-9 and crash reconstruction programs are successful due in large part to his approach to excellence and ability to mentor others through a lens of positivity. He continually strives for improvement by soliciting feedback from team members and proactively researches new ideas. Lieutenant Robert Zak is a respected leader and integral member of the Investigative Services Section.

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 (West Metro District)

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 2023, Trooper Gustavo Culbeaux arrested 202 impaired drivers. In recognition of his efforts, he is presented with the Eagle Squadron Award.



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.

Major Jeremy Geiger (Headquarters)

In addition to leading the agency down the path of national accreditation, Major Geiger's efforts with the Street Racing Enforcement Project have become a model for other states and he is often sought out for his advice on best practices. Illegal street racing in the Twin Cities became a significant and consistent problem in the summer of 2020, creating dangerous intersections and roadways and causing property damage. Historically, there has been a propensity for assaults and shootings at these events. Prior to the project, some events would draw up to 250 vehicles and 500 people. Major Geiger brought together multiple law enforcement agencies to curb this dangerous criminal behavior. His strategic plan, which required continual staffing each weekend, has disrupted the street racing community, with as few as 25 vehicles now at events during the height of summer. Major Geiger's organization of resources and collaborative efforts have changed the landscape of street racing and the illegal behaviors associated with it in Minnesota.

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.

Sam Kunjummen (MNIT - Headquarters)

Sam works in our IT section and takes great pride in his work, which is demonstrated by the great lengths he goes to as he ensures that all systems integral to our agency remain online. Many members of the agency keep Sam's phone number at the ready and when called upon at all hours of the day, he quickly troubleshoots any issues. Twenty-three members of the agency from districts throughout the state submitted examples of exemplary work and what a genuinely nice human being Sam is. He has resolved issues at all hours of the day and night, on holidays and while on vacation. We are extremely fortunate to keep Sam in our ranks as he has a heart for public service.

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

Trooper Nick Diederich (Brainerd District)

Trooper Diederich demonstrates exemplary work performance, initiative, leadership and interpersonal relations. Last year he initiated 1,591 traffic stops, investigated 45 crashes and offered public assistance 134 times. He is known to many new drivers as he takes time to conduct traffic safety presentations at many of the area high schools and other venues. Multiple people who were stopped by Trooper Diederich reached out to say they were impressed with his professional demeanor and approach to the stop, and families from several crashes thanked him for being helpful and compassionate to their families during such difficult times. During one traffic stop, a young adult broke down and had a mental health crisis. They had a long roadside conversation and Trooper Diederich gave them his business card so they could call and talk anytime. This interaction helped the driver get professional help. Trooper Diederich always displays an exemplary image of the State Patrol and has impeccable job related attributes that make him the Trooper of the Year.



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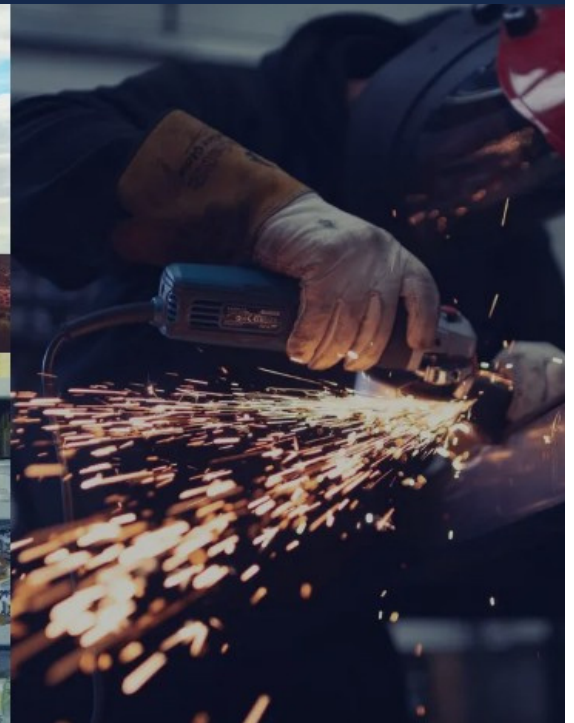
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On Monday I presented the House of shields with our \$1000 check. With that we are sponsoring a hole at their golf tournament.

The House of Shields is working to get donations not just from the Rochester area but anywhere throughout the State and Country since Officers from all over the nation and world stay there while they are treated at the Mayo Clinic. ♦

Eric Bormann SP382

REMEMBERING LOREN KALAL: A LIFELONG PUBLIC SERVANT AND COMMUNITY PILLAR

Many will Remember (especially Retirees) Loren from the warehouse.

Loren F Kalal aged 84, died from natural causes.

After finishing his degree in public administration, Loren went to work for the Highway Patrol for 39 yrs. Only to come back to work part time to get in his 39½.

Loren could invent anything with sharp attention to detail, which could only be rivaled by his sharp sense of character.

Loren was a thinker and never acted impulsively, he could wait out any problem or issue, like a cat waiting for a mouse in the cupboard, until it was either resolved or "went away".

An avid politician Loren was a member of the planning commission in West Lakeland township for many years.



Being engaged with community affairs was very important to him.

Loren made many friends, and acquaintances, at the highway patrol, it was never uncommon to have a patrolman or even the chief of the highway patrol cutting wood out in his backyard.

He always bled maroon, he always cared, he never cheated anyone.

He is already so missed. May he be blessed. ♦

His son, Peter LOREN Kalal



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UNDERSTANDING WEAR-AND-TEAR INJURIES

By Lindsey Rowland, Meuser, Yackley & Rowland, P.A.

Getting injured as a member of the Minnesota State Patrol is inevitable. Although most law enforcement officers know that workers' compensation benefits are available when they are injured when responding to a call for service, few know that benefits are also available for wear-and-tear injuries that develop over time.

Whether you are early in your career or nearing retirement, it is important to be knowledgeable about how to access workers' compensation benefits, Minnesota State Retirement Association (MSRS) disability, and other benefits for wear-and-tear injuries, should you need them in the future.

Members of the Minnesota State Patrol who develop wear-and-tear injuries (a.k.a. Gillette or repetitive stress injuries) may experience chronic pain and stiffness in their neck, back, shoulders, knees, and hips that may worsen with activity or after prolonged periods of rest.

Wear-and-tear injuries like osteoarthritis (deterioration of the cartilage that cushions your joints) and spinal stenosis (narrowing of the spinal canal causing nerve pain), are common among State Troopers and Conservation Officers and tend to worsen over the course of a long career.

Patrol duties including crouching/kneeling/lifting while providing emergency medical services at the scene of a motor vehicle accident, for example, can lead to injuries to the neck, back, shoulders, knees, and hips, which worsen over time as the joints deteriorate.

Frequent injuries to the neck, back, shoulders, knees, and hips – for example, injuries from squad-car accidents or from grappling with suspects resisting arrest – may also contribute to wear-and-tear injuries (even if your injuries seem relatively minor when they occur). That is why it is important to report

all your injuries so that you have the documentation you will need to access workers' compensation benefits if you develop a wear-and-tear injury.

Even wearing a duty belt (or vest) loaded with heavy equipment including side-arm, taser, flashlight, etc., can cause wear-and-tear to your body over time over the course of a decades-long career.

Proving that your wear-and-tear injury is work-related is sometimes difficult because other personal risk factors may also contribute to the development of common wear-and-tear injuries. There are also different rules that apply to wear-and-tear injuries including when you must notify your employer of your work injury and file a claim for benefits.

Whether you sustain an injury in-the-line-of-duty, or the day-to-day physicality of working in law enforcement finally catches up to you, you may be entitled to workers' compensation and MSRS disability benefits. The symptoms of wear-and-tear injuries often become more severe and debilitating with time, so it is important to take action to ensure you can access those benefits when you need them. ♦

Thank you

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NATIONAL TROOPERS COALITION SPRING MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

This year the National Trooper's Coalition met for their spring meeting in Indianapolis Indiana. President Mike Ledoux, Vice President Jason Theel and Andrew Larsen the Marshall District Delegate attended to represent Minnesota. During the conference, we did regional breakouts. During the regional breakouts, we discussed things such as pay, contract language, equipment, uniforms, and day to day operations. This is beneficial because we can discuss some of the challenges and successes each agency experiences that may be unique to the region.



facing and the challenges that come with it. It was a great conference with a lot of information and networking. The National Troopers Coalition holds great value in bettering our agencies and our agencies associations. The overall goal for every member involved is striving to make the best working conditions possible for Troopers and get everyone home safe. ♦

Trooper Andrew
Larsen SP 202
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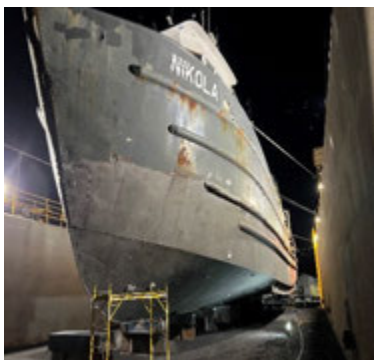
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TROOPERS HONOR MARK MCGREW'S 24-YEAR SERVICE ON RETIREMENT

On April 4th, 2024, troopers from District 2700 paid tribute to Mark McGrew on his retirement, celebrating his 24 years of dedicated service to the State Patrol. ♦



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YOUTH MOVIE NIGHT

On April 9th the Minnesota State Patrol Troopers Association hosted a movie night for the Valley Youth Center in Duluth, Minnesota. The Valley Youth Center (VYC) is a non-profit after school organization that was established in the 1970's by parents in the western neighborhood of Duluth. Families wanted a safe and structured place where children could go to after school that offered programming, tutoring and community connection. With the help of dedicated staff throughout the years, the organization has blossomed into a stable place for an annual average of 500 kids ages 5-17 to go Monday – Friday. Tuesday nights are movie nights at the VYC and our Association was proud to host 26 of the younger kids and their VYC chaperons to Kung Fu Panda 4 at the Canal Park theater. The children were greeted by Association President Mike LeDoux and Two Harbors Trooper Lori Young with a rush of excitement when they found out they got the entire screen to themselves.

Additionally, each kid received their own kiddie combo of popcorn, fruit snacks and a root beer. It was an absolute success in connecting with this group in that this may have been the first positive police experience. This organization works with kids that live in neighborhoods that see more than twice the crime, twice the police calls, and double the poverty than other parts of Duluth. Resiliency can sometimes be evident in meeting these kids for the first time but our presence by simply handing out popcorn and helping them to their seats is just one way we can walk alongside these young ones into a better tomorrow. It was truly heartwarming to see the smiles and feel the enthusiasm when the kids nestled into their dream loungers before the show. Each kid was eager to extend their gratitude to us for they understood this was a real treat. In the thank you letter we received from Executive Director, Russ Salgy, he mentioned that this was the absolute highlight for many of them that week. We hope we can make this an annual event and perhaps expand the participation to include other Duluth communities as well. ♦

Sgt Mike LeDoux #88



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April 22nd, 2024

Officer Lori Young
Minnesota State Patrol
Duluth District

Dear Lori,

Thank you for the movie evening with the kids from the Valley Youth Center. It was a great time by our kids and staff. Here at the Valley Youth Center we value recreation and a child life savior, mental health deterrent, and something in the world that makes kids feel happy. Simple things, like taking kids to a movie can be the highlight of their week.

We also value the officers, both in and out of uniform, being there as well. This showcases the people behind the badge in the eyes of our kids. Many of whom may only see officers in the line of duty, handling a situation, and unfortunately potentially involving a sibling or known person to them.

Offering these recreational types of activities goes a long way in the child's understanding and handling of the emotional picture they see through their eyes.

Sincerely,

Russ Salgy
Agency Director
Welch Center Inc.
dba Valley Youth Center
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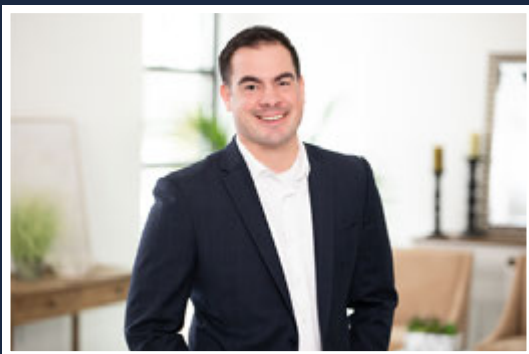
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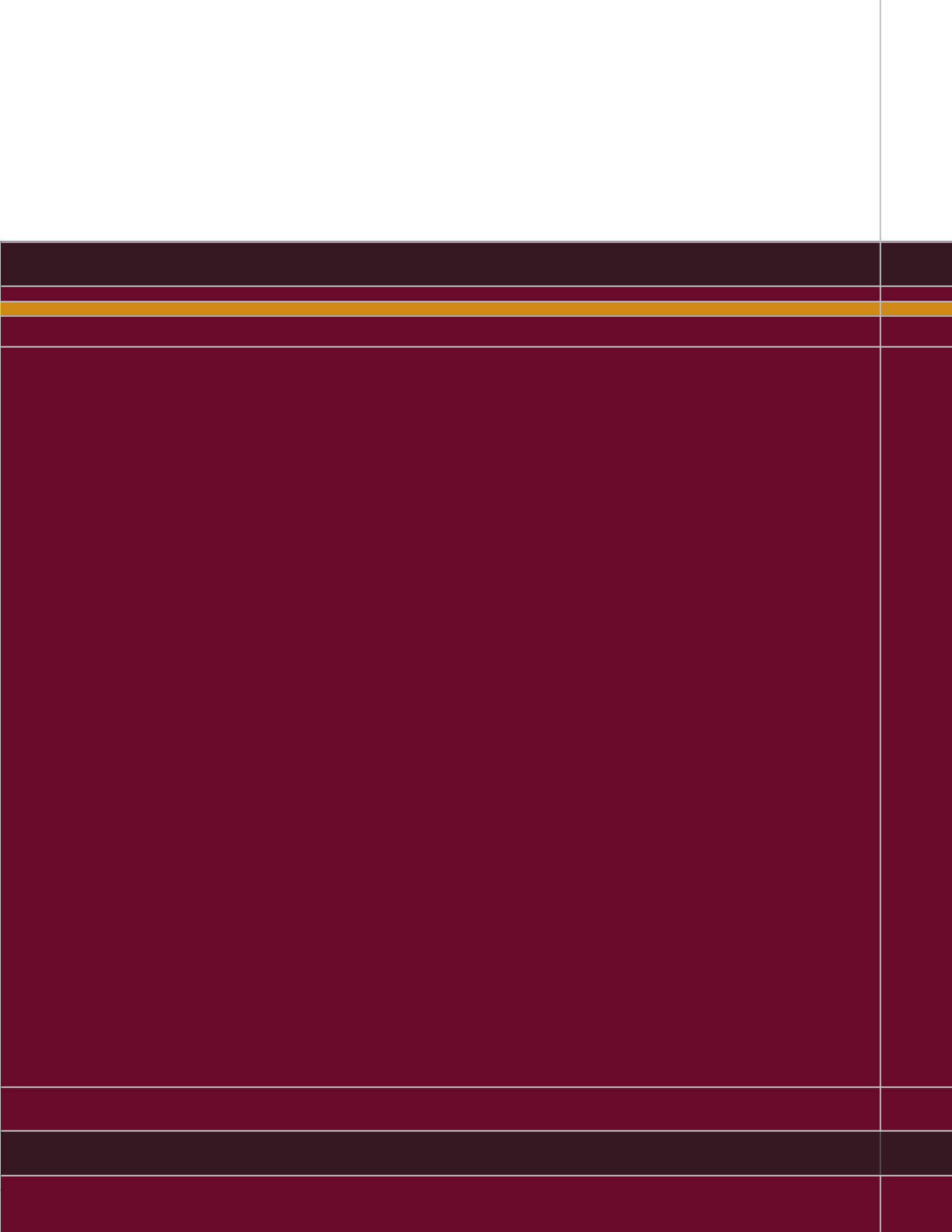
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