

MINNESOTA TROOPER

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MINNESOTA TROOPER

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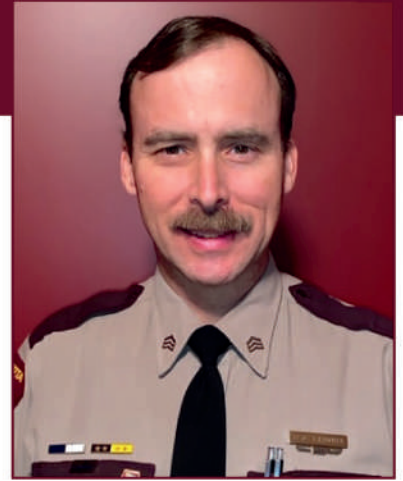
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- Membership into the National Trooper Coalition
- A voice on the State Patrol Equipment and Safety Committee



Mike LeDoux • MSPTA President

President's Report



We Stand Alone Together

I recently finished watching a companion documentary based on HBO's series Band of Brothers. This documentary tells the story of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment also known as (Easy Company), a member of the 101st Airborne Division during World War II. After watching the documentary, I felt an even greater respect for those that had endured combat in both the European and Pacific Theaters during World War II. Both my grandfathers were veterans of World War II but seldom spoke of the war in the detail revealed in this documentary. This behavior was not unique to them, and I suspect this was a coping mechanism to put the war in the past. Several years before my grandfather passed away, I walked over to his house because I located a story about his brother John online. A citizen recounted the story of the crash of a B-24 Liberator on December 16, 1942, in Cottage Grove, Minnesota. The airplane was in Minnesota being equipped with

"Associate yourself with people of good quality, for it is better to be alone than in bad company."

-Booker T. Washington



a top secret Norden bombsight and crashed shortly after taking off killing my grandfather's brother and all aboard. I printed a copy of the story for him, and it was immediately apparent to me that this article brought back

this terrible memory like it happened yesterday. After reviewing the article, he commented "mom never got over Johnny" and we left it at that.

The title of the documentary, We Stand Alone Together, resonated with me. At times over the last few years those of us in the profession have no doubt felt as if we were alone yet we have

always been together. To thrive and survive, we have leaned on each other and our loved ones. Our resolve has remained steadfast, and a deepened comradery has developed. An attack on one of us is unequivocally an attack on all of us. We have depended on each other, and Minnesotans have

depended on us to provide security, safety, and service during what certainly has been the most challenging time since our creation in 1929. We became troopers by choice and are unified by our choice to serve. This commitment and effort defending these principles is becoming increasingly apparent to the citizens we serve. We must continue to support and encourage those that wish to serve whether they wear a uniform for community or country.

The Bureau of Criminal Apprehension recently released their 2021 Unified Crime Report. The results of the report will come as no surprise to the membership. The loss of officers statewide and reactive versus proactive policing are reflected throughout the report.

The report provided a violent crime overview indicating an increase in violent crime of 21.6% from 2020. Aggravated assaults alone increased by 33.6%. Carjacking was tracked for the first time, indicating 779 reported cases. Victims of this violent crime will no doubt suffer long term trauma that can't be tracked by statistics. Assaults on law enforcement officers increased from 794 to 1,112 in 2021, an increase of approximately 40%. One of the few areas declining were officer involved shootings, decreasing by approximately 20% and use of force by officers decreasing by 33%. United States Attorney

for the District of Minnesota, Andrew Luger, said it best at a recent press conference; “The disdain many offenders are showing, grows out of a belief that they simply will not be held accountable. Because of this belief, criminals have upped the ante by engaging in evermore violent behavior that threatens our safety in more dangerous ways.”

As I indicated in a previous article, these problems require a unified and coordinated response. We need to dissolve the divide and hold the individuals accountable for this violent crime. I applaud Mr. Luger for his blunt message to these violent criminals that this behavior will no longer be tolerated, and they will be held accountable federally if not at the local level.

This November, get engaged in this important election. This election cycle will determine our next governor and the makeup of the legislature as well as congress. I suspect gas, groceries, and gangs will be on the mind of many voters as they cast their ballots. Take the time to learn about the candidates’ positions, values, and goals on issues important to you and your family. Collectively, we are an amazing force multiplier and I encourage you to let your voice be heard. Above all else, take the time to Vote. Continue to educate people that most law enforcement encounters go well, provided those involved remain calm, courteous, cooperative, and compliant not combative. ♦

Mike #88



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Colonel Matt Langer

Colonel's Message



A Busy Summer

If you stop and think about what the State Patrol has accomplished over the summer of 2022, it is nothing short of remarkable. The term “unprecedented” gets used a lot in today’s world, but I think the number of missions accomplished by the State Patrol during the summer of 2022 is indeed unprecedented.

Street racing mitigation: Every Friday and Saturday night, a group of Troopers has been taking a zero tolerance approach toward street racing. Working with allied agencies has formed a strong team that led toward multiple felony level charges amongst a key group of organizers who have demonstrated their willingness to engage in, and condone this dangerous behavior. Our efforts have paid off; prohibiting what has plagued many cities across the nation from happening in Minnesota.

HEAT: During at least 10 days each month, Troopers have banded together to work high-visibility speed enforcement. The result has been a notable increase in enforcement presence on the highways. The deterrent effect of a marked squad car should never be underestimated. Traffic stops for the State Patrol are up 15% as a result of your hard work.

Project 20(22): Troopers traveled from all across the state to participate in enforcement saturation events designed to have an impact on driving behavior. Whether in downtown Minneapolis or along the North Shore of Lake Superior, the motoring public took note of this project.

High Visibility Patrols: Each Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night, Troopers have volunteered to work overtime shifts to provide a visible police presence on Broadway Avenue and Lake Street. Business owners and residents have been appreciative of seeing a State Patrol presence. We also provided a few nights of patrols to the University of Minnesota during the first week of classes.

State Fair: 30 Troopers each day, plus 20 additional Troopers for the last two nights of the fair, worked hard to keep the gates secure. There was a steady stream of compliments and verbal messages of thanks as hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans poured into an event that is part of the fabric of our state.

These projects are in addition to the important everyday work that drives our organization and keeps Minnesotans safe on the road. Whether you work at the State Capitol, inspect commercial vehicles, dispatch calls for service, or handle the administrative work that comes from everything we do as an agency, you are contributing to our success.

While fall can be a particularly deadly period of time on our roads, throughout the summer we made progress in driving the fatal crash number down vs. 2021. A recent Star Tribune article indicated an uptick in the number of State Patrol citations and a dramatic decrease in citations written by other law enforcement agencies. Minnesota depends on us and we are delivering.

I look forward to the future, including the return of a lateral academy and the introduction of many new equipment items that will assist us in being a modern as possible. Although the summer was busy, I hope you had the opportunity to take some time off and spend it on the lake, golf course, or whatever brings you joy. Keep up the good work, knowing I am proud to serve with you. ♦



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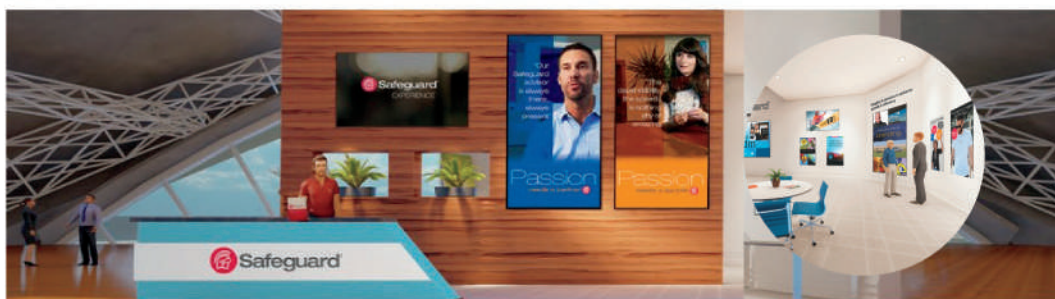
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The Taurus Project

DAYS ★ **G**



The front-wheel-drive Taurus. Is it the MSP car of the future?

By David Stumpf

Should the Minnesota State Patrol adopt a front-wheel-drive, mid-sized patrol car? That question is being examined in a special project involving the 1991 Ford Taurus.

Since February 1991, Corporal Dennis Lindahl has been putting the four-door, front-wheel-drive Taurus through its paces. Lindahl and the Taurus are assigned to Station 2640, Sauk Centre, which includes a section of I-94 and various two-lane state roads. The wide variety of roads and terrain was one reason the project was conducted in 2640.

Lindahl was assigned the car due in part to a cost comparison proposal he submitted to the Central Office. Unbeknownst to Lindahl, the Central Office had already been considering the feasibility of a front-wheel-drive patrol car. In fact, a Taurus police package had already been ordered.

As part of the project, Lindahl is examining economic factors including fuel and maintenance costs, resale value and per-unit purchase cost to determine if the Taurus's overall costs are less than for conventional units.

Safety and comfort are major considerations. Lindahl said he paid special attention to these details to make sure



Inside the Taurus, controls are easy to read and accessible.

MAY 1992/13

ONE ★ BY

the overall project evaluation reflects a trooper's point of view.

The unit is set up basically the same as full-size units, but with the addition of bucket seats, ABS four-wheel disc brakes and a driver's side air bag. So far, Lindahl said, the bucket seats have proven to be very comfortable while providing ample support. The controls are simple and user friendly and the interior is generally roomy and aesthetically pleasing. The exterior lines are neither boxy nor harsh, and the soft, curved styling makes driving easier. Undoubtedly, the Taurus's handling and safety features add to driver comfort.

The 3.8 liter fuel-injected V-6 engine has greater pick-up than Lindahl found in prior conventional squads, and this includes the top-end speeds. Lindahl said it's the most stable car he's driven at high speeds.

The unit is fitted with a roll bar cage. Although this has reduced available space in the back seat, it still remains usable. Trunk space is more than adequate, even with the full-size spare tire.



Although a mid-size car, the Taurus's aerodynamic shape provided greater stability than conventional full-size units. Photos by Trooper James Chan

Lindahl said it took time to acclimate himself from rear-wheel to front-wheel drive, but it has performed well. Front-wheel drive has not hindered the unit from doing what it's supposed to do.

Being more aerodynamic than current patrol models, the Taurus cuts the wind nicely and is less affected by crosswinds. Lindahl said that overall, the Taurus is the most pleasant unit he has driven.

The Taurus package also comes with different, more contemporary mark-

ings. Parts of the markings are highly reflective for safety reasons. The experimental computer-designed markings were done by the Graffix Shoppe in Minneapolis.

Is this the Minnesota State Patrol unit of the future? Time will tell.

About the author

David Stumpf is a Todd County assistant county attorney in Long Prairie. The article was submitted by Corporal Dennis Lindahl, Sauk Centre.



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NTC 2022

Contributed by Trooper Blake Cederstrom

President Mike LeDoux, Vice President Dan Beasley and I attended the National Troopers Coalition spring meeting held in Long Beach California May 18-20th. Tuesday was a travel day getting to California before the conference commenced on the 18th. The California Highway Patrol was the host for the spring NTC conference held at the Renaissance Hotel.

Wednesday, May 18th started with regional breakout sessions with states in our region. Wisconsin, Iowa, Michigan, Illinois and Indiana had representation attending. Discussion topics included pay, retention and recruitment. Most states have recently received moderate salary increases to recruit and retain future generations of Troopers. Minnesota Troopers are paid on the upper end comparatively to other states in our region thanks to the hard work put in by the MSPTA. Illinois currently has a top pay just shy of \$124,000 annually but it takes almost 25 years to achieve this pay scale. Iowa currently has a backing the blue initiative with a Republican Governor and Legislature that supports Law Enforcement in their state. They are committed to raising Iowa Trooper's wages as well.

Make no mistake, we are facing a hiring dilemma in our profession. Many states including ours are trying new ways to recruit new potential hires to offset attrition and retirement.

Thursday's Conference Agenda featured several business, council, lobbyist and legislative reports. The twenty nine troopers who passed in 2021 were also honored.

Thursday evening's dinner featured special guest Erik Estrada from CHiPs. I am sure there are many Troopers who don't know who Erik is or what CHiPs was. CHiPs was an American crime drama television show that aired from 1977 to 1983 on NBC. It followed the lives of two motorcycle officers on the California Highway Patrol. Erik was "Ponch" one of the officers followed on the show.

Erik is a steadfast supporter of Law Enforcement. He took many photographs and was eager to autograph anything presented to him.

Friday's Conference Agenda featured guest speaker Anne Marie Schubert. Schubert is a District Attorney in Sacramento County. Schubert spoke of the many challenges she faces as a prosecutor getting Judges to hand out appropriate bail and sentencing. Minnesota is not the only state experiencing this issue. Friday's meeting closed with election results and discussion of the Fall Meeting that will be held in Buffalo, New York.

I learned a lot during this conference and thank the MSPTA for the opportunity to attend. ♦

Stay safe everyone
Blake #425



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Remembering Dennis Olson

Contributed by

Kent D. Matthews

Retired Minnesota State Trooper (Captain 2700)

Minnesota State Patrol Troopers Association

Delegate, Secretary/Treasurer

Vice President

Minnesota State Patrol Supervisor Association

Delegate

President



**Corporal Dennis D. Olson
MSPTA President**

Dennis Olson passed away on September 1, 2022. He was born and raised out in western Minnesota, on US 212 in Montevideo. He worked as a DJ at the local radio station, something very few people who knew him could believe was possible.

He was a loving husband to his wife Linda, a wonderful father to his children, Todd, Tracie, Pam and loving grandfather. Denny retired from the State Patrol in the early 2000's. He worked mainly in District 2700 and when he retired, he worked as an investigator for the Department of Public Safety, Internal Affairs Division, for three years. He was also a delegate and President of the MSPTA for many years.

There are not many troopers left on the Patrol who worked with him or knew him when he was the MSPTA president. Time quickly moves on. Yet every trooper, every BCA agent, every Conservation Officer, to include all supervisors owes Dennis Olson a thank you. Why? Because no one before or since did more for State Law Enforcement Officers than he did.

Denny was instrumental in improving state law enforcement wages to be competitive with Twin City Suburban Departments, he was behind the initiative for a Hay Study for state troopers, which led to a substantial wage increase, he was instrumental in working for an employee assistance program for troopers, and he was an effective lobbyist for the current pension. He was the driving force behind the 3% per year of service pension that State Law Enforcement Officers currently have.

Denny Olson was smart, and he was quick smart. In contract negotiations with the State of Minnesota, Denny was always one step ahead of everybody else. He was well prepared before he went into negotiations, no one outworked him. He was scrupulously honest and fair. He earned the respect of his fellow law enforcement negotiators and the State negotiators.

This is the advice given to a MSPTA delegate, who was to lobby with him. "Don't ever lie to a legislator. Don't pretend you know something when you don't. Don't give an answer to a question that you don't know for sure, tell them you will find out and get back to them." That was good advice. It was the key to Dennis' success at the legislature. I don't think they were used to dealing with someone as up front and honest as Dennis Olson. Dennis worked across the aisles, he had the respect of Dean Johnson, Democratic Senate Majority Leader, and Steve Sviggum Republican Speaker of the House. Dennis wasn't alone, many others also worked hard for our pensions and benefits. Yet he was the driving force. His efforts laid the groundwork for the pension that State Law Enforcement Officers have today.

To the State Law Officers working today and enjoying a good wage, and to those who are now retired and getting their direct deposit, take a moment to think of those who laid the groundwork for what you have today. People and leaders such as Dennis Olson, retired trooper, and retired president of the MSPTA.

Rest in Peace Denny, you were a good and faithful servant. ♦



Minnesota State Patrol

Trooper Training Academy **GRADUATION**

The MSP Training and Development Staff:

Captain Eric Barthel

Lieutenant Andrew Thelen

Lieutenant Karla Bearce

Technical Sergeant Jimmy Buggs

Technical Sergeant Rick Harjes

Technical Sergeant David Rock

Technical Sergeant Troy Morrell

Technical Sergeant Jonathan Wenzel

Technical Sergeant Jason Halvorson

Administrative Support Senior, Navay Mar

Administrative Support, Sarah Robinson

Administrative Support, Kathy Craft

Academy Aide-de-camp:

Academy Staff Officer, Sergeant Scott Mattfield

Academy Staff Officer, Sergeant Rick Schuler

Academy Staff Officer, Trooper Scott Rudeen

Academy Staff Officer, Trooper Kristie Sue Hathaway

Administrative Support, Holley Gries

THE OATH OF A MINNESOTA STATE TROOPER

I _____, do solemnly swear,

To support the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution and laws of the State of Minnesota, and that I will faithfully and impartially discharge the duties of State Patrol Trooper employed and designated under and pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 299D, and all acts amendatory thereto;

To serve the State of Minnesota and the United States of America honestly and faithfully and at all times fulfill my oath as State Patrol Trooper;

To be loyal to my supervisors and fellow Troopers and obey and enforce the law without fear, favor or discrimination as to class, color, race or creed;

To help those in danger or distress and, if necessity arise, lay down my life rather than swerve from the path of duty; and

To conduct myself at all times in accordance with the highest moral standards and never commit any act that will reflect discredit on the Minnesota State Patrol or any member thereof.

All this I solemnly swear to the best of my knowledge and ability, so help me, God.



The 64th Academy of the Minnesota State Patrol

Colonel Matt Langer's message to the graduating class

It is so good to be with you at this monumental event. As the poet Cesare Pavese stated, "We do not remember days, we remember moments." Today is a moment that will never leave your memory. Nor will it leave the memories of your loved ones who are here today to witness your graduation from the 64th Minnesota State Patrol academy.

I want to thank Governor Walz, Commissioner Harrington, DPS staff, the Minnesota National Guard, our training staff and everyone else who works hard every day to support the work of the State Patrol. It truly is a group effort.

I never tire of speaking about our mission and core values. Our mission of traffic safety is so vital to our state. Years of great progress in reducing traffic fatali-

ties was reversed recently. This happened all across the nation, and even across the world. Minnesotans need you. They need you to go out and work hard to make our roads safer. Thankfully, 2022 is off to much better start. Undoubtedly, the efforts of the Minnesota State Patrol are contributing to that early positive trend. Whether it is HEAT, Project 20(22), street racing enforcement, or just regular work in the patrol station, we are indeed saving lives.

By now, you not only know our core values by heart, you believe in them.

Respect. We treat others with respect. There is no doubt in my mind that "Sir or Ma'am" has become part of your vernacular, sometimes being used amongst family and friends while home during the



weekend. I remember a skills classmate of mine looking at me and saying, “What is wrong with you?” when I accidentally called him sir while having lunch while at home on the weekend during my academy. Nothing was wrong with me, but it sure speaks to the transformational experience of our academy process.

Integrity. We tell the truth. While that can be difficult in times when the truth is not flattering, it is so much better than any other alternative.

Courage. We have courage as individuals. While that means the traditional hard skills of policing, it also means having the courage to stand up for your beliefs. It means having the courage to speak up when intervention into an issue is necessary.

Honor. We honor those who have gone before us. We owe it to them to make them proud. To learn from them and to apply that learning for the betterment of the organization.

Finally, **excellence.** What is excellence? I think it is

trying your very best. Without question, this profession is a challenging one. You are faced with split second decisions in difficult situations. Excellence is a journey, not a destination. You never arrive at excellence if you believe in continuous improvement. There are always ways to make things better. Excellence is not perfection. I do not expect you to be perfect because I am not perfect. We are human beings and human beings do indeed make mistakes. But if we strive for excellence, we put ourselves in the position of learning from our experiences. That learning builds character. Experience + character are necessary ingredients to make an outstanding State Trooper.

If you remember, on February 14th, we spent some time together talking about the State Patrol. It was an opportunity to reinforce why you were there and what was in front of you at the academy. When I asked you to close your eyes and listen to the words “State Trooper,” you provided a list of things that came to mind as imagery tied to those two words. That list: professionalism, courage, respect, work





ethic, pride, shiny brass, the hat, clean car (I love a clean car) came as no surprise to me. It is the same list each time I do that exercise. Really, you described our core values. Keep that fire alive now by tending to those images in your actions while on the road. Speaker and author Brian Tracy once said, “Your success in your career will be in direct proportion to what you do after you’ve done what you are expected to do.” Let me read that again. “Your success in your career will be in direct proportion to what you do after you’ve done what you are expected to do.” So what does that mean? Work hard – sure. Put forth effort – sure. That might be the way you define that statement if you are content with average, if you are content with mediocrity, if you are content with “good enough.” But, that is not who you are and that is not who we are.

You had many choices when it came to entering the profession of policing. Arguably, you could have gone anywhere – especially since we only hire the best of the best. But, you chose the Minnesota State Patrol. Not because it was easy. Not because it was fast. No. Instead, because it was hard. It was difficult. It took time. And as a result, you received the best training we can offer.

By completing the academy, you have already demonstrated you are not content with doing only what you are expected to do.

And now on your graduation day, you get to look forward from this point in time. This profession affords you the ability to go out into the world and do good things for others. While there will be days where you do not control your workload, the vast majority of your days will come with unobligated time where you can choose what to do and how much to do. Any organization has an expectation of performance. You have the choice to meet that expectation and remain comfortable. But, you also have the choice, and I think this choice is a gifted opportunity, to show us

what you are made of. Your success is in direct proportion to the effort you give beyond the norm. Now that can be defined numerically through traffic stops, citations, educational visits, crashes investigated, etc. But it can also be defined by the service you provide. Assisting with tire changes, bringing fuel to someone who ran out, providing a ride home or to work for someone after their car is totaled, or that heartfelt conversation during an arrest with the goal of influencing someone to make a life change that often times is so desperately needed. Yes, there are countless opportunities to go beyond what is expected.

The public expects a lot out of their Minnesota State Patrol, and they should. We have earned a tremendous reputation that we must never take for granted. It is not at all unusual to receive cards, emails, and thank you notes from people who have been pulled over by a State Trooper and thankful for the way in which they were treated. Each traffic stop, each encounter with another human being is an opportunity to make a situation better – once a Minnesota State Trooper shows up.

Dianne Snedaker is an executive at First Republic Bank. When discussing leadership, she provided

some great thoughts on setting standards. “Set your standards high and keep them high. If you are interested in success, it’s easy to set your standards in terms of other people’s accomplishments. And then let other people measure you by those standards. But the standards you set for yourself are always the more important. They should be higher than the standards anyone else would set for you, because in the end you have to live with yourself, and judge yourself, and feel good about yourself. And the best way to do that is to live up to your highest potential. So set your standards high and keep them high, even if you think no one else is looking. Somebody out there will always notice, even if it’s just you.”

Those are words that I hope carry you for an entire career. Set your standards high. The sky is the limit and today marks the beginning of what I believe will be an incredible adventure that affords you the ability to look back and know that you made a difference in the lives of others. I am proud of you. I am excited to watch you transition into the sworn ranks of an extraordinary organization. On behalf of the entire organization, and all Minnesotans, congratulations on your graduation from the Minnesota State Patrol academy!



Trooper Cleopatra Nystrom's Message

Greetings Governor Walz, Commissioner Harrington, Colonel Langer, Troopers, fellow cadets, family, and friends, good morning to you all.

On behalf of the 64th Academy, thank you all for attending this monumental event to celebrate our transformation from cadets to troopers of the Minnesota State Patrol. I am honored to stand before you and represent the extraordinary class of the Fortified Few, thank you to my fellow cadets for nominating me to be the voice of the 64th Academy.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge our incredible Academy Staff. Sergeant Jimmy Buggs, Sergeant Rick Schueler, Sergeant Scott Mattfield, Trooper Scott Rudeen, and Trooper Kristie Sue Hathaway – thank you for providing motivation when we felt overwhelmed, a helping hand when we felt down and guidance when we felt lost. You helped us develop discipline, find our voice and overcome self-doubt.

I also want to recognize the amount of work that goes on behind the scenes by our Training Directors - Captain Eric Barthel, Lieutenant Andrew Thelen,

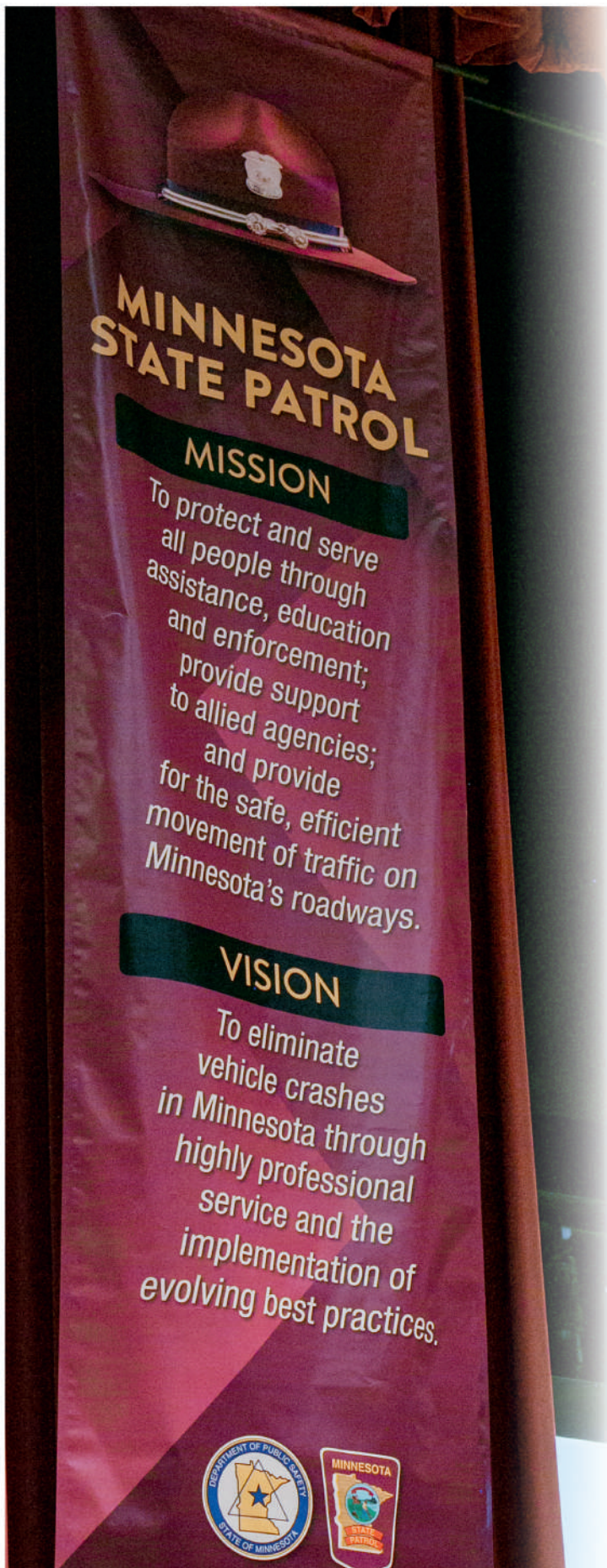
Lieutenant Karla Bearce and Support Staff - Holley Gries. The work you all do does not go unnoticed. We appreciate all your hard work on planning and coordinating everything that goes at Camp Ripley. Your commitment to the State Patrol is admirable. Let's give them a round of applause for their dedication and tireless efforts into bringing up the next generation of State Troopers.

Cadets, we have finally made it to graduation day. A day when, 'if and when' turns into, 'here and now'. I am truly grateful to have met each one of you. 70 days, 14 weeks, 4 months. However you look at it this is the amount of time these cadets endured the modified stress academy up at Camp Ripley.

Since 1929 this academy has been designed to push us to the limits: to strain us mentally, physically and emotionally. When you see someone out on the road wearing maroon and gold with a smokey bear on, you know they have gone through the trials of the academy. They worked for the title. Just as we have.

It is an honor to follow the tradition on the road to





becoming a Minnesota State trooper. Some of these individuals have come from within the four corners of Minnesota and others have traveled across the country to become a part of this agency.

While each one of us poses unique attributes and have our own reasons why we applied here; we were chosen by the Minnesota State Patrol for five values that were seen within us prior to even starting the academy.

RESPECT. INTEGRITY. COURAGE. HONOR. EXCELLENCE.

We learned the MEANING of these core values.

We learned to UPHOLD these core values.

We learned to INTERNALIZE these core values.

We learned to EAT, SLEEP AND BREATHE these core values.

At the start of week one – day one... we were a mess. Often, we were referred to as a “debacle” which was pretty accurate. That very first morning we were lost. We awoke to the sound of shouting troopers, marching around the billet - ultimate chaos. It really upheld the rumors many had heard of how life at the academy would be. We peaked our heads out our room doors to figure out what was going on; what to wear, what to bring, what to do. We were all unsure of what the day was to bring.

Our class ran several laps up and down and around the billet until we finally figured out what we needed to wear getting in a workout before physical training even began, then we were ready to start the day (or so we thought). Unfortunately, even after all that scrambling around, we still didn't have the right attire on - we ended up having our dress coats on over our PT apparel... The following days were somewhat similar.

At this time, we were 12 individuals... It became readily apparent that we needed to learn how to com-

municate and work together quickly in order to get through the academy.

By the end of week one many, if not all cadets questioned themselves on what they got themselves into and why they were doing this... They dreaded the following weeks to come, and the next 13 weeks seemed very intimidating.

Something that helped keep the end goal of graduation in mind was envisioning that moment on stage when a family member pinned on your badge. That incredible moment shared by peers, supporters and officers. Engulfed in so many emotions as your badge is pinned on. Finally taking on the title and honor of being a Minnesota State Trooper. That was the goal. That is what we worked for.

That is why we stayed dedicated and persevered through the long days and nights and kept showing up each and every Sunday putting in 114%. Suppress emotions of being sad, tired and weak. Dialing it in. Persevering through the tough times and pushing forward.

Not only did we continuously show up for our own personal reasons but collectively we showed up because we chose a career where we want to put others

before ourselves. We have an internal instinct to be guardians; to save lives and prevent tragedies from occurring.

And now our goal has changed from making it to graduation to protect and serve. To uphold the excellence of the Minnesota State Patrol and the services we will provide. We want to help others – we want to provide assistance – we want to educate.

Sacrificing our own needs to protect and serve the public and overall, ensuring the safe and efficient movement of traffic on Minnesota's roadways. Our roadways. Moving on through the weeks, day by day, meal by meal we began to understand the purpose of each trial and task thrown at us.

Some of the daily tasks such as making our beds with 45-degree tight corners, ensuring all equipment was placed in unison throughout our rooms and dusting seemed miniscule in the moment, however this taught us the valuable lesson of responsibility and a sense of pride in everything we do. You'd be surprised, no matter how much lint or dust you cleaned up it would always end up coming back and coating nearly everything in the billet. We started to think the Academy Staff was circulating it through our HVAC system. Each task we completed served a purpose.



They became second nature for us to complete so we could transition to focusing on bigger things.

Some of the hard skills we learned was kind of like drinking water from a fire hose... however we were provided the best training and education in the state to ensure we would come out of the academy and head into our careers confidently. These are skills that we will carry with us for life. They help mold us into not only better Troopers but better people overall.

It feels like just yesterday we were wearing PT shirts backwards, marching over mountainous snowbanks, complaining over wet socks when we ran through puddles or combining staff officer's names such as Hathfield. Occasionally a mistake would be saved by a smooth transition such as a 'column left' onto a sidewalk prior to entering the EMTC building.

Collectively, we have deemed ourselves the most Minnesotan class with how often an, "ope" was said. These are moments we will look back on and laugh at.

A lot of instructors have told us that our time spent up at camp would end up just being a small blip in time. They were right. We have our whole careers

ahead of us.

Now, we get to look back and reflect on the hardships, fond memories and milestones we accomplished along the way. We have overcome many obstacles together on our journey throughout the academy.

This bond we built has turned us into a family. We will always be there to support one another. As we stand next to each other, again I want to thank you my brothers and sisters for your resilience and fortitude to make it through the last 14 weeks. We are the Fortified Few.

At the end of the academy, we had the honor of getting to visit with Walt Kosel, who is a retired captain of the St. Cloud district and graduate from the 7th Academy of the Minnesota State Patrol. Retired Captain Kosel provided us with these wise words, "It's a wonderful career and you can do so much good out there."

Now, let us go out there and do the work to make Minnesota roads safer for everyone who travels upon them. Work hard, stay vigilant, be a good partner and be safe. God bless. Thank you.



Minnesota State Patrol's 64th Graduating Class



Trp. Alexander Anderson SP213

I was born and raised in Roseau, Minnesota and graduated from Roseau High School in 2011. After high school, I earned my Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from Bemidji State University. I began my career in law enforcement with the Warroad Police Department & the Roseau County Sheriff's Office but was later hired by the Hubbard County Sheriff's Office in 2017. I am currently assigned to the Roseau station but will be transferring to the Bemidji Station later this winter.



Trp. Micheal Awender SP245

I am from Crookston, MN. I graduated from high school in 2010. I attended the University of Minnesota - Crookston, graduating with a bachelor's degree in the fall of 2014. I started my law enforcement career with the Red Lake County Sheriff's Office and worked there for four years. Before starting with the Minnesota State Patrol, I worked for an armored car company for a year and a half. I am married with no kids. My assigned station is Thief River Falls.



Trp. Jamie Bird SP77

I grew up in the small town of Barnum, MN. I went to the University of Wisconsin River-Falls for two years and played Division III hockey. I then transferred to St. Cloud State and received my bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. I attended skills at Alexandria Technical and Community College in the summer of 2021. I enjoy coaching youth hockey with my twin sister, hanging out with family/fiancé, and traveling around the United States. I am assigned to the Montevideo station.



Trp. Jessica Bird SP81

I am originally from Barnum, MN. I graduated from St. Cloud State University in 2021 with a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. I am engaged to my high school sweetheart and set to get married September 16th, 2023. I enjoy traveling, hanging out with family and coaching hockey. I was hired through the traditional program and am assigned to the Montevideo station.



Trp. Joshua Bohlen SP7

I was grew up and graduated from high school in Milbank, South Dakota. Following high school, I graduated from Alexandria Technical College in 2000. I was a police officer in South Dakota for five years before moving to Minnesota in 2007. I have been working as a deputy sheriff for the last fifteen years. I live in rural Big Stone County with my wife and three boys. I enjoy golfing, turkey hunting and vacationing in Mexico each winter. I am assigned to the Morris station.



Trp. Hunter Braun SP214

I was born and raised in St. Peter where I graduated from high school in 2018. After high school, I went to Alexandria Technical and Community College for an AAS degree in law enforcement and graduated in 2020. After college, I worked part time doing tree work for the City of St. Peter and as a part time police officer for the Cleveland Police Department (MN). During this time, I was also taking classes at Mankato State University working towards my Bachelor's degree. I am assigned to the Windom station.



Trp. Tyler Lay SP109

I was originally born and raised in Sycamore, IL. After graduating from high school, I enlisted in the US Army as an Infantryman. After basic training, I was stationed at Fort Hood, TX and then moved to Fort Carson, CO. While in Colorado, I met my wife who is from Minnesota. We moved to Minnesota in 2018, and I became a Corrections Officer with the Minnesota Department of Corrections. This sparked my interest in law enforcement, and I obtained my degree in law enforcement. I am assigned to the Minnetonka station. Since moving to Minnesota, I became an avid ice fisherman. I also enjoy traveling to various state parks to hike and explore.



Trp. Nicole Marshik SP219

I am originally from Mankato, MN, but have lived in Monticello, MN since 2007. I have been married to my husband Darin for eight years. We have two daughters, Charlotte (6) and Maike (2). We enjoy spending time at the lake together. I graduated from Rasmussen University in December 2021 with an Associate's Degree in Law Enforcement. Prior to the state patrol, I worked for Crestliner Boats for 8 years as a Dealer Support Representative. I am assigned to the St. Cloud District in the Buffalo station.



Trp. Cleopatra Nystrom SP43

Originally, from Stillwater, I now live in White Bear Lake, Minnesota. I am a first generation law enforcement from my family. I was inspired to join the Minnesota State Patrol by a family friend when I was in high school. Prior to becoming a trooper, I worked at a gym as an Operations Manager for five years - there I adopted the lifestyle and sport of bodybuilding. During those years, I worked towards obtaining a degree and pursuing law enforcement. I am assigned to the Mounds View station.



Trp. Thomas Saunders SP145

I was born and raised in Maple Grove, Minnesota, where I graduated from in 2017. From there, I pursued my bachelor's degree at the University of Wisconsin - River Falls. I completed my skills at Hennepin Technical College. In my free time, I like to enjoy the outdoors and spend time with family and friends. I am assigned to the Windom station.



Trp. Joseph Weems SP91

I was born in Rockford, IL. I moved with my family to Clearbrook, MN in 1990. I graduated from Clearbrook High School in 1997. After high school, I worked as mechanic and a custodian. I attended Bemidji State University and obtained my Associates Degree in Criminal Justice. I worked for the Clearwater County Sheriff's Office for eleven years. In 2016, I met my wife, Melissa, and we were married in 2020. We have eight kids between the two of us. We have four (soon to be five) grand kids. I was assigned to the Thief River station and will be transferring to the Bagley station in January.



Trp. Joshua Wood SP14

I am originally from Anchorage, Alaska and moved to Minnesota last April with my wife and two children. I have a Bachelor's Degree from the University of North Dakota in Forensic Science. Prior to the Minnesota State Patrol, I worked 13 years for the State of Alaska Department of Corrections. I enjoy riding motorcycle and participating in dog sports. I am assigned to the Minnetonka Station.



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2022 Blue Line Ball in Duluth: A Festive Affair

Contributed by Mark & Heather McGrew

Fancy ball gowns, well-tailored suits, a professional photographer, a silent auction, and even a rock band were just a few of the items on the agenda in Duluth, Minnesota, at the Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center (DECC) on the evening of May 21st, 2022, as Backing the Blue Line (BtBL) had its first Ball after a two-year hiatus because of the pandemic. The night was a wonderful time for law enforcement to gather at an event where they could release that sense of continual watch and enjoy the night.

For those unaware, BtBL is a Minnesota based non-profit 501(c)(3) organization organized by law enforcement spouses and their mission is to support law enforcement in any way possible. Maybe some have seen blue flowers at a law enforcement funeral or perhaps a peace officer has received a note of encouragement in the mail after an unexpected event in their life. This is what BtBL does...support and defend law enforcement officers and the profession to which they are called.

This year, the BtBL Ball was hosted by Imran Ali, a former Washington County Minnesota attorney who left his job after he was handed the Kim Potter case. Ali believed that partisan politics drove the decision to prosecute Potter and he didn't wish to be a part of that endeavor. It is unfortunate that political divides frequently influence decisions of whether to charge individuals, but that has been a trend for years as most of us with any time in the profession have noticed.

In addition to hearing Ali's story, ball-goers had the opportunity to meet the "Tourette's Cop" of Minnesota. Officer Craig, the keynote speaker, is a police officer here in the North Star State. Officer Craig discussed the dynamics of serving as a police officer with Tourette syndrome. It was both fascinating and inspiring.

Also in attendance was Waseca Police Officer Arik Mattson, who was wounded in the line of duty in January of 2020. Officer Mattson received a well-deserved standing ovation, and it was great to see him in attendance at such a festive event!

While the speakers were entertaining the crowd, the ball attendees had a chance to have a wonderful meal that consisted of salad, rolls, steak and chicken along with a vegetable medley and potatoes. In addition, there was a cash bar available for those who wished to enjoy a cocktail or beer.

After all the speakers had finished, The MN Brassholes Rockin Sheriffs Band took the stage and provided musical entertainment, so people could dance and enjoy the rest of the night with familiar songs in the background.

Throughout the night, ball-goers had a chance to support BtBL by participating in several different events. There was a silent auction that people could monitor as they try to outbid unknown opponents. (Who knows, maybe attendees would purposefully bid on items just to drive the price up.) In addition, a pull-tab event offered attendees a chance to win other prizes from gift cards to pre-made baskets. Furthermore, there was a "10 times event" where individuals could enter by placing an arbitrary amount of money in an envelope and if their envelope was randomly drawn, they would win 10 times the amount they placed in the envelope. There was also an alcohol draw where bottles of wine and liquor were wrapped in metallic foil, not allowing the viewer to see what they were, and people would pay a specific amount to pick one. Finally, a table raffle allowed ball-goers an opportunity to buy tickets in an attempt to win different rewards ranging from a shotgun, a corn hole game, to a generator.



It is my recommendation that everybody should attend a Blue Line Ball at some point in their life. It does move around the state, so look for it when it comes to your neighborhood or take a road trip to enjoy the event. When one does attend, it not only supports a great organization like BtBL, but also gives one's mental health a boost as attendees are able to step away from the job and interact with partners from all law enforcement agencies in a different light or maybe see partners from the past. The "blue line" is real and law enforcement is the defender that is the difference between law and order versus anarchy, so yes, we are all in this together regardless of whether an officer wears blue, green, brown, or maroon. The people behind BtBL are to be commended as they are standing behind those who protect this line every day of the year. Thank you for what you do and continue to do on a regular basis.

On June 9th, BtBl posted on their Facebook page that the fundraising effort at the Ball garnered the organization over \$57,000! Excellent effort by all who participated in the event! ♦



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36th MSPTA Trooper/Guest Golf Tournament Benson Minnesota

The 36th annual MSPTA Golf Tournament took place July 14th and 15th in Benson. The tournament was well attended by current and retired troopers, dispatchers, and guests. The course was in great shape and the weather was beautiful.

The team of Jerry and Mark Baker were 1st day winners, while John Magaard was the low gross retired Trooper winner. Dillion Rieland was the low gross winner for active troopers. This year's winners on day two was the team of Mat Hodapp, Marty Earley, John Hodenfield, and Roger Gau.

Greg Peterson did a tremendous job organizing this year's tournament. A big thank you to Greg, those who assisted in helping him out, and to all of the sponsors who make the golf tournament possible.

The tentative dates for next year's tournament are July 19th and 20th and will be held at Thumper Pond in Ottertail. ♦

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Retired Troopers Day 2022

Coyote Moon Grille - St. Cloud



Pictured below:
Retired Trooper Mike "Speedo" Sommers
SP390 and MSPTA President Mike LeDoux SP88.



State Patrol Day Minnesota State Fair 2022





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Minnesota State Patrol Chaplains

In the 1990's, the Minnesota State Patrol had Sergeant Dave Anderson as its chaplain and he provided support to agency members around the state. At the time, he was the most visible form of EAP. When he retired, the chaplain program went with him for over twenty years.

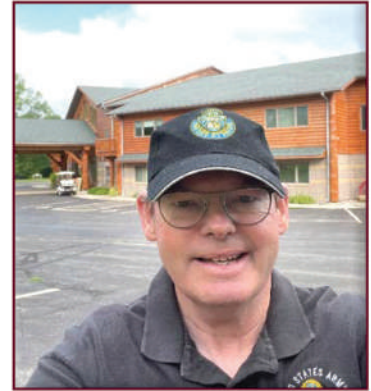
We are reviving the chaplain program and expanding it to include a team of chaplains from different parts of the state. It will include a principal chaplain to guide the rest of the team. We are currently seeking applications from interested persons of any faith who have the needed skills and training.

Chaplain programs take different forms, but one consistent theme is that the members are persons of faith who have training and experience in providing spiritual support when someone is in need. A key point is that a chaplain is from a particular faith, but is able to offer support to people from any spiritual background or religion, or those with no affiliations. They are part of a network of others and can use those connections to help a member contact a chaplain or spiritual guide of their own faith when that specific kind of support is necessary. In all cases and regardless of spiritual considerations, any chaplain is a good resource to hear you out no matter what your challenges are.

Our chaplain program will consist of all volunteers who donate their time and energy to support you because they believe in what we do and care for their fellow people. We hope to attain a team of chaplains in every region of the state to better serve the members who work there. As chaplains join the team, their information will be added to the Cordico app so that contacting them is simple. The program is directed at our members for their welfare. This might differ from other programs you have experienced, where they might be called upon to assist with death notifications or other external responsibilities.

Our first member and principal chaplain is Reverend John Morris, a retired Army colonel with a vast array of military and civilian experiences service who many members met in April 2021, at meetings, or at district/section training. He will be at Support Staff in-service, MRT special teams training,

and a number of other gatherings in the near future. He is amazingly perceptive and has an uncanny ability to connect with people.



Here is a bit about John:

Chaplain John Morris is an ordained minister and a retired Army Chaplain. He is a 'military brat' who grew up on Air Force installations around the world. He is a graduate of the University of Minnesota and Bethel Seminary. Chaplain Morris served in the Army for thirty one years with three combat tours in Iraq. He has been married for forty three years. He and his wife, Kathy have three daughters and four granddaughters. He is an EMT serving with the Lower St. Croix Valley Fire Department and a part time DNR employee at Afton State Park. ♦

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A photograph showing a worker in a yellow bucket performing tree maintenance on a large tree. The worker is positioned high up in the tree, and a yellow bucket truck is visible. The background shows a residential area with houses and trees.

The State Won't Agree to Contract Terms or It's Discipline is Unreasonable... Now What?

Contributed by Mark J. Schneider General Counsel, Law Enforcement Labor Services, Inc.

Minneapolis teachers went on strike. Auto workers can strike. Manufacturing workers can strike. Why not police officers, firefighters, correctional officers, or other essential public employees? "Essential employees" are defined as "firefighters, peace officers subject to licensure . . ., 911 system and police and fire department public safety dispatchers, guards at correctional facilities, confidential employees and supervisory employees ..." *Minn. Stat. §179A.03, subd. 7.* "Essential employees may not strike". *Minn. Stat. §179A.18, subd. 1.* Other public employee may strike only when certain circumstances are satisfied. *Id.*

Interest Arbitration

Since police officers, firefighters, dispatchers and correctional officers are essential and necessary to protect the public and preserve the safety and welfare of the residents of the State of Minnesota, the legislature determined that these essential employees should not be allowed to strike. In place of the ability to strike, the Public Employment Labor Relations Act, *Minn. Stat. §179A et seq.*, provides that the employer and exclusive bargaining representative for the essential public safety employees must submit their differences to interest arbitration. In fact, the exclusive representative and the employer are required to enter into a written contract or memorandum of contract containing either the terms of a negotiated agreement or an interest arbitration decision, along with any terms established by law. *Minn. Stat. §179A.20.*

Either the exclusive representative or the employer of essential employees may petition the Bureau of Mediation Services (BMS) for binding interest arbitration. The document filed with BMS details the items to be submitted to binding arbitration. Both parties submit final positions pertaining to

the matters in dispute. BMS will then determine the items to be decided through interest arbitration. BMS will certify the issues in dispute when it is believed both parties have participated in good faith bargaining efforts and that an impasse has occurred. *Minn. Stat. §179A.16.* With interest arbitration, BMS provides a list of seven (7) arbitrators from its approved roster of arbitrators. The parties then strike arbitrators from the list on an alternating basis until one arbitrator remains. Upon selection of the arbitrator, the matter is scheduled for hearing before that arbitrator. Both parties submit evidence in support of their respective positions. Generally, after filing post hearing briefs, the arbitrator will make their decision and issue their award within thirty (30) days from the date the record is closed.

Grievance/Discipline Arbitration

When an employer unreasonably or improperly applies or interprets terms in the collective bargaining agreement or disciplines an essential or public safety employee, the parties turn to the collective bargaining agreement to proceed through the grievance process in an effort to resolve the contractual interpretation or discipline grievance prior to arbitration. Generally, in the event a resolution is not possible, the final step in the contractual/discipline grievance process is arbitration

Grievance arbitration involves generally two (2) areas: (1) Contractual Interpretation and (2) Discipline. A grievance may arise from a dispute concerning the interpretation of a provision in the party's collective bargaining agreement. If a contract interpretation dispute proceeds to arbitration, the exclusive representative for the public employees would usually file a request for arbitration with BMS. After filing,

BMS will issue a list of seven (7) arbitrators. The parties then select an arbitrator by each striking one arbitrator from the list until only one arbitrator remains.

When grievances involving discipline of licensed peace officers move to arbitration, "grievance arbitrations for written disciplinary actions, discharge or termination ..." are handled pursuant to the peace officer grievance arbitration selection procedure contained in *Minn. Stat. §626.892*. This statute was enacted in Minnesota in response to the issues that arose in the summer of 2020. When the peace officer grievance arbitration selection procedure applies, the peace officer files a request for arbitration pursuant to *Minn. Stat. §626.892*. BMS then selects the arbitrator to hear the grievance arbitration. The parties are not allowed to strike from a list of arbitrators as was done previously. The peace officer grievance arbitration selection procedure statute requires assignment of an arbitrator from the roster of six (6) arbitrators on a rotating basis.

There are exceptions to the licensed peace officer grievance arbitration process for discipline cases. *Minn. Stat. §626.892* applies to "grievance procedures in a collective bargaining agreement covering licensed peace officers". *Minn. Stat. §626.892, subd. 1(e)*. When a licensed peace officer who is a qualifying veteran under the Veterans Preference Statute, *Minn. Stat. §197.46*, is terminated from their position with the public employer, the qualifying licensed peace officer may select the veterans preference hearing procedure. To qualify as a veteran under that statute, the veteran must have been honorably discharged "after having served on active duty for 181 consecutive days or by reason of disability incurred while serving on active duty, or who has met the minimum active duty requirements as defined [in the code of federal regulations, Title 38]." *Minn. Stat. §197.447*. After the employer provides proper notice of the intent to discharge, the veteran must request a hearing pursuant to the Veterans Preference Act within the required timeline. Failure to do so prevents the qualifying veteran employee from exercising the rights under the statute. The qualifying veteran employee may choose to have a hearing before a civil service board or commission, a merit system authority or an arbitrator. Until the commission, authority or arbitrator makes their decision, the employer must pay the salary and benefits of the qualifying veteran employee. The statute also provides for the parties to strike from a list of arbitrators provided by BMS on an alternating basis, beginning with the employer. *Minn. Stat. §197.46(c)*.

State Troopers also have the option to contest any suspension, demotion or discharge under *Minn. Stat. §299D.03*. If the trooper elects to proceed with the procedure in *Minn. Stat. §299D.03*, the trooper will file a request with BMS to obtain a list of five (5) arbitrators. The parties will then select an arbitrator from that list by striking arbitrators on an alternating basis.

As you can see, while the ability to strike is not available to essential public safety employees working in the public sector, there are options available to ensure that affected employees' rights and interests are protected through an appropriate process. The MSPTA will assist you in deciding which procedures apply and the option that would be best suited for a particular circumstance. Given the difficult times and environment for law enforcement, it is important to select the appropriate hearing/arbitration option to provide for the most open, just and fair process in deciding contract, grievance and discipline disputes. Thank you for what all of you do for the citizens of Minnesota. *

*** This article is for general informational purposes only and is not intended to provide legal advice. You should consult with an attorney to review your particular circumstances and situations.**



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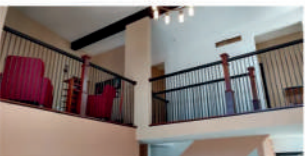
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