

FLYING WHEEL

VOLUME 62 • NUMBER 4

OCTOBER - DECEMBER, 2024

**ACT 2025:
A ROADMAP
TO SAFER
OHIO ROADS
AND STRONGER
COMMUNITIES**

**OPERATION
SANTA'S
SLEIGH
SPREADS
HOLIDAY
CHEER
ACROSS
OHIO**

**WORKING IN
THE COMPUTER
CRIMES UNIT**



OHIO STATE
HIGHWAY PATROL

COLONEL'S LETTER



As we continue to build on the Ohio State Highway Patrol's legacy of service and innovation, I remain inspired by the tireless dedication and professionalism of our personnel. Every day, your efforts ensure Ohio's roads are safer, our communities are stronger and the trust of the people we serve is upheld.

In this issue of the Flying Wheel, we highlight some of the incredible work being done across the Division, along with exciting new initiatives that reflect our ongoing commitment to progress.

A key feature is ACT 2025: Advancing Collaboration and Traffic Safety. This initiative aligns with our Strategic Plan to improve Ohio's roadways through targeted enforcement, education and partnerships. With a focus on leadership development and measurable outcomes, ACT 2025 ensures our mission remains impactful and service-focused.

Mental health also remains a cornerstone of our focus. This edition features K-9 Hope and Trooper Paul E. Appleman, whose work fosters conversations and provides support for officers facing challenges. By reducing stigma and offering resources, programs like this ensure our personnel feel supported and valued.

These stories – and the many others featured in this issue – are a reflection of the remarkable individuals who make up the Ohio State Highway Patrol family. Each of you contributes to the Division's success and demonstrates the positive impact of public service.

God bless our fallen, God Bless the families and God Bless the Ohio State Highway Patrol.

Colonel Charles A. Jones
Superintendent



Scan the QR code to view
a video version of the
Colonel's letter. This content
is a Flying Wheel exclusive!

TABLE OF CONTENTS



PG. 4



PG. 8

FEATURES

- 4 Operation Santa's Sleigh Spreads Holiday Cheer Across Ohio
- 6 ACT 2025: A Roadmap to Safer Ohio Roads and Stronger Communities
- 7 Patrol Produces New Video Series Describing Activation Process for Ohio's Four Statewide Alerts
- 8 Aviation Downlink System Access Offered to All Ohio Law Enforcement

NEWS AND EVENTS

- 9 Forty Troopers Graduate from Ohio State Highway Patrol Training Academy, Lieutenant Howard Graduates from Police Executive Leadership College, OSHP Celebrates 91st Birthday
- 10 Saved by the Belt, Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police's Central Ohio Teen Summit
- 11 Holiday Shoe Drive, 2024 Holiday Card Contest Winner Chosen
- 12 A Glance into History: The Evolution of the Polygraph Unit
- 13 Computer Crimes Unit (*Featuring CCU's own Keith Ferguson on the cover!*)
- 14 Regional Training Unit
- 15 Medina Post Lost Dog Rescued, Trooper Clapper I-77 Tire Change, 4-year-old Brings Donuts to Cambridge Post Troopers



AWARDS

- 16 Patrol IT Recognized, Trooper Goodnite Earns Perfect Fitness Score, Budget Analyst Gleich Honored
- 17 Trooper Wilson and K-9 Mari Presented with Ohio NARCO Award, Trooper Grim Wins Central Ohio Crime Stopper's Officer of the Year Award, AP4 Clouse Earns 40 Years of State Service Certificate
- 18 Photographer O'Shea Presented with Light Ohio Blue Award, Auxiliary Officer Ostrander Earns Award
- 19 Lieutenant Root and Sergeant Yeager Receive Military Awards
- 20 Trooper Garloch Receives a Distinguished Service Medallion, Five Honored at Lebanon Post for Saving a Life
- 21 Trooper Whitacre, Deputy Ruggles Receive Medallion Certificates for Lifesaving Actions, Trooper Morrell Presented with Certificate of Recognition

AROUND THE STATE

- 22 Events from Around the State, Columbus District Spotlight

AND MORE!

- 28 Where Are They Now? - Sergeant Larry Jackson, PSA from the Credit Union
- 29 Letter from HPRS: Understanding IRMAA and Its Impact on Retirement Planning, Highway Patrol Auxiliary
- 30 Retirements
- 33 Season of Sharing, OIU Becomes Stand-Alone Division
- 34 Honor Guard, VTFU Troopers Honored by Ohio Insurance Institute, Lieutenant Schack Graduates from FBINA
- 35 Post-Patrol Professions: Heidi A. Ramsey, Highway Highlights
- 36 Event Photos
- 38 Director's Corner and Chaplain's Corner
- 39 The Lighthouse: The Growing Role of Therapy Dogs in Law Enforcement

Want daily updates on the Patrol?
Follow us!



Ohio State Highway Patrol



@OSHP
@OSHP_NWOhio
@OSHP_NEOhio
@OSHP_CentralOhio
@OSHP_SWOhio
@OSHP_SEOhio



@OhioStateHighwayPatrol



Ohio State Highway Patrol



@OSHP



Officers, firefighters and first responders gather in front of Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus for Operation Santa's Sleigh.

OPERATION SANTA'S SLEIGH SPREADS HOLIDAY CHEER ACROSS OHIO

On December 23, the sixth annual Operation Santa's Sleigh (OSS) brought together law enforcement officers, firefighters and first responders from across the state for this heartwarming event, visiting children's hospitals, veterans' homes and medical centers to spread holiday cheer to those who needed it most.

This year, a new location—the Chillicothe Veterans Administration Hospital—was added to the list of stops, making it the ninth destination. As a result, the event reached more people than ever before, brightening the holidays for children, veterans and their families in Akron, Chillicothe, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Georgetown, Sandusky and Toledo.

At each location, including Ohio's children's hospitals, Veterans Administration hospitals and two Ohio Department of Veterans Services veterans' homes, the familiar flashing lights of emergency vehicles served as a visible message of support and care. First responders rolled in with their sirens and lights on, letting patients, staff and families know they were not forgotten during the holiday season.

In Columbus, the heart of OSS, several hundred law enforcement and public safety vehicles took part in a festive caravan that made its way from Columbus State Community College to Nationwide Children's Hospital. First responders turned on their lights and waved to the children who were spending their holidays away from home.

As is tradition, OSS junior leadership were sworn-in at the Columbus event. This year's Junior Ohio State Highway Patrol Colonel is 4-year-old Ayden Hankinson, whose dad is Trooper Alan M. Hankinson, assigned to the Lima Post. Ayden is bravely battling an illness that prevented him from traveling to the Columbus event. On December 10, Colonel Charles A. Jones, Patrol superintendent, performed Ayden's swearing-



Trooper Daniel J. Harrison, Cleveland District Commercial Enforcement, gives a thumbs up from the back of the Rudolph Award winning truck.

in at the Lima Post. A video of that momentous occasion was played during the Columbus event. The "Deck Your Sleigh" vehicle decoration contest was another highlight in Columbus. Participating agencies decorated their vehicles with festive themes, showcasing their creative flair and holiday spirit. The Patrol's Licensing and Commercial Standards truck took home the third place Rudolph Award in the decorating contest (*shown above*).

First responders and participating agencies filled the Patrol's semi-truck full of donated toys, food, household items, personal care products and gift cards. The semi made the delivery that night to the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Ohio, ensuring that families received much-needed support during the holiday season.

The event has become a cherished tradition in Ohio, involving Light Ohio Blue, the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police, Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association, Ohio State Highway Patrol, International Association of Firefighters, and other law enforcement and public safety agencies.

Shown right: Junior Ohio State Highway Patrol Colonel, Ayden Hankinson, with his mother, Chelsea.



Left: Scan the QR code to view Ayden Hankinson's swearing-in as Junior OSHP Colonel at the Lima Post.



Right: Scan the QR code to the to view a gallery of posts and photos from the event.



Family members Michael Lauofo of the U.S. Coast Guard, Trooper Matthew F. Lauofo of the Hamilton Post and retired Police Officer Faupo Lauofo join together for OSS at Dayton Children's Hospital.



OSS at Cincinnati Children's Hospital.



Santa rides in style at OSS in Chillicothe.

ACT 2025: A ROADMAP TO SAFER OHIO ROADS AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES

The Ohio State Highway Patrol's new initiative, ACT 2025 (Advancing Collaboration and Traffic Safety), is poised to bring lasting change to the state's road safety landscape.

On the heels of a significant reduction in traffic fatalities in 2024, and increases in key enforcement metrics, Major David R. Brown, Office of Field Operations, introduced ACT 2025 at the Commanders meeting held at the Training Academy on December 4.

Designed as a proactive, service-based program, ACT 2025 aligns with the Division's Strategic Plan, ensuring that daily operations focus on achieving clear, measurable goals. With an emphasis on both immediate operational needs and long-term improvements, ACT 2025 is a balanced approach that includes targeted enforcement, education, partnerships and leadership development. By addressing critical traffic safety issues, ACT 2025 aims to reduce crashes, foster community engagement and build a safer future on Ohio's roadways.

Specific Goals to Drive Change

ACT 2025 sets ambitious objectives to tackle some of Ohio's most pressing traffic safety concerns. Among the key goals are:

- **Reducing Distracted Driving Crashes by 10%:** With the growing prevalence of smartphones and other distractions, reducing crashes caused by distracted driving remains a top priority.
- **Reducing Drugged Driving Fatal, Injury Crashes by 10%:** Addressing impaired driving, particularly involving marijuana and other drugs, is a vital aspect of improving road safety.
- **Increasing Safety Belt Compliance to 87%:** Safety belt use is one of the most effective ways to reduce fatalities, and boosting compliance is a key focus.
- **Reducing Ohio's OVI Recidivism Rate to 35%:** By lowering the rate of repeat offenders, ACT 2025 aims to reduce the number of impaired drivers on Ohio's roads.
- **Reducing the Incidence of Speeding Violations (20+ MPH Over Speed Limit) to Less Than 2%:** Excessive speed continues to be a leading cause of serious crashes. ACT 2025 seeks to curb speeding violations through more effective enforcement.



Targeted Strategies for Success

ACT 2025 uses a variety of strategies to meet these goals. One of the core elements of the initiative is **high-impact, data-driven enforcement**. Leveraging real-time technology through the **Ohio Statistics and Analytics for Traffic Safety (OSTATS)**, the Division can quickly respond to aggressive, distracted and impaired driving behaviors. This technology allows troopers to identify patterns, monitor high-risk areas and implement rapid interventions when necessary.

Another central aspect of ACT 2025 is **educational outreach**. The initiative promotes community programs that educate drivers about the dangers of distracted and impaired driving. Through **school-based initiatives** like **Saved by the Belt** and **Drive to Live**, young drivers are taught safe driving habits early on, particularly the importance of wearing safety belts. Additionally, the Division will engage with communities through events such as Coffee with a Cop and local parades, strengthening relationships and raising awareness of traffic safety.

Building Strong Partnerships

To address the root causes of impaired driving, the initiative is expanding partnerships with mental health and addiction services through **Operation New Beginnings**. This program connects individuals struggling with substance abuse to resources aimed at reducing repeat offenses. The goal is to reach 65 counties by the end of 2025, ensuring that this critical service is available statewide.

ACT 2025 also focuses on building partnerships with organizations such as the Ohio Association of Professional Firefighters, the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police, the business community and the Ohio Department of Transportation. These collaborations are designed to strengthen community ties and amplify the impact of safety initiatives.

Innovative Communication and Leadership Development

When it comes to connecting with the public, ACT 2025 utilizes **innovative communication** strategies, particularly through social media and digital platforms. Personal stories of individuals affected by unsafe driving behaviors will be shared to drive home the consequences of risky actions behind the wheel. Proactive media campaigns will ensure that safety messaging reaches a broad audience, emphasizing the importance of responsible driving.

To prepare the next generation of leaders, ACT 2025 also incorporates **future-ready initiatives**. These include **Supervisor Ride Time** in daily duties, **Drug Recognition Expert Ride-Alongs**, and the expansion of **Advanced Criminal Interdiction Ride Training (ACIRT)**. By participating in informal and formal mentorship programs, officers will be equipped to take on leadership roles in the future.

Measuring Success

Along with a commitment to continuous improvement, success will be measured through **data-driven insights**, using statistical analysis to track reductions in distracted driving, impaired driving and speeding violations. Regular **community engagement surveys** will assess public perception of the initiative and continue building trust in law enforcement. Additionally, **partnership impact** will be tracked through success stories that highlight the positive outcomes of collaborations with mental health services and other organizations.

A Safer Ohio, Stronger Communities

ACT 2025 represents a forward-thinking approach to traffic safety in Ohio. By combining enforcement, education, partnerships and leadership development, the initiative will drive change that will benefit all Ohioans. As the program continues to evolve, its comprehensive strategy is expected to reduce crashes, build stronger communities and ensure that Ohio's roadways are safer for years to come.

PATROL PRODUCES NEW VIDEO SERIES DESCRIBING ACTIVATION PROCESS FOR OHIO'S FOUR STATEWIDE ALERTS

The Public Affairs Unit, at the request of the Ohio AMBER Alert Advisory Committee, produced a new video series regarding the activation process and criteria for each of Ohio's four statewide alerts.

The videos, which were posted to the Ohio AMBER Plan website on November 1, cover the activation process in Ohio for an AMBER Alert, Endangered Missing Child Alert, Endangered Missing Adult Alert and Blue Alert.

The videos were produced to provide the general public with an understanding of what takes place during the activation of each alert, as well as a resource for local and county agencies for roll-call training due to the high-risk/low-frequency nature of agencies handling incidents that may require an alert.

Each alert is covered through a series of four short videos (2-3 minutes each) in which viewers can learn what the specific alert means, the criteria for issuing the alert, the investigating agency's responsibilities for each alert and the Ohio State Highway Patrol's and/or Ohio Attorney General's Bureau of Criminal Investigation's responsibilities for each alert.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol appreciates the collaboration in the production of these videos from the Grove City Police Department, Bexley Police Department, Pickaway County Sheriff's Office, Ohio Department of Transportation, Bureau of Criminal Investigation and Ohio Department of Public Safety.

Scan the QR code to view the series. Videos include training on the following: how to request alerts, AMBER alerts, endangered missing child/adult alerts, blue alerts and regional Ohio alerts.



AVIATION DOWNLINK SYSTEM ACCESS OFFERED TO ALL OHIO LAW ENFORCEMENT



A Patrol pilot using equipment from the cockpit.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol, along with Governor Mike DeWine and Ohio Department of Public Safety Director Andy Wilson, announced the Patrol's aviation Downlink system is now accessible at no cost for all local, state and federal agencies in the state.

Downlinking is a term used to describe the process of transmitting video footage from an aircraft to ground-based receivers, which then pushes the feed to a secure internet site. Any agency with internet access and the correct credentials can then view the video in real-time on a phone, tablet or desktop.

The Patrol's Aviation Section maintains a fleet of 16 aircraft in support of all public safety operations across the state, and its assistance is requested daily by federal, state and local partners for a wide array of missions. Calls for service include violent crime reduction initiatives, criminal suspect searches, missing persons searches, vehicle pursuit mitigation, documenting severe weather damage and other various requests throughout Ohio.

The Downlink system has been deployed

numerous times since it was established in 2019. In 2024 alone, the program resulted in 308 successful location assists with aerial support, aided in 162 vehicle pursuits and contributed to 102 foot pursuits. It also assisted in the recovery of 80 stolen vehicles, as well as the seizure of 76 illegal firearms.

"The Downlink program represents an advancement in our collaborative public safety efforts," said Colonel Charles A. Jones, Patrol superintendent. "Providing real-time aerial footage directly to our law enforcement partners enhances situational awareness, speeds response times and supports informed decisions to protect our communities."

The system operates by direct line of sight between an aircraft and a ground-based receiver, with the effective range depending upon the aircraft's altitude. However, a fixed-receiver site has a range of approximately 50-70 miles. As of now, there are nine receiver sites that enable Downlink coverage across Ohio.

Downlinking allows command staff a broader view of a scene or search area to assist with asset allocation on the ground. This leads to faster and safer outcomes for all those involved. As public safety entities throughout Ohio are provided real-time information through the Downlink system, their ability to make quicker and safer decisions is substantially increased. This results in quicker responses and outcomes, leading to enhanced public safety.

"Many of Ohio's law enforcement agencies, especially in the rural parts of the state, don't have aviation capabilities," said Director Wilson. "This incredible asset provides a valuable resource to help those agencies fight crime and protect the public."

The capabilities provided by Downlink help create a safer environment for everyone traveling through the state. The ability to share safety information in real-time enhances safety on Ohio roadways, mitigates risk to the general public and acts as a force multiplier to other agencies accessing the system.

Any federal, state or local agency wanting to utilize the Patrol's aviation resources can contact their local Ohio State Highway Patrol post.

FORTY TROOPERS GRADUATE FROM OHIO STATE HIGHWAY PATROL TRAINING ACADEMY

On November 8, the Ohio State Highway Patrol's 174th Academy Class graduated after 30 weeks of intense training. Director Andy Wilson, Ohio Department of Public Safety, and Colonel Charles A. Jones, Patrol superintendent, provided remarks. Retired Lieutenant Colonel and current United States Marshal for the Southern District of Ohio, Michael D. Black, delivered the commencement address to the 40 members of the Patrol's 174th Academy Class. Judge David A. Trimmer, Fairfield County Court of Common Pleas, issued the Oath of Office.

Trooper Samuel R. Hammon, Defiance Post, was selected as the class speaker, expressing thanks to the Patrol's Training Academy and cadet family members for being supportive during their training.

Two graduates received special honors for top performance in various fields of study at the Training Academy. Trooper Hammon, Defiance Post, received awards for overall performance, academics, firearms and physical fitness. Trooper Colton R. Costin, Wapakoneta Post, received the top performance in driving.

Graduates reported to their assigned posts on November 10. They were assigned to 19 of the Patrol's 59 posts.



LIEUTENANT HOWARD GRADUATES FROM PELC



On November 8, Lieutenant Dexter T. Howard, Batavia Post commander, graduated from Police Executive Leadership College (PELC) after completing 3 weeks of an executive leadership training program.

Lieutenant Howard graduated with other law enforcement leaders from around Ohio.

Shown from left: Vandalia Division of Police Chief Kurt Althouse, Lieutenant Dexter T. Howard and Dublin Police Department Chief Justin Páez.

OSHP CELEBRATES 91ST BIRTHDAY

On November 15, personnel and retirees from around the state gathered to pay homage to the Ohio State Highway Patrol – past and present. Scan the QR code below to read a letter from Colonel Charles A. Jones about the pioneers of the Patrol.



SAVED BY THE BELT EVENTS



Saved by the Belt recipients and their families surrounded by Kings Island staff, Charlie Brown and Snoopy, and Patrol personnel.

Front row: Saved by the Belt recipients are holding certificates and are shown standing between Charlie Brown and Snoopy. They include Reba L. Gibert, Wanda L. Walters, Elaine P. Halterman and Bobbi Gikerson.

Row 2: Curtis Blake Payne, Timothy W. Walker, Dustin Akers and Chase Lambert. Row 3: Sergeant Joseph A. Westhoven, Batavia Post and Lieutenant Nicholas A. Lunsford, Ironton Post.

Back row: Sergeant Tyler S. Ross, PAU; Deonta Whigham, Kings Island; Staff Lieutenant Matthew R. Schmenk, Wilmington District Headquarters; Colonel Charles A. Jones, Patrol superintendent; Captain Robert M. Hayslip, Wilmington District Headquarters; Captain Craig Cvetan, Jackson District Headquarters; Lieutenant Scott J. Kuntz, Cincinnati Post; Trooper Jovande M. Coleman, Xenia Post; and Lieutenant Chad E. Smith, Lebanon Post.

Jackson, Piqua and Wilmington Districts

On October 12, a Saved by the Belt event was held at Kings Island amusement park in Warren County. Nine individuals from the Jackson, Piqua and Wilmington districts were honored by the Patrol and Colonel Charles A. Jones. Each recipient received a framed Saved by the Belt certificate, license plate and license plate bracket. Kings Island also provided each recipient and their families with one-day admission tickets to the park.



OACP TEEN SUMMIT



Trooper Jessica A. McIntyre, Office of Recruitment & Diversity, with students.

On October 31, the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police's Central Ohio Teen Summit was held at the Patrol's Training Academy. The Summit offered teens an opportunity for a day of fun while learning about safety, wellness and planning for their futures.



Criminal Patrol Unit's Sergeant Joshua Beynon and Sergeant Jerrold T. March meet with the students.

Cambridge District – New Philadelphia Post

On October 12, the New Philadelphia Post and the Tuscarawas County Sheriff's Office presented Oliviaa Hull and Linda Burgess with Saved by the Belt certificates, and Reese Kashuba with a Saved by the Helmet award. The presentation was made at Midvale Speedway Racing in New Philadelphia.

From left: Trooper Gabriel A. Duvall, Sergeant Jennifer Makris, Lieutenant Johnnie H. Maier, Saved by the Belt recipient Linda Burgess, Tuscarawas County Sheriff Orvis L. Campbell, Motorcycle Ohio Statewide Coordinator Michele Piko, Tuscarawas County Sheriff's Office Sergeant David DiGenova, Saved by the Helmet recipient Reese Kashuba, Saved by the Belt recipient Oliviaa Hull, New Philadelphia Police Department Captain Rocky Dusenberry and Cambridge District Staff Lieutenant Scott A. Louive.

TROOPERS TAKE PART IN ANNUAL SHOE GIVEAWAY



On December 5, the annual shoe giveaway took place at Etna Elementary in Whitehall. Springfield Post Trooper Coleton J. Piatt (shown left) and Granville Post Trooper Brian J. Miller (shown right) took time out of their days to help 200 children receive new Under Armour shoes, socks and a winter hat. The program is a collaboration between Rock City Church, the Franklin County Sheriff's Office, the Columbus Division of Police and the Patrol.



2024 HOLIDAY CARD CONTEST WINNER CHOSEN



Holiday card contest winner, Piper Kohls (far right), daughter of Trooper Tiffany J. Kohls (second from right) celebrates her win with her family and the Patrol's Therapy Dog, Hope.

Piper Kohls, a fifth grader from Northmor Elementary School in Morrow County, was named the winner of the Ohio State Highway Patrol's 2024 Holiday Card Contest.

Piper's heartfelt and imaginative artwork was featured on the Patrol's official holiday card, which was sent to law enforcement agencies and partners across Ohio and the United States. The card was also shared on social media.

During a special ceremony at her school on December 16, Piper was presented with a certificate and a framed version of her artwork by Colonel Charles A. Jones, Patrol

superintendent. Family, friends and classmates gathered to celebrate Piper's achievement.

Piper, the daughter of Trooper Tiffany J. Kohls, assigned to the Delaware Post, spent five hours working on her winning design.

This year's design had to include the Patrol's new Therapy Dog, K-9 Hope, and feature the message, "May Your Holidays be Filled with Hope and Joy," along with the Patrol's Flying Wheel symbol.

The second-place winner was Reese Bauer, a fifth grader from Monroeville St. Joseph, and third place went to Juliana Oboczky, a fifth grader from Creekview Elementary in Marysville. These young artists, along with Piper, are a testament to the talent and creativity of Ohio's youth.



Piper's winning holiday card design.

A Glance Into History

EVOLUTION OF THE POLYGRAPH UNIT

The Ohio State Highway Patrol began using polygraphs in the mid 1950's. Many of our previous examiners were trained by Dick Arther, a pioneer in polygraph examination, at the National Training Center of Polygraph Science (NTC) in New York City until the mid-2000's. More recently, all examiners have attended federal curriculum-based schools that are recognized by the American Polygraph Association and the American Association of Police Polygraphists.

In 1956, the In Desk Polygraph Machine used by the Patrol was the instrument of choice. It would measure physiological changes in blood pressure, heartbeat, respiration and perspiration-reactions, indicating stimulation of the central nervous system while a subject was asked questions.

On May 12, 1976, investigator and then Sergeant Richard F. Wilcox, administered a polygraph on a defendant, Gene Souel, who pleaded not guilty to the aggravated murder and robbery of Ralph Steinman, and requested a polygraph examination. Following the polygraph examination, Sergeant Wilcox determined that Souel had not been truthful. Souel's counsel attempted to have the results thrown out and subjected Sergeant Wilcox to a cross-examination of his qualifications and the conditions of the test administration process. As a result of his extensive training and the abilities of the polygraph machine, the results were admitted as evidence. This polygraph examination set into motion a landmark ruling in 1978 by the Ohio Supreme Court for the admissibility of polygraph examinations used in court trials, under certain conditions. This has been called "the leading case in Ohio on the admissibility of polygraph results" and has been cited in many rulings since 1978.

From the 1970's until 1990, those who conducted polygraph exams did not do it as a full-time position, but combined that duty with criminal investigations. In 1990, then Colonel Thomas W. Rice created a full-time polygraph unit that was decentralized - creating polygraph offices/suites in Cleveland, Warren, Massillon, Findlay, Cincinnati and Columbus General Headquarters. This change began the testing of all applicants applying for Trooper positions; something the Patrol had not done prior.

In the 1990's, the Patrol became the first law enforcement agency in Ohio to use the computerized polygraph, as well as one of the first law enforcement agencies besides the FBI to use the computerized polygraph east of the Mississippi.

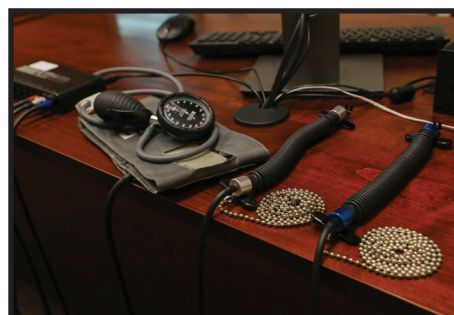
As of early 2024, there were ten full-time examiners and one contract examiner for the Polygraph Unit, who for 2023 had 1,241 polygraph exams scheduled. Of those scheduled, 113 were criminal exams, with 72 being conducted, 19 were terminated and 22 were canceled. The remaining 1,128 were applicant exams scheduled. 1,013 were conducted, 27 were terminated and 88 were canceled.



Above: Early polygraph examiners in the 1950s, retired Staff Lieutenant Douglas C. Wells and Patrolman James "Jay" F. Devoll.



Left: The 1970 Stoelting Polygraph Instrument, which took approximately 30 minutes to warm up before use. It provided a continuous recording of blood pressure, heart rate, pulse, respiration and electrical skin resistance.



Above: 1979 polygraph machine.

Left: Modern polygraph equipment.

COMPUTER CRIMES UNIT

In August 2024, troopers from the Hamilton Post first encountered a commercial vehicle driver, whose suspicious behavior with regard to a 16-year-old juvenile passenger, prompted a deeper investigation. Upon examining the driver's cell phone, troopers discovered a photo showing him and the juvenile sharing an intimate kiss. The juvenile later admitted to engaging in sexual conduct with the driver, and digital evidence revealed that child sexual abuse material (CSAM) had been exchanged between their devices.

As the digital age continues to evolve, so do the ways in which criminals operate. Digital devices are now at the heart of a wide array of criminal activities, from financial fraud and human trafficking to cyberterrorism and CSAM. The Ohio State Highway Patrol's Computer Crimes Unit (CCU) is leading the charge in tackling these digital threats, offering crucial support and expertise in criminal investigations across the state and beyond.

Established in 1997, the CCU began as a small operation focused on conducting digital forensics on desktop computers and laptops. Over the years, as technology advanced and digital crimes grew more complex, the CCU's scope expanded.

With the rise of mobile devices, the unit began analyzing cell phones for digital evidence. As technology progressed further, the CCU grew in size and expertise. Today, the unit consists of one sergeant, one trooper and six professional staff forensic specialists. The CCU has processed over 1,000 Patrol cases in the last five years and has assisted in more than 1,500 cases from local, state and federal agencies.

The Hamilton Post case escalated when the juvenile ran away from home within days of being returned home. A day later, on August 16, 2024, the man from the original Hamilton Post contact, now wanted for his role in the crime, was found in a hotel parking lot in Montgomery County with the runaway in a stolen vehicle. The juvenile was recovered safely, but the driver fled from police, leading to a high-speed chase that ended when he crashed into a train.

During the investigation, the CCU examined three devices seized from the scene. One of the devices contained a hidden folder with multiple videos and images of CSAM, including footage of the driver and juvenile in a sexual act. The investigation also uncovered videos showing the driver staging the camera to record six other underage victims.

The CCU has become an indispensable resource in investigating crimes that involve digital devices or state databases. Staff work a variety of cases including those involving CSAM like in the Hamilton Post incident, but also those tied to human trafficking, identity

fraud, financial fraud, kidnapping, network intrusion, prostitution, sexual assault, swatting, terrorism and theft in office.

Their outstanding work has garnered national recognition. On December 5, 2024, two members of the unit, Forensic Computer Specialist 2 Daniel P. Maher and Forensic Specialist 2 Stewart M. R. Watkins, were honored as part of the National Computer Forensics Institute's (NCFI) Top 100 Forensic Examiners. This prestigious award recognizes the best forensic examiners from law enforcement agencies across the nation. Maher ranked 23rd, while Watkins ranked 73rd out of more than 3,800 participants. Additionally, Maher received the NCFI Cyber Investigative Impact Case Award for his work on a CSAM case with the Jackson County Sheriff's Office.



Forensic Computer Specialists Daniel P. Maher Jr. and Stewart M. R. Watkins display their awards.

There are many tangible examples where the importance of the CCU in uncovering digital evidence leads to the prosecution of serious crimes, including the driver in the Hamilton Post case having been indicted on multiple felonies, with additional federal charges pending.

The work of the CCU is more critical than ever, and its role will continue to grow as technology evolves. From encrypted communications to sophisticated cyberattacks, digital evidence will remain a cornerstone of modern criminal investigations.

By staying at the cutting edge of digital forensic technology and collaborating with law enforcement agencies with both investigatory expertise and training at all levels, the CCU ensures the Division is prepared to face the challenges of the digital age.

REGIONAL TRAINING UNIT

The Ohio State Highway Patrol's Regional Training Unit (RTU) is a vital resource for law enforcement agencies across the state, providing specialized, up-to-date training that focuses on officer safety, operational readiness and liability management. An extension of the Training Academy, the RTU plays a crucial role in ensuring that officers are well-prepared to handle the complexities of modern law enforcement.

One of the key benefits of the RTU is its regional approach to training. By offering courses locally, the RTU eliminates the need for agencies to travel long distances for essential training. This model makes high-quality, relevant instruction more accessible to law enforcement officers and departments statewide. This approach enhances the readiness and safety of law enforcement agencies across Ohio, equipping officers with the tools and expertise needed to readily serve their communities.

The RTU is sponsored by the Ohio Department of Public Safety to foster collaboration with Ohio law enforcement agencies by offering a wide array of specialized training programs. These include emergency vehicle operations (EVO), which covers key skills such as precision immobilization techniques (PIT), Train-the-Trainer and EVO instructor courses. In spring 2025, the RTU will hold an advanced EVO course at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course. The one-day session will focus on vehicle dynamics, skid control, autocross and high-speed driving, providing officers with valuable driving skills for high-stakes situations.

In addition to EVO training, the RTU also organizes a comprehensive 29-week driving in-service program, supported by 12 temporary instructors to ensure effective delivery.

The RTU's commitment to enhancing law enforcement extends beyond driving courses. All Division in-service is coordinated by the RTU in conjunction with the Training Academy staff, ensuring consistency in law



RTU instructors assist with emergency vehicle operations training.

enforcement practices and protocols. This in-service covers mandatory topics for annual certification and specialized training that aligns with statewide operational goals and compliance standards.

Through the Public Safety Leadership Academy, in partnership with The Ohio State University's John Glenn College of Public Affairs, the RTU helps senior law enforcement officers hone their leadership skills. The 11-week program offers 10 hours of academic credit and helps officers build skills for leadership roles, while also providing a platform for participation in National Police Week.

The RTU's programs are made possible by a dedicated and diverse team, comprised of both sworn officers and professional staff.

In a rapidly evolving law enforcement landscape, the Patrol's RTU remains a cornerstone of professional development and collaboration, empowering law enforcement agencies across Ohio to serve with confidence and competence. The RTU continues to elevate training standards, ensuring that Ohio's law enforcement agencies are equipped with the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to respond effectively in service to Ohioans across the state.

continued on page 34

MEDINA POST LOST DOG RESCUED

On October 15, Trooper Tara M. Yurek from the Medina Post patrolled Interstate 71, searching for a lost dog. The dog was spotted on the side of the road, where Trooper Yurek pulled over to coax the dog into the cruiser, to which the dog happily complied.

Soon after, an investigation into the dog's microchip revealed the name and address of "Winston," allowing Trooper Yurek to return him home, reuniting Winston with his grateful family.



Scan the QR code to the right to watch body cam footage of the dog's rescue.

4-YEAR-OLD BRINGS DONUTS TO CAMBRIDGE POST TROOPERS



On October 25, a kind four-year-old boy saw a group of troopers in Guernsey County on their lunch break. The boy decided he wanted to bring doughnuts to the personnel at the Cambridge Post.

On his visit, the boy met the post's troopers and talked with them. The boy's father said, "The troopers were so sweet to my son. They came out and talked with him, and it just made his day."

The troopers were appreciative of his visit, and Lieutenant Todd L. Henry posed for a picture with the ecstatic boy.

TROOPER CLAPPER I-77 TIRE CHANGE



In October, a woman traveling home from college on Interstate 77 found herself needing a tire change. Luckily, Trooper Matthew Clapper, New Philadelphia Post, saw the motorist and stopped to assist.

The motorist's uncle commended Trooper Clapper for his willingness to help: "Just wanted to give Clapper a kudos. He helped my niece change her tire yesterday on 77 on her way home from college."

His actions also caught the attention of an employee from the Ohio Department of Transportation Eastern Ohio District 11, who said, "Please tell your trooper his work didn't go unnoticed."

INFRASTRUCTURE SPECIALIST TEAMS RECOGNIZED



On October 15, Colonel Charles A. Jones recognized the Division's Infrastructure Specialist teams for their exceptional dedication and unwavering commitment during the recent CrowdStrike outage recovery. Despite the challenges posed by the outage, they remained steadfast and focused on restoring critical systems. The majority of the restoration process occurred July 19-23. In response to the crisis, 25 Patrol IT staff members worked a combined 980 hours to fully restore systems.

Front row: Infrastructure Specialist (IS) 3 Liljana Cvetkovska, Computer Operations; IS 2 Thomas "Greg" Sites, Cambridge District; IS 2 James "Todd" Hunt, Computer Operations; IS 2 Kyle K. Miller, Computer Operations; IS 2 Robert I. Eakins, Wilmington District and Network Services Supervisor Mauro G. Pereira, Computer Operations. Back row: IS 2 William Griffiths, Computer Operations; IS 2 Joshua M. Henry, Jackson District; IS 4 Randall K. Bogue, Computer Operations; Information Technology Manager 1 Richard A. Bussey, Computer Operations; IS 2 Christopher L. Baker, Cambridge District; Data Systems Administrator Jeremy J. Hansford, Technology/LEADS and IS 2 Todd J. Walters, Computer Operations.

Not pictured: IS 2 Ann M. Craft, Warren District; IS 2 Wayne A. Eidemiller, Piqua District; IS 2 Daniel B. Hall, Bucyrus District; IS 2 Donald R. Lachman, Jackson District; IS 2 Frederick R. Lust, Bucyrus District; IS 2 Eric C. Lytle, Cleveland District; IS 2 Derek M. Martin, Findlay District; IS 2 LeVincent T. Morgan, Computer Operations; IS 2 Michael S. Oliver, Cleveland District; IS 2 Douglas M. Scott, Warren District; IS 2 Michael J. Swartz, Cleveland District; IS 2 Bryan K. Weaver, Piqua District and IS 2 John T. Zwyer, Findlay District.

TROOPER GOODNITE EARNS PERFECT FITNESS SCORE FOR THE SECOND TIME



On November 14, Trooper Nickolas B. Goodnite, Canton Post, scored a 500 on his Physical Fitness Evaluation Graded Exercise Text (GXT) for the second time. He previously earned a perfect score in March of 2014.

BUDGET ANALYST GLEICH HONORED FOR 40 YEARS OF SERVICE

On December 17, Colonel Charles A. Jones presented Budget Analyst Brenda S. Gleich with a certificate for 40 years of state service to the citizens of Ohio.



TROOPER WILSON AND K-9 MARI PRESENTED WITH OHIO NARCO AWARD



Trooper Wilson and K-9 Mari at graduation in 2023.

During the annual Ohio NARCO (Narcotics Association of Regional Coordinating Officers) Conference, held September 30 through October 2 in Dublin, K-9 Handler Trooper Michael R. Wilson and K-9 Mari were recognized as the 2024 Ohio NARCO K-9 of the Year. Trooper Wilson and K-9 Mari seized or assisted in the seizure of the following amounts of contraband in 2024:

222
POUNDS
OF COCAINE

1,419
POUNDS OF
MARIJUANA

300
POUNDS
OF METH

5 POUNDS OF
FENTANYL

4 POUNDS OF
KETAMINE

TROOPER GRIM WINS CENTRAL OHIO CRIME STOPPER'S OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARD



From left: Local Columbus television personality Anna Hoffman; Lieutenant Aaron E. Vollmer, Granville Post Commander; Trooper Shawn D. Grim, Granville Post; Captain Kevin A. Knapp, Columbus District commander; and Charles A. Jones, Patrol superintendent.

On October 24, Trooper Shawn D. Grim, Granville Post, received the Officer of the Year award from the Central Ohio Crime Stoppers during their 47th annual Central Ohio Crime Stoppers breakfast.

AP4 CLOUSE EARNS 40 YEARS OF STATE SERVICE CERTIFICATE



Colonel Charles A. Jones presented Administrative Professional 4 Lisa M. Clouse with a certificate for 40 Years of State Service on December 10 at the Findlay District Headquarters.

PHOTOGRAPHER O'SHEA PRESENTED WITH LIGHT OHIO BLUE AWARD



Lieutenant Colonel Chuck Linek, Photographer Colleen E. O'Shea and Major Jacob D. Pyles.

On October 11, OSHP Photographer Colleen E. O'Shea was honored during the 2024 Light Ohio Blue/Red Awards Ceremony. The winning photo in the specialty equipment category featured a Patrol helicopter.

Each year, Light Ohio Blue conducts a photo contest in remembrance of the heroic actions taken by the men and women who responded to Ground Zero following the 9/11 attacks.

According to Light Ohio Blue, 153,829 votes were cast by law enforcement personnel, first responders and the public during the contest. The photo of the Patrol helicopter garnered a 4,973 5-star rating, winning the category. Photograph submissions were eligible in one of 11 categories based on the agencies' jurisdictional area population size and/or vehicle type.

The award ceremony was held at First Responders Park in Hilliard.

Story behind the photo from Patrol Photographer Colleen E. O'Shea:

"We were up at the 419 Range in Toledo for Airborne Use of Force Training. During this training, Special Response Team (SRT) designated marksman shoot targets from the Patrol helicopter. To get a different perspective than photographing from the ground, I hopped on the second helicopter to cover the training. Shooting photography from the other helicopter allows me to show the helicopter flying much closer, and at eye level even. I like being able to show the action of the helicopter moving from this height along with the designated marksman shooting it from closer range. It's a perspective and angle we are lucky to be able to show how our pilots and troopers work."

AUXILIARY OFFICER OSTRANDER EARNS AWARD



On October 22, Auxiliary Officer Donald E. Ostrander was honored with the Ohio State Highway Patrol's Certificate of Recognition. On March 28, 2023, he was working in his primary job in Mansfield when a customer fell. Auxiliary Officer Ostrander went to help the customer, noticing that their pant leg was red with blood. He instructed a bystander to call 911 and then rushed to his personal vehicle to retrieve his Patrol-issued tourniquet and his own first aid kit. The customer's femur bone had punctured through their leg and they were losing a lot of blood. Auxiliary Officer Ostrander applied his tourniquet and tightened it until the bleeding stopped. He also used the trauma dressing for the injury until additional medical aid arrived.

From left: Auxiliary Officer Donald E. Ostrander, Bucyrus District Captain Scott C. Rike and Auxiliary Lieutenant Colonel Jason Sanford.

LIEUTENANT ROOT AND SERGEANT YEAGER RECEIVE MILITARY AWARDS



During a ceremony at the Patrol's Training Academy on November 12, Lieutenant Dallas E. Root and Sergeant Joshua A. Yeager were honored with the 2024 Department of Public Safety Military Service Award.

Lieutenant Root, Dayton Post commander, retired in September as a senior master sergeant in the U.S. Air Force after a 24-year military career. During his military career, he assisted with maintaining and supporting essential

flying missions for training F-16 pilots for the U.S. Air Force and Royal Netherlands Air Force. He also supported critical flying missions in response to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

In August 2018, he graduated from the Air Force First Sergeant Academy, serving as the key enlisted advisor to the 178th Mission Support Group Commander on matters concerning unit members' welfare, career progression and mission readiness. From July 2022 to January 2023, he was attached to the 378th Air Expeditionary Wing, Prince Sultan Air Base, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.



Above: Ohio National Guard Major General John C. Harris Jr., Ohio Department of Public Safety Deputy Director Jon Rayfield, Lieutenant Dallas E. Root, Ohio Department of Public Safety Director of Public Safety Andy Wilson and Ohio Department of Veterans Services Director Deborah Ashenhurst.

Left: Sergeant Joshua A. Yeager addresses the crowd at the Military Awards ceremony.

Lieutenant Root joined the Patrol in May 2004 as a member of the 142nd Academy Class. Throughout his Patrol career, he has earned the prestigious Superintendent's Citation of Merit and the O.W. Merrell Meritorious Service Award.

Sergeant Joshua A. Yeager, Lisbon Post assistant commander, has served in the Air National Guard since September 2012. He is a first lieutenant serving with the 200th Red Horse Squadron out of the 179th Mansfield-Lahm Air National Guard Base. In March 2024, Sergeant Yeager deployed for Operation Guardian Twister, assisting in recovery and response efforts following an EF3 tornado in Logan County.

Sergeant Yeager is a member of the 164th Academy Class and was named District Trooper of the Year and Post Trooper of the Year in 2021. He has earned the Criminal Patrol Award twice. Sergeant Yeager also serves as a drug recognition expert, where he has excelled at removing impaired drivers from Ohio roadways.

He keeps care packages in the trunk of his cruiser that contain hygiene kits and blankets to give to those in need. He also carries toys in his cruiser for calming children when they are faced with difficult situations.

TROOPER GARLOCH RECEIVES A DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDALLION



Trooper Brian K. Garloch with Colonel Charles A. Jones.

Colonel Charles A. Jones presented Delaware Post Trooper Brian K. Garloch with the Patrol's Distinguished Service Medallion on November 13. Trooper Garloch was dispatched on September 29 to assist the Delaware County Sheriff's Office in locating a suicidal individual. The individual was believed to be in the area of the Delaware State Park. Sheriff's deputies advised Trooper Garloch that they cleared the state park and were unable to locate the person or their vehicle.

Trooper Garloch checked several pull-offs and gravel roads along state Route 229. He located the vehicle and the individual through a tree-line. As he approached the individual, Trooper Garloch was able to see the person had already sustained a gun shot wound to the head, but was still breathing. Trooper Garloch contacted dispatch to call for EMS. He used items in his medical kit to treat and pack the wound. For more than 20 minutes, he continued applying pressure on the gunshot wound and monitoring the subject's pulse until Delaware County EMS arrived. His quick thinking and decisive actions saved a life.

FIVE HONORED AT LEBANON POST FOR SAVING A LIFE



From left: Lieutenant Colonel Joshua M. Swindell, Dispatcher Janelle M. Jackson, Trooper Michael D. Slack, Trooper Xavier C. Harris, Sergeant David M. Beck, Dispatcher Jessi Lovejoy and Lieutenant Colonel Chuck Linek.

On November 19, Lieutenant Colonel Joshua M. Swindell presented Medallion Certificates to Sergeant David M. Beck and Trooper Michael D. Slack, and Certificates of Recognition to Trooper Xavier C. Harris, Dispatcher Jessi Lovejoy and Dispatcher Janelle M. Jackson, all from the Lebanon Post.

The five were honored after they assisted in saving the life of a teen who was attempting to jump from the Jeremiah Morrow Bridge in Warren County. On the evening of August 30, dispatchers Jackson and Lovejoy received an urgent call from a mother, concerned about her 17-year-old son who was experiencing a mental health crisis. Through GPS, the mother was able to determine that her son's location was near the bridge on Interstate 71.

Sergeant Beck and troopers Slack and Harris promptly responded to the scene. Sergeant Beck arrived first and found the teenager climbing

the bridge's fencing. Sergeant Beck quickly approached the teenager and engaged him in conversation, while Trooper Slack safely removed him from the dangerous position.

The officers continued to de-escalate the situation and offer support until EMS arrived. Their timely actions were critical in preventing a devastating outcome.

TROOPER WHITACRE, DEPUTY RUGGLES RECEIVE MEDALLION CERTIFICATES FOR LIFESAVING ACTIONS



Amy Balvin, Jeff Sommers, Trooper Anthony W. Whitacre, Deputy Jason Ruggles, Nathan McNair and Elijah Fernstrum.

Lieutenant Colonel Chuck Linek presented Trooper Anthony W. Whitacre and Summit County Deputy Jason Ruggles with Medallion Certificates on December 6 at the Canton Post.

The awards were presented for their lifesaving actions on August 22 when Trooper Whitacre was alerted by a passing motorist of a man nearby lying on the ground outside his car. When he responded to the scene, bystanders were already conducting chest compressions on the man. He retrieved his AED and began working with those on scene alongside Deputy Ruggles.

Lifesaving efforts took place for approximately six minutes before medics arrived and took over. After clearing the scene, Trooper Whitacre went to the hospital to follow up with

the man, who was now in stable condition, and was advised that their efforts on scene saved his life.

In addition to the Medallion Certificate to Trooper Whitacre and Deputy Ruggles, Certificates of Recognition were presented to civilians Laura Bryner, Elijah Fernstrum, Nathan McNair, Jeff Sommers and Amy Balvin, whose efforts also played a critical role in saving the man's life.

TROOPER MORRELL PRESENTED WITH CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION



Ross County Sheriff George Lavender, Trooper Gabriel Morrell and Jackson District Captain Craig S. Cvetan.

On November 4, during the Jackson District fall firearms training, Trooper Gabriel Morrell was presented with a Patrol Certificate of Recognition. Jackson District Captain Craig S. Cvetan and Ross County Sheriff George Lavender presented Trooper Morrell with the certificate following his actions on August 9, when he was advised of a domestic violence incident. A man with a knife who was suffering from mental health issues was reported to be threatening family members. Ross County Sheriff's deputies requested assistance due to the nature of the incident. Trooper Morrell responded to the scene and made contact with Sheriff's deputies, who were able to quickly get family members out of the house. Family members informed law enforcement that the male was barricaded in a back room. Trooper Morrell was able to communicate with the male subject and build a rapport with him.

Trooper Morrell stayed calm and got the man to drop the knife and come down into the yard, where he was secured without further incident. Trooper Morrell's ability to stay calm saved the life of the man and prevented physical harm to others.

GHQ



Criminalist Lindsie D. Mayfield in the lab with students.

Crime Lab – On October 15 and 17, the Patrol's Crime Lab hosted students visiting from the Canal Winchester Local School District's Biomedical Pathway. The students who toured the lab expressed an interest in forensic science as a potential career.



Security Services – On October 26, Trooper Tedd M. Bergeron participated in a Trunk or Treat event held at First Baptist Church in Heath.

FINDLAY DISTRICT



Sergeant Joshua T. Menke, Van Vert Post, and Lieutenant Erica J. Gockstetter, Swanton Post.

Findlay District – On October 28, Mercy Health Life Flight conducted a helicopter safety and landing zone training with troopers from the Findlay District. The informative training helped ensure the safety of first responders and Life Flight crews at the scene of an emergency. Another training was held on November 4.



Defiance Post – Sergeant Fernando M. Chavez participated in a CarFit event with Defiance County Safe Communities on November 12 in Hicksville. Troopers checked vehicles to ensure they were in good operating condition. The checks were free and open to the public.

Lima Post – On October 24, Sergeant Anthony L. Kuhn (left) gave a DRIVE to Live presentation to the auto tech students at Lima Senior High School.

Bowling Green –

On November 20, (shown from left) Lieutenant Matthew N. Geer, Trooper Thomas J. Vaculik and Trooper Emily N. Wooley visited Otterbein SeniorLife in Pemberville. While there, they enjoyed coffee and talked to residents about traffic safety.



BUCYRUS DISTRICT



Marion Post - Two DRIVE to Live events were held in Marion County. On October 1, Trooper Eric C. Maskey and Sergeant Mark A. Menendez held an event at Elgin High School, where approximately 70 students were present. Then on October 2, Trooper Drew P. Nelson (shown standing left) and Trooper Maskey (shown standing right) presented at River Valley High School where approximately 100 students were in attendance.

CLEVELAND DISTRICT



Ashland Post – On November 2, Lieutenant Bradley R. Bishop (left); retired Captain Herbert Homan (second from left), now an assistant professor of criminal justice at Ashland University; and Sergeant Daniel Kumor (right) joined students from Ashland University's Criminal Justice Club for a Cram the Cruiser event. The event was held at the Ashland Walmart and supported Associated Charities food supplies. More than 4,200 pounds of food and hygiene items were collected. They also collected more than \$1,300 in donations.



From left: Trooper Daniel T. Telehany, Medina Post; Trooper Ashley C. Bogard, Cleveland Post; Sergeant Jeffrey S. Carpenter, Medina Post; Sergeant Christopher S. Ausse, Medina Post; Santa; Trooper Cynthia D. Wilt, Milan Post; Lieutenant Timothy J. Hoffman, Cleveland Post; Trooper Steven E. Robison, Cleveland District Licensing and Commercial Standards; Trooper Tara M. Yurek, Medina Post; and Dispatcher Lisa M. Hoffman, Medina Post.

Medina Post – On December 7, troopers and dispatchers participated in a Shop with a Cop event sponsored by the Medina Fraternal Order of Police lodge. The Patrol's Aviation Unit dropped in to help support the day.

WARREN DISTRICT



Warren Post – On October 12, troopers from the Warren Post, including Sergeant Benjamin M. Barnard and his children, Sophia and Cooper, participated in Safety Day at the Warren Meijer alongside fellow safety service partners. More than 150 attendees were able to discuss traffic safety with troopers.



From left: Dispatcher Angela Harmon, Ravenna Post; Sergeant Jeremy A. Kindler, Chardon Post; (center right) Trooper Diep N. Pham, Office of Recruitment and Diversity; and Target personnel (center left and right).

Ravenna Post – On October 11, The Ravenna Post held a Cram the Cruiser event at the Streetsboro Target. More than 500 pounds of donations were collected and delivered to the Catholic Charities food pantry in Ravenna.

PIQUA DISTRICT



Dayton Post – On November 19, Trooper Kevin L. Brubaker visited children enrolled in the Preble County Head Start early education program. While there, he read to the class, discussed traffic safety and explained the roles of law enforcement.



Wapakoneta Post – On December 14, Sergeant Matthew A. Dyer joined Celina-area law enforcement in a Season of Sharing event at the Celina Walmart.

DISTRICT SPOTLIGHT — COLUMBUS DISTRICT

Circleville Pumpkin Show

The Annual Circleville Pumpkin Show is billed as the greatest free show on Earth. The 117th show took place October 15 through 19.

Each year, the event is estimated to bring 400,000 visitors to Circleville. The Ohio State Highway Patrol's Circleville Post has a primary role of getting traffic in and out of the festival.

"We take great pride in getting people in and out safely," said Circleville Post Commander, Lieutenant Shad E. Caplinger.

Throughout the week, Circleville Post personnel and units from neighboring posts work special duty to do just that. Additionally, the Patrol participates in a parade, and has in past years assisted in the local safe communities booth, spreading safety messages to those in attendance.

For months, planning meetings take place. Each meeting is an opportunity for the Patrol and various agencies to come together.

To say the Pumpkin Show is a community event is an understatement. Area schools close for the week so students can be a part of the event. Residents take part in competitions such as baked goods, flower show, fruits and vegetables, art show, craft show, and window decorating. The event is opened every year with the Kiwanis Club singing a catchy tune, called the "The Punkin Show" by M.W. "Burk" Burkhart.

"It's a nice fest for Circleville and the community," Lieutenant Caplinger said, adding that the 2024 event was his 16th year working the Pumpkin Show.

Pumpkin Show Fun Facts:

The first Pumpkin Show was held in 1903.

The largest pumpkin on display in Ohio history was in 2023, weighing in at 2,388.5 pounds.

More than 40 floats and 50 bands participate in the seven Pumpkin Show parades.

Lindsey's Bakery prepares a huge pumpkin pie each year for the event, measuring six feet in diameter and weighing more than 400 pounds.

There are approximately 23,000 pumpkin pies and more than 100,000 pumpkin donuts sold during the four-day show.

*Information courtesy of the Circleville Pumpkin Show

COLUMBUS DISTRICT



Granville Post – On October 25, the Granville Post participated in Licking County area trunk or treat events.

Trooper Bowman (pictured above) attended a Trunk or Treat event at the Kids Education and Recreation Center in Granville. Trooper Bowman even decorated his cruiser!



Captain Kevin A. Knapp (second from right) with (from left) son Kasen, son Kody, daughter-in-law Abigail and wife Sandie Knapp.

On November 30, Columbus District Captain Kevin A. Knapp was honored during the Scarlet and Gray Salute at the Ohio State verses Michigan game for his years of serving security detail.

CAMBRIDGE DISTRICT



Cambridge Post – On October 20, Trooper Chase A. Lucas, his fiancé Sidnye and their dog Cruze participated in Caldwell Elementary PTO's Trunk or Treat. More than 200 kids were in attendance.



Cambridge Post – Cambridge Post Trooper Kaden I. Miller participated in Treats on the Trail on the Great Guernsey Trail on October 19. The event was sponsored by The Guernsey County Community Development Corporation. Approximately 600 kids and their parents attended.

WILMINGTON DISTRICT



Batavia Post – On October 11, Trooper Blake S. Combs participated in the Bethel-Tate Homecoming Parade, tossing candy to children along the parade route. Trooper Combs has been active in Clermont County building a rapport with local first responders, as well as interacting with parents and students about being a trooper.



Canton Post – Trooper Justin K. Smith (pictured far right) participated in the Massillon Police Department's Cram the Cruiser event at the Massillon Walmart on December 7. During the event, toys were collected for the children of the Massillon community.

WILMINGTON DISTRICT



Georgetown Post – On October 24, Trooper Samie J. Wedmore participated in a fall safety fair at Danville Middle School.

JACKSON DISTRICT



(Far left) Dispatcher Traci G. Malone, (second from left) Lieutenant Aaron M. Morgan and (center) Jackson County Sheriff Ted Frazier.

Jackson Dispatch Center and Jackson Post –

The Jackson Dispatch Center and Jackson Post personnel organized the inaugural First Responder Chili Cook Off at Manpower Park in Jackson on October 19. Dispatcher Traci G. Malone and Dispatch Supervisor Mitchell P. Saunders oversaw the event. Proceeds from the event raised money for dinners and toys for children in Jackson and Vinton counties for the holidays. The Apple City motorcycle club made a \$2,500 donation. The best overall chili went to Scioto Township Fire Department, while Jackson County Sheriff's Office was selected as the spiciest. The Jackson Dispatch Center was chosen as the most unique chili.

TRAINING ACADEMY



Above: A group photo of the Hero Run participants, taken at the Patrol's Training Academy.

Right: Trooper Wendy G. Everett's Memorial Plaque, which hangs at Heritage Hall.

Training Academy – Members of the 175th Academy Class, training academy staff and senior staff participated in the Hero Run on November 22. The cadets chose Trooper Wendy G. Everett, who was killed in the line of duty. The Hero Run is a chance for Academy staff to teach cadets and honor the memories of the Patrol's fallen. Previous Hero Runs honored Trooper Robert Perez Jr., Trooper James R. Gross and Patrolman Carl L. Thrush.



RETIREES – By Captain Rob Jackson, Retired

Retired Sergeant Larry Jackson

Years Served: June 1962 - November 1997

Cadet in the 64th Academy Class

Assignments: Chillicothe - Dispatcher; Springfield, Lancaster, GHQ-Ohio Investigative Services (OIS) - Trooper and Sergeant

As the last member of the 64th Academy Class to leave the active ranks, Sergeant Larry Jackson retired just prior to reaching the 55-year-old age limit in place at the time of his retirement. Following his initial time with the Patrol, he served as bailiff at the Ohio Court of Claims. Larry held this position for 14 years before retiring, but this didn't end his public service, as he went on to serve as a background investigator for the Division for several years. Larry enjoyed doing backgrounds and seeing the new generation of troopers starting out their careers.

Since retiring from the Division, Larry enjoys fishing, hunting, playing golf and traveling to Florida to visit his extended family. He also served on his local condominium HOA, volunteering time and helping in his community. Larry currently lives in Lancaster and enjoys spending time with and helping his local family, including his kids, four grandkids and his great-grandson, Wyatt.

Larry said he misses the people from his days at the Patrol and still keeps up with several retirees. He participates in the Post 23 monthly coffee gatherings and Annual Retiree Cookout. Attending these events with his son Rob, a fellow retiree, is a good time and allows him to connect with former co-workers he hasn't seen for some time. Larry also stays connected to the Division through his grandson, Trooper Scott Jackson (Aviation Section), and enjoys seeing him build his career.

Where are they now?



Retired Sergeant Larry Jackson, Trooper Scott Jackson, Retired Captain Rob Jackson.

\$SAVE TO WIN®

WIN UP TO **\$5,000** IN QUARTERLY PRIZES

Over 100 winners each month! Will you be next?

Open a Save To Win account today.

www.patrolcu.com 614-431-0784



Official account and prize entry rules, and a complete list of prizes are available at savetowin.org.
Void where prohibited by law. © CUSG, 2023. All rights reserved.

@savetowin

/savetowinmi

Message From HPRS Executive Director

Understanding IRMAA and Its Impact on Retirement Planning

The Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA) is an additional charge that some Medicare beneficiaries must pay on top of their standard Medicare Part B and Part D premiums. This surcharge is based on your modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) from two years prior. For example, your 2024 IRMAA is determined by your 2022 income. Although this may not impact all our members, some have expressed concern and suggested there be more communication on the topic.

IRMAA is calculated using a tiered system. The higher your income, the higher your IRMAA surcharge. The Social Security Administration (SSA) reviews your tax return from two years ago to determine your MAGI and places you in one of several income brackets. Each bracket corresponds to a different surcharge amount. Like tax brackets, understanding how to avoid the next IRMAA bracket could save hundreds of dollars.

With health care expenses continuing to be a major concern for retirement, understanding IRMAA is crucial for budgeting. Higher-income retirees need to account for these additional premiums when planning their retirement income and expenses. Retirees can manage their income to stay below IRMAA thresholds by making strategic withdrawals from retirement accounts, timing of income recognition and managing capital gains.

Effective tax planning can help minimize IRMAA surcharges. Strategies include Roth conversions, tax-loss harvesting and charitable giving to reduce taxable income. Also, the timing of Social Security benefits can impact your MAGI. Delaying Social Security can sometimes help manage income levels and avoid higher IRMAA brackets. Moreover, understanding IRMAA can influence decisions about when to enroll in Medicare and whether to choose Medicare Advantage or Medigap plans, which can have different cost structures.

In conclusion, IRMAA is an important consideration in retirement planning for higher-income individuals. By understanding how IRMAA works and implementing strategies to manage your income, you can minimize its impact on your retirement finances. Consulting with a financial advisor can provide personalized strategies to optimize your retirement plan and manage healthcare costs effectively.

Best Regards,



Carl Roark, Ph.D. HPRS Executive Director



HIGHWAY PATROL AUXILIARY

The Ohio State Highway Patrol Auxiliary, an all-volunteer force that provides assistance to troopers in the course of their duties, is accepting applications.

To inquire or apply for a position in the Auxiliary:

email OSHPAux@dps.ohio.gov or apply online:

<https://statepatrol.ohio.gov/recruit/auxiliary.html>



**MAJOR NAKIA J. HENDRIX,
OFFICE OF FIELD
OPERATIONS**

Major Nakia J. Hendrix, Office of Field Operations, retired on October 1, after 28 years with the Ohio State Highway Patrol. He joined the Patrol in February 1999 as a member of the 133rd Academy Class. He earned his commission in

July of the same year and was assigned to the Wooster Post. As a trooper, he also served at the Canton, Hiram and Warren posts, and the Training Academy. He was promoted to sergeant in 2005 and was assigned to serve as assistant post commander at the Ashtabula Post. As a sergeant, he also served at the Hiram, Canfield and Warren posts. He was promoted to lieutenant in 2010 to serve as the post commander at the Cambridge Post. As a lieutenant, he also served at the Ravenna and Canfield posts, and the Office of Planning. He was promoted to staff lieutenant in 2018 and remained in the Office of Planning. As a staff lieutenant, he also served at the Warren District Headquarters. He was promoted to captain in 2021 and transferred to the Office of Field Operations. As a captain, he also served at the Warren District Headquarters. In 2022, he was promoted to major to command the Office of Field Operations.

Major Hendrix earned an Associate of Applied Science degree in police science from Youngstown State University in 1995. Major Hendrix received a certificate in advanced leadership training from the John Glenn College of Public Affairs, Public Safety Leadership Academy in 2013.



**LIEUTENANT KARI L.
RIEBESELL,
CAPITOL OPERATIONS**

Lieutenant Kari L. Riebesell, Capitol Operations, retired on November 1, after 26 years with the Ohio State Highway Patrol. She joined the Patrol in April 1998 as a member of the 131st Academy Class. She earned her commission

in October of the same year and was assigned to the Sandusky Post. As a trooper, she also served at the Zanesville and Lancaster posts, and the Executive Protection Unit. In 2012, she was promoted to sergeant to serve as assistant post commander at the Chillicothe Post. As a sergeant, she also served at the Lancaster Post, Training Academy, Security Services and Capitol Operations. In 2022, she was promoted to lieutenant to serve as post commander in Capitol Operations.

Lieutenant Riebesell earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in education from Ohio Dominican University in 1994.



**SERGEANT ROBERT L. BURD,
LEBANON POST / D8**

Sergeant Robert L. Burd, Lebanon Post, retired on December 31, after 31 years with the Ohio State Highway Patrol. He joined the Patrol in January 1993 as a member of the 124th Academy Class. He earned his commission in June of

the same year and was assigned to the Findlay Post. As a trooper, he also served at the Lima Post. He was named Post Trooper of the Year three times and he earned the Ace Award for excellence in auto larceny enforcement. In 2011, he was promoted to sergeant to serve as the assistant post commander at the Bowling Green Post. As a sergeant, he also served at the Findlay, Wilmington and Cincinnati posts. In 2020, he earned the Colonel Robert M. Chiaramonte Humanitarian Award.



**SERGEANT JEFFREY P. JIRLES,
ZANESVILLE POST / D7**

Sergeant Jeffrey P. Jirles, Zanesville Post, retired on November 1, after 26 years with the Ohio State Highway Patrol. He joined the Patrol in April 1998 as a member of the 131st Academy Class. He earned his commission in October of the same year and

was assigned to the Wooster Post. As a trooper, he also served at the Zanesville Post and the Cambridge District Commercial Enforcement Unit. He was promoted to sergeant in 2014 and was assigned to the Zanesville Post to serve as assistant post commander.

Sergeant Jirles earned an Associate of Applied Science degree from Ohio University in 1991.



**SERGEANT CHAD M.
MCMUNN,
OFFICE OF RECRUITMENT**

Sergeant Chad M. McMunn, Office of Training, Recruitment and Diversity/Recruitment, retired on December 2, after 20 years with the Ohio State Highway Patrol. He joined the Patrol in December 2004 as a member of the 143rd Academy

Class. He earned his commission in June of the following year and was assigned to the Lancaster Post. He was named District Trooper of the Year once and Post Trooper of the Year five times. He earned the Criminal Patrol Award in 2013. He was promoted to sergeant in 2018 and was assigned to the Capitol Operations to serve as assistant commander.



**TROOPER SHAWN G. BOWERS,
LIMA POST / D1**

Trooper Shawn G. Bowers, Lima Post, retired on December 13, after 20 years with the Ohio State Highway Patrol. He joined the Patrol in December 2004 as a member of the 143rd Academy Class. He earned his commission in June of the following year and was assigned to the Van Wert Post.

Trooper Bowers served in the United States Air Force from 1990 to 1999.



TROOPER ANTHONY M. GUJARDO, WEST JEFFERSON POST / D6

Trooper Anthony M. Guajardo, West Jefferson Post, entered into retirement on December 29, after nine years with the Ohio State Highway Patrol. He joined the Patrol in September 2015 as a member of the 159th Academy Class. He earned his commission in March of the following year and was assigned to the Piqua Post. As a trooper, he also served at the Springfield Post.

Trooper Guajardo served in the United States Marine Corps from 2005 to 2015.



**TROOPER SCOTT B. MERSHMAN,
LIMA POST / D1**

Trooper Scott B. Mershman, Lima Post, retired on December 11, after 20 years with the Ohio State Highway Patrol. He joined the Patrol in December 2004 as a member of the 143rd Academy Class. He earned his commission in June of the following year and was assigned to the Van Wert Post. As a trooper, he also served at the Findlay Post and Findlay District Licensing and Commercial Standards. He earned the Criminal Patrol Award twice. In 2024, he earned the Master Trooper designation.

He currently serves in the Ohio Military Reserves. In 2022, he joined the State Defense Forces.



**TROOPER WILLIE E. RICHARDSON,
BOWLING GREEN POST / D1**

Trooper Willie E. Richardson, Bowling Green Post, retired on October 11, after 34 years with the Ohio State Highway Patrol. He joined the Patrol in May 1990 as a member of the 120th Academy Class. He earned his commission in March of the following year and was assigned to the Swanton Post. As a trooper, he also served at the Granville and Toledo posts, and Findlay District Commercial Enforcement. He earned the Criminal Patrol Award in 2007. He was named the District Commercial Motor Vehicle Inspector of Year in 2012 and Post Trooper of the Year in 2019. He earned the Colonel Robert M. Chiaramonte Humanitarian Award in 2018. In 2024, he earned the Master Trooper designation.



**TROOPER STEPHEN L. ROGERS,
MARIETTA POST / D7**

Trooper Stephen L. Rogers, Marietta Post, retired on November 1, after 20 years with the Ohio State Highway Patrol. He joined the Patrol in May 2004 as a member of the 142nd Academy Class. He earned his commission in November of the same year and was assigned to the Zanesville Post. He was named Post Trooper of the Year twice. In 2024, he earned the Master Trooper designation.

Trooper Rogers served in the United States Marine Corps from 2003 to 2006.



**TROOPER MICHAEL T. SHIMKO,
BATAVIA POST / D8**

Trooper Michael T. Shimko, Batavia Post, retired on October 10, after 24 years with the Ohio State Highway Patrol. He joined the Patrol in February 2000 as a member of the 135th Academy Class. He earned his commission in September 2000 and was assigned to the Batavia Post where he remained throughout his career. In 2024, he earned the Master Trooper designation.

Trooper Shimko earned an Associate of Applied Science degree in criminal justice from Kent State University in 1995.



POLICE OFFICER 2 ROBERT L. THOMPSON, SECURITY SERVICES - EXPO CENTER

Police Officer 2 Robert L. Thompson, Security Services – Expo Center, retired on December 16, after 31 years with the Ohio State Highway Patrol. He joined the Patrol in October 1993 as a Police Officer 1 and was

assigned to the Alum Creek Facility. In October 1994, he was promoted to Police Officer 2 and remained at the Alum Creek Facility. As a Police Officer 2, he also served at the Operations Hilltop Facility, the Alum Creek Facility, Governor's Residence Detail and Security Services.



MOTOR VEHICLE INSPECTOR RICHARD P. LAMP, CLEVELAND DISTRICT LICENSING AND COMMERCIAL STANDARDS

Motor Vehicle Inspector Richard P. Lamp, Cleveland District Licensing and Commercial Standards, retired on November 22, after 28 years with the Ohio State Highway Patrol. He

joined the Patrol in September 1996 as a Motor Vehicle Inspector assigned to the Cleveland District Enforcement Office. He also served as a Stationary Load Limit Inspector at the New Philadelphia Post and as a Motor Vehicle Inspector at the Warren District Headquarters.



STATIONARY LOAD LIMIT INSPECTOR RHONDA K. MORRIE, PIQUA DISTRICT LICENSING AND COMMERCIAL STANDARDS

Stationary Load Limit Inspector Rhonda K. Morrie, Piqua District Licensing and Commercial Standards, retired on December 31, after 28 years with the Ohio State Highway Patrol.

She joined the Patrol in January 1999 as a stationary load limit inspector assigned to the Piqua District Commercial Enforcement Unit. As a Stationary Load Limit Inspector, she also worked at the former Eaton Post. She also served as a Motor Vehicle Inspector.



MAINTENANCE REPAIR WORKER 2 JOHN E. PINCIN, ZANESVILLE POST / D7

Maintenance Repair Worker 2 John E. Pincin, Zanesville Post, retired on November 1, after nine years with the Ohio State Highway Patrol. He joined the Patrol in March 2015 as a Maintenance Repair Worker 2 assigned to the Zanesville Post. He

also served as a Portable Load Limit Inspector assigned to Cambridge District Commercial Enforcement.



PORTABLE LOAD LIMIT INSPECTOR TIMOTHY R. RENO, BUCYRUS DISTRICT LICENSING AND COMMERCIAL STANDARDS

Portable Load Limit Inspector Timothy R. Reno, Bucyrus District Licensing and Commercial Standards, retired on October 31,

after 28 combined years with the Ohio State Highway Patrol. He joined the Patrol in September 1981 as a Stationary Load Limit Inspector assigned to scale house in Fremont and in Bowling Green for two years. He again joined the Patrol in November 1998 as a Stationary Load Limit Inspector assigned to Findlay District Commercial Enforcement. In 2006, he became a Portable Load Limit Inspector in the Bucyrus District.



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER 1 TONJA M. SMITH, OFFICE OF FINANCE AND LOGISTICS/TAILOR SHOP

Administrative Officer 1 Tonja M. Smith, Office of Finance and Logistics/Tailor Shop, retired on October 31, after 32 years of combined service with the state of Ohio and the Ohio State Highway

Patrol. She joined the Patrol in December 1994 as a Clerk 3 in the Stockroom. In 1996, she became an Inventory Control Specialist 2 and remained in the Stockroom. As an Inventory Control Specialist 2, she also worked in the Tailor Shop. In 2006, she became an Administrative Assistant 1 in Logistic Services Stockroom/Tailor Shop. In 2011, she was promoted to Program Administrator 1 and continued to serve in the Tailor Shop. In 2017, she was promoted to Administrative Officer 1 and remained in the Tailor Shop.

Administrative Officer 1 Smith served in the United States Army from 1977 to 1979.



DISPATCHER DOUGLAS W. WEBB, SPRINGFIELD POST / D5

Dispatcher Douglas W. Webb, Springfield Post, retired on October 25, after 21 years with the Ohio State Highway Patrol. He joined the Patrol in April 2003 as a Dispatcher assigned to the Marysville Post. He earned Post Dispatcher of the Year

four times. In 2020, he earned District Dispatcher of the Year. In 2022, he earned the Ace Award for excellence in auto larceny enforcement. He also earned a Gold Star Award in 2024.

Season of Sharing



On December 21, Lieutenant Steven P. Daugherty, Santa, Dispatcher Cassandra Kiger and Trooper Kyle Ratcliff participated in a Season of Sharing event at the Logan Walmart, organized by the Logan Police Department. More than \$60,000 in donations were raised. Approximately, 400 local children were fortunate enough to receive toys and clothing from the Logan Walmart.



On December 24, Jackson District personnel, including Trooper Russell L. Landrum (pictured), made Christmas a little merrier for 17 families and 38 kids in Vinton County. Each family received everything needed to make a big Christmas dinner and presents for all their children. Santa and the Grinch helped with all the deliveries. The names of the families were provided through the Jackson-Vinton Community Action Head Start Program.

OHIO INVESTIGATIVE UNIT BECOMES STAND-ALONE DIVISION

On October 30, Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) Director Andy Wilson announced that the Ohio Investigative Unit (OIU) was moving to become a stand-alone division within ODPS.



In early November, Jamie Patton began as OIU's new Executive Director. Patton served as Union County Sheriff from 2011 through 2024. OIU Senior Enforcement Commander Erik Lockhart assumed the role as OIU assistant director.

After integrating OIU into the Patrol's Office of Criminal Investigations in 2013, agents began conducting traceback investigations that focused on finding the source of where alcohol was obtained in violation of the law after a serious crash or fatality. Agents were notified as soon as possible by troopers or local law enforcement across Ohio after they had determined that alcohol was involved in a fatality. This enabled agents to respond to a scene and collect evidence as an investigation began to trace back the source of alcohol.

OIU agents have also distinguished themselves for investigating and enforcing Ohio's laws relating to the liquor control act, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) fraud, and tobacco, as well as criminal activity in or around liquor permit locations and illegal establishments.

While OIU will remain a key partner with the Patrol, on behalf of Colonel Charles A. Jones, Patrol superintendent, the Division thanks all current OIU personnel and retirees for their collaboration and partnership since 2013 in making Ohio communities safer.

continued from page 14

Honor Guard

The Patrol's Honor Guard, overseen by the RTU, plays a vital role in a variety of events, including memorial services, law enforcement funerals, official ceremonies and special events. Their most significant annual event is the Division's Memorial Ceremony held each May, which remembers and honors the Patrol's fallen.

Established on March 18, 1966, under Colonel Robert M. Chiaramonte as the, "Academy Color Guard," Honor Guard members uphold the Patrol's traditions and provides crucial support to families and communities during somber events.

The Honor Guard also represents the Patrol at numerous high-profile occasions such as professional sporting events across the state.



Left: Members of the original Guard, Sergeant Ted Gentry, Corporal Dave Harper, Corporal Charles Robinson and Patrolman Rollie Oatley.

Below: Sergeant Kamal Z. Nelson, Trooper Justin R. Adleta, Trooper Thomas P. Middendorf, Trooper Holly M. Chesnick and Sergeant Anthony S. Fox of the Honor Guard present the colors at a Cincinnati Bengals home game.



VTFU TROOPERS HONORED BY OHIO INSURANCE INSTITUTE



Cleveland VTFU Trooper Jim Donohue, Cleveland VTFU Sergeant Mike Russell, Ohio BMV Investigator Michelle Ruminski, Warren VTFU Trooper Brian DePizzo, and GHQ VTFU Trooper Grady Coblentz.

Troopers from the Vehicle Theft and Fraud Unit were recently recognized by the Ohio Insurance Institute for their outstanding work to arrest four suspects in a major vehicle theft operation. The suspects were charged with 56 criminal offenses, and 11 stolen vehicles worth \$197,000 were recovered. In total, 197 stolen vehicles valued at over \$3 million have been recovered over the past two years.

LIEUTENANT SCHACK GRADUATES FROM FBINA



Toledo Lieutenant Rustun K. Schack graduated from the FBI National Academy on December 12, after completing 11 weeks of advanced communication, leadership and fitness training.

POST-PATROL PROFESSIONS

Heidi A. Ramsey, Instructor, Leadership Education Unit, FBI National Academy

When Heidi Ramsey retired from the Ohio State Highway Patrol as a staff lieutenant in 2018, she knew one thing for sure: her career as a law enforcement instructor wasn't over. After 23 years with the Patrol, where she held various operational and administrative roles, served in multiple assignments at the Training Academy, and helped create leadership training programs like SIGNAL and the Ohio ASSIST seminar for first responders, she was primed for new challenges.

Today, Ramsey serves as an instructor with the FBI National Academy, teaching a 10-week leadership course to law enforcement executives around the world.



Her journey is a testament to the power of taking risks, betting on yourself and the value of transferable skills.

For officers nearing retirement, Ramsey's story offers valuable advice on navigating the next chapter of their careers.

"A lot of us think that after we leave, we're only suited for certain jobs because that's all we've known," Ramsey explained. "But the truth is, everything you've done as a trooper—whether it's decision-making, leadership or crisis management—prepares you for so much more."

One of her key messages is to embrace change. In retiring two years early from the Patrol to pursue a teaching career at the FBI National Academy, she faced the challenges of leaving behind a job that she knew and was comfortable with, selling her house and moving to Virginia to be a contractor.

"It was a huge step, but I was ready to prove to myself that I could succeed on my own," Ramsey said. "I probably would have been successful if I had stayed in Ohio and with the Patrol, but I was ready to try something else. Betting on myself was the best decision I made."

This advice to trust in one's own abilities is something she applies every day as an instructor at the FBI National Academy. Her courses focus on topics like managing at-risk employees and handling internal leadership crises—issues that, while tough to discuss, are critical in law enforcement.

"We don't want to talk about the struggles officers face, but it's essential that we do," Ramsey said. "My own journey, including struggles with stress and wellness, has helped me connect with officers who may be facing similar challenges."

Ramsey also emphasizes the importance of teaching and mentorship. During her time in the Patrol, she served as an instructor for cadets and staff, which helped set the stage for her current role at the FBI National Academy.

"Teaching allows you to share your experiences and make a lasting impact," Ramsey said. "The relationships you build in those classrooms are priceless and can open unexpected doors."

To future retirees, Ramsey offers this advice: "Take risks, trust in your skills, and don't be afraid to step outside your comfort zone. If you keep moving forward, you'll find that life after the Patrol can be just as rewarding as your time in uniform."

HIGHWAY HIGHLIGHTS

Comments received via social media.

"Grateful for the partnership we have between Cleveland Police and OSHP to keep our streets safe and secure." – Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb on X

"We had a special visit from the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) during our ESL class at HOLA Ohio! The officers shared important traffic rules and created a fun and engaging atmosphere where our students practiced real-life scenarios, such as what to do during a traffic stop . . . Thank you to Lt. Larry Jones from OSHP, our volunteer tutors, and the HOLA team for making this event a success!" – HOLA Ohio on Facebook

"A huge Thank You to State Highway (Trooper) Bruce Palmer & the Ohio State Highway Patrol for the gift bags for our Seniors last home game!!" – East Palestine Football on X



Troopers work detail at the OSU vs. Nebraska game on October 26. The Buckeyes won the game 21-17.

State of the Patrol

This spring, Colonel Charles A. Jones will deliver the third annual State of the Patrol address, which provides the opportunity to highlight significant accomplishments and discuss future strategic Division goals.

SAVE THE DATE – MARCH 28, 2025



Trooper Jacob Lawrence and K-9 Darius participate in a criminal patrol statewide training with the Special Response Team using The Rook.



(Top photo) Staff Lieutenant Nathan E. Dennis, Operations, leads a multi-agency training collaboration with Mobile Field Force, which included Franklin County Sheriff's Office and many others.



Patrol personnel join children from the Columbus area to shop together during the Season of Sharing.



Trooper Tyranda A. Franklin participates in the Season of Sharing with a child from the community.



Sherika T. Williams, Recruitment and Diversity, participates in the Season of Sharing with children from the community.



Retirees and senior staff gather for a group photo at the former senior staff luncheon. Back row: Lieutenant Colonel Kevin D. Teaford, Major David R. Brown, Lieutenant Colonel Joshua M. Swindell, Lieutenant Colonel Charles J. Linek, Major Michael D. Kemmer, Major Matthew L. Them, Major Jacob D. Pyles, Major Anne R. Ralston, Retired Major B. Gene Smith, Retired Colonel Richard S. Fambro, Retired Major Robert W. Booker, Retired Major Fred G. Goldstein. Middle row: Retired Lieutenant Colonel Arthur A. Reitz, Retired Major Donald G. Goodman, Retired Major Robert D. Myers, Retired Lieutenant Colonel Robbie K. Hartsell, Retired Lieutenant Colonel Michael R. Everhart, Retired Major Darryl L. Anderson, Retired Major J.P. Allen, Retired Major Gary Allen, Retired Major Stephen A. Friday, Retired Lieutenant Colonel Marla K. Gaskill. Front row: Retired Major Robin R. Schmutz, Retired Lieutenant Colonel William Costas, Retired Major Brigitte E. Charles, Retired Major Lisa J. Taylor, Colonel Charles A. Jones, Retired Colonel Kenneth L. Morckel, Retired Lieutenant Colonel Sheldon W. Senek, Retired Lieutenant Colonel Michael D. Black.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER



Department of
Public Safety



Men and women of the Ohio State Highway Patrol,

On a weekly basis, I hear stories and read reports where members of this amazing team save the lives of citizens across the state. There are literally people alive today, who would have otherwise been dead, but for the actions of the men and women of the Ohio State Highway Patrol. My words in this article will never truly be enough to thank you for what you do every day to keep our families, our friends and our community safe.

As we look forward to 2025, I encourage you to be vigilant and proactive. Be intentional about taking care of your physical, your mental and your emotional well-being. Challenge yourself every day to be better than you were yesterday. Frequently do hard things, and attack those hard things from a growth mindset perspective. When you apply a growth mindset perspective to your life, you never lose. You will either succeed, or you will learn to be better.

Throughout this coming year, I encourage you to always reflect on why you joined this great agency and the true sense of pride you felt when you graduated from the Academy. Our ability to positively influence the world around us through our profession is actually very brief. Let's seize the moment and use every day to make our state a better place to live, work and play.

LET'S GO!!!

Andy Wilson

Director

Finding Your Meaning:

As another year closes and a new one begins, reflection takes place and resolutions are made. It is easy as a year passes to lose focus of our purpose, derailed by moments of suffering, feeling overwhelmed by commitments and/or responsibilities, or losing track of time that has eluded us due to the daily "things" in our lives. A new year gives us a point to reset and find our meaning once again. It is precisely in these times that Viktor Frankl's words resonate with such profound power: "When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves."

Frankl, a Holocaust survivor and renowned psychiatrist, discovered that even in dire circumstances, we have the ability to choose our response. He argued that while we cannot always control the events that befall us, we can find meaning and choose our direction. This insight became the cornerstone of his philosophy.

Frankl reminds us that we possess an inner strength and resilience that can be transformed into a purpose that propels us forward. By shifting our perspective, we can find hope where none seems apparent. We have the power to shape our experience, to find meaning, and ultimately, to rise above. Let us embrace the current opportunity to refocus with faith, courage and conviction, so our lives can hold deeper meaning—no matter the circumstances, and continue to serve with a purpose.

Blessings,
Reverend Phil Hurlbert

State Chaplain

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER





The Lighthouse

Mental Health Resources for Your Voyage Through Life's Challenges

The Growing Role of Therapy Dogs in Law Enforcement: A Look at the Ohio State Highway Patrol's Program

In the high-stress world of law enforcement, officers regularly face emotionally intense and physically demanding situations. Support staff also feel the impact of these events vicariously, either during or after the event. The mental toll of these challenges is often underestimated, yet the importance of addressing the emotional well-being of law enforcement personnel cannot be overstated. This is where therapy dog programs, such as the one at the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP), are making a significant difference. By providing emotional support and promoting mental wellness, therapy dogs like the OSHP's Hope, have become invaluable resources for agencies across Ohio.

Hope, a one-year-old English Labrador therapy dog, is a fully-certified therapy dog having completed her certification with the Alliance of Therapy Dogs in December. She is also certified through the Franklin County Sheriff's Office First Responder's Therapy Dog Program, and has achieved multiple milestones, including the American Kennel Club (AKC) S.T.A.R. Puppy and Canine Good Citizen certifications. Her ongoing training, which includes beginner, fundamentals and advanced obedience courses with an AKC-certified trainer, ensures she is well-prepared to provide the comfort and support employees need.

Hope's primary role is to offer emotional support to law enforcement personnel, particularly following critical incidents. She works alongside Trooper Paul E. Appleman, helping to open conversations surrounding mental health. Their work is focused on providing resources for those who may be struggling with stress, anxiety or trauma. This proactive approach encourages officers to seek help for themselves or their peers, reducing the stigma that often surrounds mental health issues in law enforcement.

Since her introduction earlier this year, Hope's presence has been particularly impactful during debriefings following traumatic events. For example, after a rescue operation in Medina County involving an abducted child, Hope visited with employees involved in the case, offering comfort during a time of heightened stress.

Her ability to provide emotional relief outside of critical incidents is equally important. It allows officers to unwind and recharge in the face of the daily toil of law enforcement and gives support staff an outlet to discuss the vicarious trauma they have experienced.

In addition to her work with law enforcement personnel, Hope has provided support to others. Earlier in the year, when an Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) worker was tragically killed, Hope was there to assist during a debrief. By providing comfort to ODOT employees processing their grief, Hope helped to ease the emotional burden of those affected by the loss.

Beyond her critical work with OSHP personnel and safety partners, Hope also plays an important role in community outreach. At public events across the state, she has become a beloved "attraction" that draws people in with her calm demeanor. These interactions offer Trooper Appleman the opportunity to educate the public about mental wellness, trauma and the importance of seeking help. Hope's ability to connect with people of all ages helps bridge the gap between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

Research shows that therapy dogs play a crucial role in reducing stress and promoting mental health in first responders. Studies have found that spending just 15 minutes interacting with a therapy dog can significantly lower cortisol levels, reducing stress and anxiety. For officers exposed to high-pressure situations on a daily basis, this simple interaction can make a noticeable difference in their well-being. Therapy dogs also provide emotional support, reduce anxiety and help officers build resilience, allowing them to recover from the emotional challenges of their work.

Additional information and research about therapy dog programs, including their connection to promoting mental health in the law enforcement profession, can be found in the October 2024 article Paws That Help: How Therapy Dogs Improve Police Officer Wellness on the SoundThinking website. *Scan the QR code to read.*

For OSHP employees, this article was also added to the Mental Health & Wellness site on the internal Gateway.

Programs like the OSHP's therapy dog initiative highlight the growing recognition of the need to support the mental health of law enforcement personnel. As Hope continues her training and certifications, she will remain an essential part of this effort, providing comfort, reducing stress and helping officers navigate the emotional complexities of their demanding profession. In a field where the mental health of first responders is critical to long-term success, therapy dogs like Hope are proving to be a vital tool for improving wellness and building resilience.

NEED HELP? If you or someone you know is in crisis, call or text 988, or chat [988Lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org) for 24/7, confidential support.

OSHP employees can visit the link to "Mental Health & Wellness" under The Gateway.



988
SUICIDE
& CRISIS
LIFELINE



OHIO STATE HIGHWAY PATROL
P.O. BOX 182074
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43218-2074

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
COLUMBUS,
OHIO
PERMIT NO. 3546

CONTRIBUTORS:

The *Flying Wheel* is published by the Ohio State Highway Patrol in the interest of the entire Patrol family.

Mike DeWine – Governor, State of Ohio

Andy Wilson – Director, ODPS

Colonel Charles A. Jones – Superintendent, OSHP

S/Lt Tiffiany L. Meeks – tlmeeks@dps.ohio.gov – Editor

Colleen E. O'Shea, Shane N. Flanigan – Photography

PIO1 Mariah McVeigh – Graphic Design

Reporters: Lt. J. Ray Santiago, Sgt. Ryan E. Purpura, Sgt. Bridget A. Matt, Sgt. Tyler S. Ross, Sgt. Eric J. Devers, PIO1 Julie L. Hinds, PIO2 Julie A. Akers, PIO2 Mara E. Diaz, PIO1 Jonah M. Young, PIO1 Logan P. Nowlin, PIS Bradley C. Shaw, Project Manager 2 Jeffrey W. Grayson, Intern Emily C. Parrett, Retired Captain Rob Jackson, HPRS Executive Director Carl Roark and Chaplain Phil Hurlbert

Special thanks go to the field and section units across the state who submitted photos and/or content.

