

INFORMER

Volume 82

2024—First Quarter

NSP Informer Staff

• Editors:

Mikayla Hall
Cody Thomas

• Contributors:

Captain Miller
Captain Frerichs
Captain Hagen
Captain Denton
Captain Caradori
Captain Riedel
Captain Schmidt
Becky Bliven
Janet Van Lengen
Chris Neukirch

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2024 Comes in With a Winter Blast

The first few months of 2024 were highlighted as usual by winter weather, but January brought challenging historic winter storms across the state of Nebraska, keeping our troopers busy.

In the matter of less than a week, many areas experienced two storms that dropped several inches of snow. The Columbus area received over 20 inches of snow during that time. These storms were coupled with dangerous cold across the entire state, with air temperature in the -20 degree range.

Troopers responded to 1,500 weather-related incidents during the week of January 7th.

Including 1,456 motorist assists and 81 crashes. The snow and ice made driving hazardous, with many vehicles sliding off roads or getting stuck in drifts.

In addition to hundreds of responses, NSP also collaborated with the Nebraska Department of Transportation and the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency to promote public safety through media and social media.

We're thankful for the dedication of our troopers. Despite the difficult conditions, everyone worked tirelessly to ensure the safety of all Nebraskans, providing assistance to those in need and working to raise awareness for safer travel.

Collaboration with the Department of Transportation was crucial in keeping roads passable. Plows and salt trucks were deployed around the clock to clear snow and ice, allowing traffic to flow more freely.

Additionally, the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency coordinated their FSA Disaster Assistance Programs such as the Livestock Indemnity Program and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program. This support aided the farmers and ranchers affected by the extreme winter weather.

Thank you all for your dedication to our ongoing mission to keep Nebraska safe.



Around The State

Troop A

The Patrol Division has been off to a fast start in 2024. There has been a large increase in most every statistical area from last year. Specifically, in the area of DUI enforcement. 96 impaired drivers have been taken off the road in the first quarter of 2024. One shocking statistic coming out of all those DUI arrests is that 5 of those impaired drivers had young children in the vehicle ranging in age from 2 - 7 years old. Everyone working the road has shown a dedication to working relentlessly toward ensuring public safety.

Trp. Dave Nelson, a longtime member of Troop A, "Trooper Dave" who you many have heard give the traffic reports for Husker home football games has retired. We are now excited to announce our very own Sgt. Estwick will be taking over that role. We look forward to hearing him on the radio this fall.

Troop A ISO has seen some changes over the last few months. Veteran investigators Todd Wiley, Paul Smoot and

Anthony Sattlefield all retired as well as Office Specialist Susan Chesnut. We are pleased to welcome our new additions Investigator Ryan Henrichs and Office Specialist Miranda Cornett. Investigator Joyce also welcomed a new addition to her family with the birth of her first child in January.

The Criminal Division has been busy during the first quarter with SOR compliance checks in Douglas County. The checks involved verifying Lifetime Registrants in Douglas County. They also handled an in-custody death investigation in Dodge County. The Liquor Division handled 43 applications, conducted 48 premise inspections and worked two joint operations with the Patrol Division and PSD resulting in the issuance of 10 MIP citations.



This quarter, CIU seized 19 kilos of meth, 106 kilos of marijuana, 2100 fentanyl pills and 8 firearms. Great teamwork was exhibited in cases involving multiple troop areas and allied agencies, leading to arrests in Troops B, C, and H.

Investigator Kroenke and the Overdose Task Force had a significant impact in the Omaha metro area. Overall overdose/poisoning deaths in Omaha were down nearly 40% from 2022. Although the opioid epidemic is still very much a problem, the OD Task Force is doing its part to dismantle drug trafficking organizations, educate the public, and preserve life in Troop A.

Troop B

In January, Sgt. Kildare, along with Troopers Johnson, Frerichs, and Grassmyer, assisted Madison PD with a sexual assault that occurred over one year ago. When confronted with police having been called, the subject went into the bathroom, barricaded themselves, and slit his throat. Madison County negotiated the subject back out of the bathroom, Trp. Grassmyer assisted with life-saving measures, and the subject was transported to Faith Regional.

In February, Trp. Lingren stopped a vehicle and observed two handguns under the front

driver's seat along with a large, fixed-blade knife. The driver stated he was going to beat up the guy his wife was cheating on him with. Trp. Lingren engaged the subject in consensual conversation after the stop and gained consent to search the vehicle. Trp. Lingren also had a PC because the driver stated he had a marijuana pipe in the center console. The search revealed two BB guns, two large, fixed-blade knives, THC wax, paraphernalia, and methamphetamine. Further charges are pending due to his wife having a protection order and his presence at her work.

Also, in February, Troop B Patrol, Carrier, and Investigative Services divisions came together to investigate a double homicide in Bloomfield, Nebraska. Great work by all these Divisions, including working with our local Allied Agencies and County Attorney.

In March, Trp. Bestenlehner, Grassmyer, Tighe, and Sgt. Pfeifer were called for the MIP party, and a female who was suicidal was locked in the bathroom. The female made statements of self-harm and wanting to die. Her BAC was .204. She was EPC'd and left at Norfolk Faith Regional

Troop B Continued

for observation due to her high BAC.

Investigator Ron Kosiba's last day with NSP was March 8th after 33 years of service to the State of Nebraska. Ron had a great turnout at his retirement celebration on March 23rd, with many in attendance. Ron's service

and dedication were second to none, and his positive influence will carry on with the next generations of Troopers.

March 1st, Troop B Captain Dain Hicks transferred to lead NSP's Special Operation Division. Captain Paul Hagen was selected as the next Troop

B Commander and began those duties on March 24th.

Troop C



This past quarter has been a winter weather challenge for not only Troop C, but for the state. We participated in 2 interstate 80 closures at Kearney spanning over a few days. These closures, while necessary for public safety, put us to the test. Diverting traffic, CMV's in particular, puts a lot of strain on local communities and those troopers that are helping during the closures. Several other winter storms caused chaos in our area due to extreme cold, snow fall, blowing snow, ice and black ice conditions on the roadways. Troop C adapted to those conditions and implemented 24 hour coverage for many days to help keep those traveling safe. Our Troopers, allied agencies and NDOT made the best out of those trying circumstances.

Despite the winter weather, Troopers made several interdiction arrests. Collectively 33.2 pounds of methamphetamine, 20 pounds of cocaine, 100.1 pounds of marijuana and 3 pounds of THC wax were seized. During one of those seizures, in addition to the suspect vehicle, a decoy vehicle was also used and stopped. It is believed the original vehicle containing the arrested subject made a fake 911 call of a person having a heart attack to divert Troopers attention away from himself during the traffic stop. Spoiler alert, it did not work. This stop also highlighted a new tool to NSP, the LPR Vigilant system to help the trooper debunk the suspects travel history story as well as identifying the decoy vehicle.

Additionally, Troopers from the K-9 and Patrol divisions received information from the Oklahoma US Marshals Service

to locate and apprehend an Oklahoma man that fled the day prior to a plea deal sentencing, where he was facing 30 years for child molestation.

Given all the challenges this past quarter, Troopers still managed to get out with their communities and received some appreciation. Trooper Cassidy took time to visit with local Girl Scouts and bought some cookies.

Troop C Investigative Services Criminal Division has been actively working on the casework from the two homicides that occurred in Troop C near the end of 2023. They also worked on developing a case and making two arrests on a case referred to NSP from Hastings PD on the abuse of a vulnerable adult and theft of nearly \$100,000. The Drug Division continues to work case investigations in the Troop Area and with our partners in the TRIDENT Task Force.



Troop D

But what happened after the initial contact? Our 1st quarter has been an array of criminal activity, response to weather events, and outreach.

In Traffic, we are seeking out active warrants to complement our road patrol activity. Each week our analyst focuses on two serious warrants and sends them out to the field. The Troopers apply the intel and act on the warrants before the end of the week. Each week is a sprint and has made for some good competition. During one sprint, our leads pointed us to call up Troop A for an assist. Our subject was in their area, and we are appreciative for the arrest made. We have been increasing the frequency of identifying DUI's in the first quarter between 2022-24. Our crash rates lowered from 84 to 57 as well.

The positive arrests for DUI and decrease in crashes may be attributed to the increase in enforcement activity. Enforcement activity has increased from 3,844 (2022) to 5,780 (2023). This is all on top of the severe winter weather storms. ISO made a significant splash in January with a drug conspiracy case that was 3½ years old. 19 arrests were made on January 23rd with assistance from various outside agencies. During the case, approximately 55 arrests. The long-term focus of this team was tested as new members of the Task Force were spun up on the status of the case while others retired or transferred out of the area. There is a lot that can happen in 3½ years.

We have continued our recruiting efforts with ride-alongs. Outreach in our schools and YMCA's has been frequent and increasing with

the spring weather upon us. Our intern program observed a win in the current hiring process with their application being submitted. Our travels in recruiting have taken us out of state to Fort Hays, Kansas. While there, we were invited to Garden City for their Career Fair.

In closing, I would like to answer my first question. The beginning of an investigation is what happened after the initial contact. Impaired drivers, rolling domestic violence calls, drug interdiction loads, minors in possession, or identifying drivers who were overdue and had dementia. There are so many stories that come from our contacts, and we look forward to what the day or night may bring us in the second quarter.

Troop E

Trp. Marco Vera Chavez #171 from Camp 68 started his FTO process in January. He has almost completed the FTO process and is a great addition to the Troop E team.

In March, the Patrol and ISO did a great job on an investigation that led to the arrest of a subject for Felony possession of a controlled substance and possession of stolen property from a local hospital. The arrest aided in keeping the Troop E office secure from that subject accessing the building.

Troop E and Trp. Flick continue to do a great job recruiting. Trp. Flick has visited many colleges and other

businesses working on recruiting future troopers for our area and the State of Nebraska. He is always busy traveling the western half of the state looking for new applicants.



Troop H

The Troop H Uniform Patrol Division proudly serves 14 counties in Southeast Nebraska. Troop H began 2024 with arctic temperatures reaching down into the negative 20 degree range. Troopers remained steadfast in their commitment to motorist on the interstate and the many roadways in Troop H. During the 1st quarter of 2024, Troopers removed 70 motorists off the streets for DUI, along with 135 citations for drug and alcohol violations. Additionally, they made 33 felony arrests for various law violations.

In January, much of the state was hit with a strong winter storm that included arctic temperatures. Troop H was extremely busy with heavy amounts of snow. Both Saunders and Butler Counties were impacted greatly, especially on Highway 92 with motorists needing to be rescued during whiteout conditions. Drifting snow made the rescues very difficult. Both NSP, NDOT and local Fire Departments

teamed up to reach all the stranded motorists. This could not have been accomplished without the outstanding efforts of our NSP Communications Division who managed the NSP Highway Helpline and dispatched the Troopers to the motorists.

On January 31, Troopers responded to assist the Seward County Sheriff's Office and safely resolved a standoff in Utica. Troopers, including NSP Crisis Negotiators, responded to Utica to assist. The NSP SWAT Team was also activated. After multiple hours of negotiations, the woman allowed the child to leave the home. The child was safely taken into protective custody, but the woman again barricaded herself in a room inside the residence. A short time later, at approximately 8:30 p.m., the NSP SWAT team made entry into the room and successfully took the subject into custody. There were no injuries to the woman or the child during this incident.

In March, the NSAA State Basketball tournaments were held again in Lincoln. Troop H Troopers remained very busy on the roadways making sure fans were able to get to the games safely. Troopers, combined with the Air Support Division were able to keep traffic flow smooth throughout both tournaments. Troop H welcomed 3 new Troopers to the family. Troopers Elizabeth Forbes #115 (Duty Station Nebraska City), Braden Heidbrink #155 (Duty Station Beatrice) and Spencer Kort #122 (Duty Station Beatrice). All of them are currently in the Field Training program and will be hitting the roadways on their own very soon. In addition, Troop H was happy to get Trp. Griffin Vater #443 back safe and sound from his military deployment!

Carrier Enforcement

Sgt. Brad Wagner #472 worked with the Office of Radiological Security and secured equipment valued at well over \$1,000,000 to be used to assist the Patrol with its ever growing mission.

This year we welcomed two new members to the Carrier Family, Cory Comstock and Donny Tran shown with Brenda Coufal, Ron Adams and Sandy Spooner. These folks provide the support and intelligence that assist in our sworn being able to be as successful as they are.

Several members of the Team traveled the country to attend

and present at various seminars and trainings. It is truly amazing how nationally recognized the Nebraska State Patrol Carrier Division is.



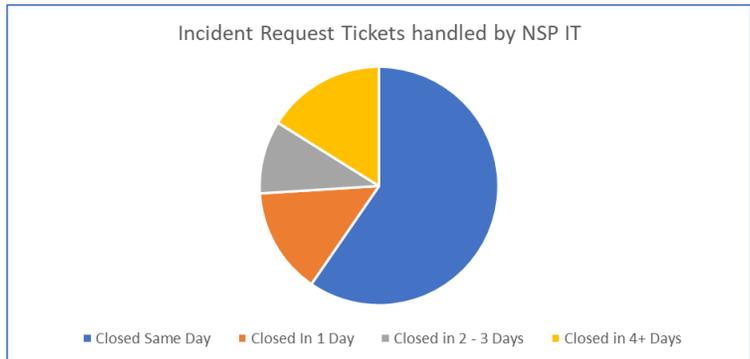
Featured Divisions: Information Technology Division and Dispatch Division

Information Technology (IT) Division

The NSP Information Technology Division has been very busy innovating over the last year and completed several important projects across the Agency. The Service Portal was reorganized and a new Landing Page for NSP was created for ease of use. A link was added to the Launch Pad

for ease in locating the Landing Page. The IT Division handled 2,747 tickets in 2024 and closed over 75% of them within one day. Using the Service Portal is the most efficient way to have an issue resolved or make an IT request.

The TraCS/MACH/Niche team has been busy with forms and reporting improvements. As of March 2024, there are 157 Partner Agencies using TraCS for the NDOT Crash Form and 119 of those are also using the e-Citations module. There are 9 agencies are using the TraCS RMS module. There are 144 allied partner agencies using MACH and of those, 87 agencies are using the MACH BOT for message switch queries.



All tallied, there are over 4,900 users of TraCS and MACH across Nebraska.

The Fusion Center IT Team has continued to make improvements in NITE, which launched in 2022, including added features to the searching. In the last month, IT has added the Request for Service Module into NITE and have received a lot of positive feedback on the RFS.

The General Development and the Business Analyst Teams has been working hard to deliver the RITS Rewrite for CID. The RITS Rewrite launched on April 8, 2024, and created several key efficiencies for CID.

Over the last year, the IT Division has assisted several NSP Divisions by adding additional inventory items and reports in the Quartermaster application. There are plans to expand the use of Quartermaster with future modules.

Tyler Thompson, IT Supervisor, completed the State Government Leadership Certificate in 2024. Crystal Tinajera Reynolds, IT Supervisor, and Tyler Ford, Business Analyst Supervisor, are also working toward this accomplishment. Christian Robb, IT Developer for the Fusion Center, joined the team in 2023. Please welcome Christian to NSP.

NSP Landing Page

GENERAL SUPPORT		NSP SPECIFIC APPLICATIONS	
General Issue	Software Installs	POLAR	Reports/Stats
Something You Already Have Is Broken	Camera Access	Filebound	Kronos
Hardware/Peripheral Requests	Communication Devices	NITE	NICHE/NRAMS
		SharePoint	TraCS/MACH
		RITS/PCH	Vehicle/Radio/GETAC
NSP USER ACCESS		NSP AFIS/CLEIN SUPPORT	
New/Separation Employee	Employee Transfers	AFIS	CLEIN
Folder Permissions	Password Changes		
NSP AFTER HOURS INCIDENT			
Report an incident during non-business hours. Non-business hours include weekends, holidays, and any time outside of 0800 - 1700 Central Time Monday - Friday. This ticket will be assigned to the OCIO Service Desk.			

Dispatch Division

Since the Communication Division's last update beginning of 2023, we have completed our VIPER phone project in both centers.

While it was a long process it was well worth it as there have already been a few instances of the phones going down in one of the centers and the calls seamlessly rolling over to the other center providing the redundancy that we were lacking but needed.

We are currently in the process of finishing up on an RFP for a new CAD system for the agency. We hope to have a vendor selected by the end of the year. CAD technology has greatly evolved over the years and this new system should provide us with advanced technology and functionality that will benefit not only dispatch, but many divisions within NSP.

Additionally, we just closed a dispatch job posting in each center. Once those positions are filled and complete the six month training period, then for the first time in a long time

both centers will be fully staffed. We are looking forward to that milestone to better serve our internal and external customers.

We look forward to celebrating our dedicated dispatchers during the week of April 14th- April 20th as we recognize National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.



Gov. Jim Pillen and NSP Recognizes Nebraska Native for Tackling Suspected Gunman at Kansas City Chiefs' Parade

Governor Jim Pillen and Colonel John Bolduc presented Nebraska native, Paul Contreras, with the Nebraska State Patrol Public Service Award. This commendation was given to recognize his actions during the Super Bowl parade in Kansas City on February 14th.

On Wednesday, February 14th, Contreras and his family were walking back to their vehicle when they heard what they and many believed were fireworks.

"Within 40 seconds or so comes this person—running as fast as they can. No sooner, here comes law enforcement everywhere chasing that person," Contreras said. "...At that moment, I really didn't know what was really taking place. It was just a not time to think, just action on my part and Trey's part, the other gentleman."

These actions led to Contreras being recognized in a ceremony held at the Warner Chamber in the Nebraska State Capitol.

The Nebraska State Patrol Service Award recognizes the citizens of Nebraska who demonstrate significant accomplishments in regards to public service.

"It's an incredible source of pride for all Nebraskans that you acted, and you're a Nebraskan. We're incredibly proud of you," Governor Pillen said. "The thing I love about Nebraska and the people of Nebraska is we answer the call to help each other no matter what the circumstances are. You don't have to know anybody, we just — we jump to it. You answered it beyond the call that many of us could never think of."

The Nebraska State Patrol motto "Pro Bono Publico" contains the Latin meaning "For the Good of the Public." It's the motto the NSP strives to put into action and encourages it's fellow citizens to uphold. Contreras's heroic actions during the Kansas City Chief's parade were for the good of the public.



Camp 69

Seventeen recruits started their journey to becoming a Nebraska State Trooper in January. The recruits come to NSP from several different backgrounds and 12 different communities.

As of May 1st, 13 recruits continue going strong at the NSP Training Academy. Graduation is set for June 14 at the State Capitol.

Here are the 13 Recruits of Camp 69:



Gavin Boutin	Ogallala	Tomas Margritz	Kearney
Ryan Clark	Kearney	Carissa Moore	Crete
Samuel Gustafson	Kearney	Bryce Smidt	Wayne
Ashley Jackson	Gering	Brian Smith	North Platte
Jordan Jones	Marienville, PA	Garrett Swantek	Gering
Samantha Ligenza	Lincoln	Seth Valverde	Lincoln
Sinai Mandungu	Lincoln		

New Mobile Command Post for North Platte

The Nebraska State Patrol was proud to unveil a new vehicle that will be utilized in several ways to keep Nebraska safe. The vehicle was donated to NSP by the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Radiological Security (ORS). The new mobile command post will be stationed in North Platte.

“This generous donation by our partners at the Department of Energy will benefit the people of Nebraska for years to come,” said Colonel John Bolduc, Superintendent of the Nebraska State Patrol. “This mobile outreach unit will help NSP spread potentially life-saving training related to radiological incidents. It will also be available to respond to

any number of critical situations across western Nebraska and serve as a mobile command post.”

The vehicle is one of two donated to NSP by ORS. The other vehicle, a mobile response trailer, will be based in Lincoln. Both are equipped to function as a mobile unit for a variety of purposes, from hosting training sessions to responding to a major disaster. The unit unveiled Thursday is equipped with full internet connectivity, several TV screens, and can seat approximately 10 people as a mobile office.

“Radiological situations can be extremely dangerous if responders aren’t prepared

appropriately,” said Sgt. Brad Wagner, NSP Coordinator to the Nebraska Hazardous Incident Team. “This partnership with ORS will help NSP share critical information with partner agencies about how to address a situation in which radiological material may be lost or stolen.”



New Hires

January 2024

- Miranda Cornett, Office Specialist-Investigative Services, Troop A—Omaha
- Ciara Hurley, Communications Specialist, Troop D—North Platte
- Shawna Riedel, Communications Specialist, Troop D—North Platte
- Emily Redmond, Communications Specialist, Lincoln
- Ashley Peters, Admin

- Tech—Criminal History Specialist—CID, Lincoln
- Mikayla Hall, Marketing/Communications Specialist II
- Brittany Lucas, Forensic Technician—AFIS, Lincoln

Specialist—HDQ Patrol Division, Lincoln

March 2024

- Madison Sladky, Forensic Scientist I-Chemistry, Lincoln
- Michael Wehling, Attorney III, Lincoln
- Theodore Bax, Security Guard, Lincoln
- Sabastian Peek, Security Guard, Lincoln

February 2024

- Emma Armstrong, Office Specialist—CID Front Desk , Lincoln
- David Burton, Security Guard, Lincoln
- Megan Howard, Office

Transfers

March 2024

- Bryce Lingren, Trooper-Patrol Division , Hartington to South Sioux City
- Nathan Knudson, Trooper-Patrol Division , Lincoln to Omaha
- Jamie Thompson, Trooper-CVE/CE to Patrol Division, Omaha
- William Fankhauser,

- Trooper-Patrol to Criminal Investigator, Wahoo to Lincoln
- Matthew Brown, Trooper-Patrol Division to Criminal Investigator, Scottsbluff
- Dain Hicks, Troop B Captain to Special Operations Captain, Norfolk to Lincoln

Retirements

March 2024

- Ron Kosiba, Investigator—Drug Division, Columbus



Separations

January 2024

- Bol Riek, Security Guard, Capitol Security—Lincoln
- Daniel Smith, Officer Candidate—Camp 69, Grand Island

February 2024

- Sara Hulac, Attorney III, Lincoln
- Paul Manestar, Security Communication Specialist Supervisor, Lincoln
- Kimberly Skala, Research Analyst II-CE, Lincoln
- Sherrie McLain, Office Specialist-Patrol Division, Omaha
- Katelyn Werkmeister,

Communications Specialist, North Platte

- Steven Johnson, Trooper—Aviation Division, Lincoln

March 2024

- Raul Clouse, Officer Candidate—Camp 69, Grand Island
- Abbegayle Dodds, Forensic Lab Supervisor, Lincoln
- Thomas Schlegal, Accountant I, Lincoln
- Rachel Andrew, Office Specialist—CID Front Desk, Lincoln
- David LaDuke, Officer

Candidate—Camp 69, Grand Island

Promotions

January 2024

- Alex Sinnett, Inv-Drug—Sidney to Sergeant-Patrol—Sidney
- Cory Halverson, CE Sergeant to CE Lieutenant, North Platte
- Emily Shupe, Office Specialist to AFIS Forensic Tech, CID—Lincoln

February 2024

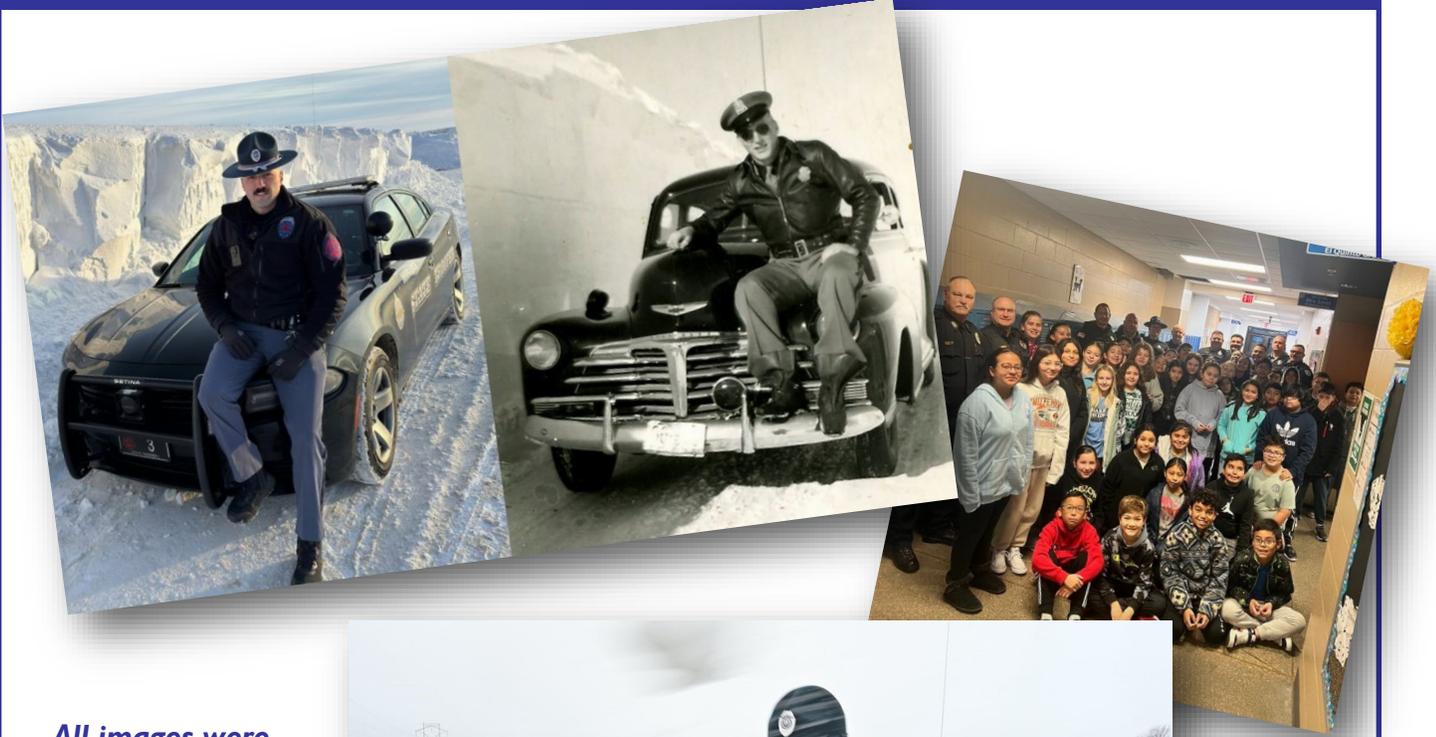
- Josie Svoboda, Forensic Tech to Forensic Scientist I, Lincoln
- Amy Douglas-Homolka, Forensic Tech to Records Analyst Supervisor—CID

March 2024

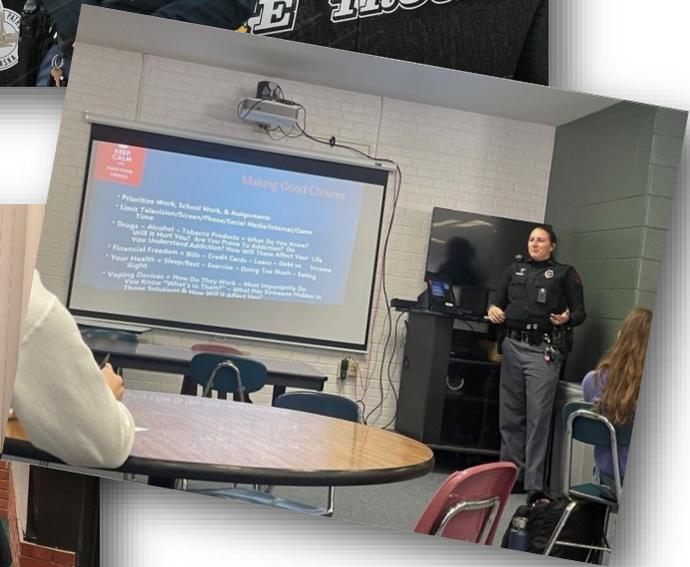
- Justin Brase, Trooper-Patrol

to Sergeant-TA, Hastings
to Grand Island



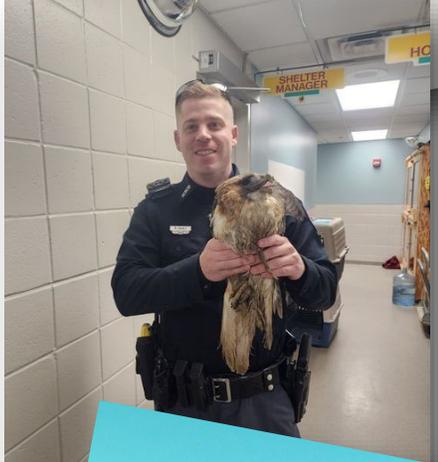


All images were taken by various NSP personnel and friends around the State during the first quarter of 2024!



Making Good Choices

- Prioritize Work, School Work, & Assignments
- Limit Television/Screen Time/Social Media/Internet/Games
- Drugs - Alcohol - Tobacco Products - "Legal" Do You Know? Your Uninformed Actions! They Can Affect Your Life
- Financial Freedom - Bills - Credit Cards - Loans - Make It - Manage Right
- Your Health - Sleep/Rest - Exercise - Doing Too Much - Eating Right
- Vaping Devices - How Do They Work - What Happens? Do Your Research - What Are the Risks? - What Are the Consequences? - What Are the Benefits? - What Are the Risks?







NEBRASKA STATE
PATROL

4600 Innovation Drive
Lincoln, NE 68521
PO Box 94907
Lincoln, NE 68509

Phone: 402-471-4545
<https://statepatrol.nebraska.gov/>

For further information about what it means to be a Trooper, visit
NebraskaTroopers.com



**In memory of those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice
while serving the State of Nebraska**

Loyal M. Zink (#43)

John T. Meistrell (#67)

Vernon C. Rolfs (#129)

Marvin L. Hansen (#98)

Duane F. Nichols (#133)

Raymond M. Koerber (#108)

George W. Amos Jr. (#9)

Michael D. Farber (#427)

Robert J. Chab (#221)

Donald Matejka (#192)

Mark P. Wagner (#168)

Jerry L. Smith (#373)



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