

# INFORMER

Volume 77

2022—Fourth Quarter

## NSP Informer Staff

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## NSP Sees Big Increase in Dangerous Drug Seizures

The Nebraska State Patrol saw a large increase in seizures of several different controlled substances during 2022. Those seizures and subsequent prosecutions required teamwork from many levels of NSP operations.

From the troopers and K9 handlers on the road locating the controlled substances, to the investigators taking the investigation the next step, to the evidence technicians properly handling the substances, to the scientists at the NSP Crime Lab testing the substances, these seizures and cases are truly a team operation.

In 2022, seizures of methamphetamine, cocaine, and fentanyl were all higher than recent years.

Meth—366 LBs

Cocaine—316 LBs

Fentanyl—66 LBs

Each of those are the highest since at least 2017, except for the (at the time) record largest seizure of fentanyl in the United States of 118 pounds by NSP in 2018.

“These investigations and seizures are critical for the safety of our Nebraska communities and for the potential destination communities for these drugs,” said Colonel John Bolduc. “These efforts are undoubtedly saving lives thanks to the incredible teamwork of our sworn and professional staff teammates.”

Many of the large drug seizures occurred during an operation that took place in August in conjunction with similar efforts in many other states. Operation Able Vanguard resulted in the seizure of over 250 pounds of cocaine, 180 pounds of methamphetamine, and 18 pounds of fentanyl in Nebraska.



With respect to fentanyl, the latest DEA estimates are that 6 out of every 10 fentanyl pills contain a potentially lethal dose.

The increase in seizures also comes following the creation of a collaborative effort between the Nebraska State Patrol, Nebraska Attorney General's Office, United States Attorney in Omaha, DEA—Omaha, and FBI—Omaha.

The Nebraska Drug Forum was launched in early 2022 and will continue in 2023 as an opportunity for NSP and partner agencies to share information with smaller agencies. The effort also works to gather information from smaller agencies and assist with the investigative process in similar cases.

As 2023 kicks into gear, NSP's efforts to remove dangerous drugs from the street will continue making an impact for the safety and security of all Nebraskans.



## Governor Ricketts, NSP Present Carnegie Hero Medal

In November, NSP had the privilege to honor a citizen hero with a prestigious award.

Frank Axiotes, of Elkhorn, helped save the lives of two people after he witnessed a vehicle crash on Interstate 80 in Lincoln in September of 2020. The vehicle caught on fire and both occupants were trapped. Frank rushed to help, using a pocket knife to break the glass and help extricate the young driver after already helping her brother out of the backseat. His heroic actions were honored with an NSP Life Saver Award last year, but NSP

also nominated Frank for a prestigious Carnegie Hero Medal.

Governor Ricketts, Colonel Bolduc, and Lt. Jason Stahl came together to present Frank with the Carnegie Hero Medal in front of his family and media members at the State Capitol in November. The family he helped save was able to attend



the NSP Life Saver Award presentation in 2021 and also sent their thanks and congratulations for this new honor.

## Leadership Awards

The Nebraska State Patrol is full of talented leaders throughout the agency. Each year, four leaders are selected from various categories for the Excellence in Leadership Award, as part of the Governor's State Employee's Recognition Program.

This year's honorees were invited to the Governor's mansion for a reception and to receive their award in late October.

### 2022 Excellence in Leadership Honorees

Civilian Supervisor—Kenneth Lonowski, Capitol Security

Runner-up—Nina Anderson-Trumble, Intelligence

Civilian Employee—Brenda Coufal, Carrier Enforcement

Runner-up—Amy Elwood, Troop D

Sworn Supervisor—Sgt. Matt Workman, PSD

Runner-up—Captain Jeff Roby, Troop C

Sworn Employee—Trooper Ryan Hayes, Troop D



## Camp 66

The most recent Nebraska State Patrol Basic Recruit Class finally gained their official "Trooper" title as they took the Oath of Office on December 16, 2022 in a ceremony held at the Nebraska State Capitol. That silver Trooper badge is what these 16 individuals have been striving for during their 22-week long training camp.

Every trial and tribulation thrown at Camp 66 was overcome as a team. They may have arrived as individuals and strangers to one another on day one, but they certainly did not leave that way. Over the course of 22 weeks, they grew to know and appreciate what each individual brings to the table. They learned to trust, challenge, and support one another which ultimately lead to them exiting camp as brothers and sisters in blue.

At the graduation ceremony, Recruit Zachariah Sporer addressed the crowd on behalf of him and his campmates with the class motto that has been telling of their time together "Service over Self."

Senior Command Staff were able to present a few awards for outstanding performance at the graduation ceremony as well. Five different people recipients of these awards in this camp!

Mark Fluckey received the R.J. Buchholz Physical Fitness Award for showing the greatest improvement in physical fitness over the course of his time at camp.

The D.R. Shearer Marksmanship Award was awarded to Zachary Matthews for his incredible range performance. He received the highest score in

shooting assessments.

For his incredible commitment to demonstrating and embracing the NSP core values, Zachariah Sporer received the Capt. Mark Williams Core Values Achievement Award.

Steven Johnson was given the O.H. Witt Academic Achievement Award for having the highest grade point average throughout camp.

Last but certainly not least, Steven Johnson was awarded the Superintendent's Leadership Award. He was chosen by his fellow campmates as the one who displayed outstanding, consistent leadership throughout all facets of their time together.

Although the dust may be settling on their time at camp, these new Troopers are just beginning their professional journey. Each one will begin their first assignment soon and will continue growing into the best Trooper he/she can be.

Congratulations to Camp 66! The Nebraska State Patrol proudly welcomes you to the team and looks forward to watching you thrive.



Trooper	Badge #	Duty Station	Troop Area
Ethan Broker	237	Beatrice	H
Dylan Cramer	243	Broken Bow	D
Ashely Elrod	247	Omaha	A
Clarissa Fitzgerald	295	Omaha	A
Mark Fluckey	253	York	C
Anthony Franks	258	Omaha	A
Steven Johnson	267	Lincoln	H
Logan Krein	271	Omaha	A
Johnathon Lawrence	273	St. Paul	C
Zachary Matthews	284	Omaha	A
Anthony McGlade	287	Omaha	A
Kailey Ortiz	288	Aurora	C
Lazaro Pena	289	Grand Island	C
Zachariah Sporer	290	Scottsbluff	E
Justyn Stindt	296	Kearney	C
Trysten Whitted	298	Lincoln	H





## Aviation Support Division

The Aviation Support Division with the Nebraska State Patrol has been keeping busy!

The fully operational Bell 505 has been on several calls for service since our acceptance in August! Two NSP pilots have been to the Bell Helicopter factory training course in advancement of qualifications. Pilots in North Platte continue to work on their Instrument rating adding to their qualifications to fly at night and in reduced weather conditions.

The added TFO's within recent months, who serve to run the thermal and daytime camera have been utilized often to assist with staffing and crew resource availability.

The division is looking to add a moving map and microwave video downlink to better equip the North Platte airplane. The moving map overlays streets and addresses to the TFO's viewing monitor in active situations it

aids in the control of the camera itself.

This last quarter has involved our continued service to outside agencies in surveillance and searches. We are very pleased to offer these services to agencies who do not have the resources. Our better equipped aircraft and pilot qualifications serves to improve these services to all Law Enforcement in need of support. In 2023, we expect to capitalize on our efforts.



## Nebraska Information Analysis Center (NIAC) and Technical Crimes Division (TCU)

The NIAC and TCU Division have undergone many changes in 2022 but have managed to continue to operate at a high level. Sergeant Eric Aho became the new supervisor for the computer crime lab. A 25-year veteran, Eric brings a technical skill set and a calming demeanor to an intense and challenging position. Additionally, Sergeant Aho is mentoring 3 new digital forensic examiners! Lisa Banks joined the team from the Carrier Division, Krystal Jelinek comes to us from DMV, and Neal Trantham transferred over from Troop H ISO. Amidst the change, the labs had their most productive year yet! As of the end of November, the lab examined 1,355 devices compared to 1,252 devices from all of 2021.

On the operations side of the TCU, investigators continue to

make solid cases as cybertips from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children continue to grow. The ICAC taskforce has vetted more than 2,600 cybertips which have led to well over 200 criminal cases for possession, distribution, or manufacturing Child Pornography. As a part of their efforts, Investigators conducted over 70 knock and talks, executed 23 residential search warrants, and made nearly 30 arrests of bad actors that exploit children. Many cases that were started in 2022 will lead to further state and federal arrests in 2023.

The NIAC has worked hard to build relationships in the field and with allied agencies and provide real-time and relevant intelligence information in a timely manner. Analysts fielded over 2,400 requests for service,

completed nearly 1,200 work-ups, entered over 2,100 deconflictions and put out nearly 150 situational awareness bulletins. Just like the lab, the NIAC did all of this during periods of transition and turnover of personnel. Troop A regained their analyst with the hire of Jackie Beaton. She comes to NSP after spending many years in the medical field. Additionally, Dee Lang took over as the research manager stationed in the NIAC. Dee had previously been the cyber analyst in the NIAC.

## Emergency Preparation Coordination

Sgt. Prante was busy this quarter taking over the Amber Alert/Code Red Program and implementing some additional training to our agency points of contact. Sgt. Prante and Sgt. Wagner from NHIT also attended a multi day Foreign Animal Disease pandemic exercise hosted by the Kansas Department of Agriculture in Kansas.

Sgt. Prante assisted in coordinating a response to two large fires. One was the Bovee Fire in Halsey along with the fire in Gage and Lancaster Counties. Air assets, drones, and manpower were part of the coordinated response.

Sgt. Prante also assisted providing resources to the Douglas County Emergency Management and NEMA requests to ice jams in the Missouri river over the Christmas Holiday.



## Hazardous Device Technician (HDT)

Trooper DeFreece and Trooper Brown attended joint training with 72nd Civil Support Team (WMD) and the FBI in Mead, NE that ended with a large scale exercise at the Charles Schwab Stadium in Omaha.

Several HDT members were deployed to Valentine Nebraska regarding a unique call with dynamite. They located approximately 20 deteriorated Nitro-Base sticks of 50% ditching dynamite, 1100 blasting caps, and approximately 100 feet of time fuse in the loft of an old hay barn. The caps were disposed of via countercharge.

Due to their training and experience no one was injured and no property was damaged.

It is with great respect and appreciation we announce Trooper Trevino departing the HDT Squad after 20 years of service.

Thank you for two decades of service, #317!



## Police Service Dogs (PSD)

The Nebraska State Patrol's Police Service Dog Unit (PSD) continues to show dedication and leadership with their statewide response using self initiated activity and responding to internal and external agency requests. Below are some examples of the teams mentality:

- On December 15, 2022, a semi driver was arrested after a long pursuit and stand off. Team work was displayed by all divisions of the State Patrol. NSP SWAT and PSD used tools and tactics to their advantage to bring the incident to an end with minimal injury.
- On October 31, 2022, Patrol Troopers, PSD handlers and DEA agents worked a joint operation at the North Platte Railway – the event located 16 kilos of cocaine and

100 pounds of methamphetamine.

- On December 15, 2022, Patrol Troopers, PSD handlers and DEA agents worked a joint agency operation at the railway near Brady, Nebraska. The event located over 30 pounds of methamphetamine.

This quarter NSP's PSD handlers have continued to provide support to the United States Marshall's Fugitive Task Force. During the 4th quarter, over twenty significant arrests have occurred including two for homicide suspects. NSP PSD Unit was able to secure 10 bullet-proof/stab proof vests for their PSDs which were donated through Vested Interest Inc LLC.





## Small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS)

The sUAS program has seen an increase with mission flights as the unit has trained additional sUAS pilots to be nearly fully staffed for the new program. Based upon the stats for 2022, the sUAS pilots have conducted 193 mission flights with 116 of those for crash investigation scene mapping.

As anticipated with the introduction of the new forensic mapping capabilities with the sUAS program, we have continued to reduce our on scene

investigation time from 52 minutes in 2021 and down to 43 minutes in 2022. This started as 2 ½ hours of investigation time before the sUAS program was implemented, on our Crash Reconstruction scenes. As the sUAS program continues to develop, additional applications have been identified to increase operational effectiveness and officer safety. The sUAS pilots are working with SWAT for watching over critical events, conducting attempt to locate missions and

responding to outside agency responses for assistance. The NSP sUAS program has become so successful that other agencies have reached out to us for training and guidance to develop their agency's programs.



## Crash Reconstruction

The Crash Reconstruction unit has stayed on pace with the usual level of calls for assistance on major crash scenes. They have responded to 101 cases as we close out the year. Also, consistent with data from previous years, 25% of those cases involve Commercial Motor Vehicles and partnering with the Post Crash Inspection unit in the Carrier Enforcement Division. The implementation of the Forensic Mapping team has greatly increased the efficiency and work flow for the Crash Reconstruction team.

The Crash Reconstruction team had three members complete training to the Technical Investigator level. Those members are scheduled to complete Crash Reconstruction training beginning in January. Two members at the Technical Investigator Level completed their Crash Reconstruction certification training in 2023.

Lastly, one of our Crash Reconstruction members successfully completed the national ACTAR accreditation exam. NSP Grants personnel have been busy seeking out Grant funding opportunities to assist

with both training and equipment procurement for the Crash Reconstruction



unit. NSP was awarded Grant funding for Trimble GPS Total Stations, Trimble X7 3D scanners, Crash Reconstruction software license renewals, and funding for specialty training and conferences.

## Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT)

Another busy quarter for NSP SWAT. Six activations occurred ranging from three warrant services, one barricaded party in a semi on Interstate 80 who was taken into custody with minimal injury, a team response to wild fires in Lancaster Co/Gage Counties assisting with evacuations and

traffic control along with one EP Security Detail.

NSP SWAT also held a two week SWAT Basic course at the Greenleaf Training Site in Hastings with ten attendees.



# Featured Divisions: NSP HQ Activities Committee and CID

## NSP HQ Activities Committee

The Nebraska State Patrol Headquarters Activities Committee was officially organized during the fall of 2021. After the move to our new headquarters facility with so many more teammates in one building, it was agreed this was the perfect opportunity to be a committee that can help people meet and have some fun while at work.

The Activities Committee meets monthly and organizes such things for our teammates as food trucks, free coffee days, food or dessert days for holidays, and a summertime cook-out and potluck. We also have fun with contests such as photography, a soup challenge, March Madness, Best Ugly Holiday Sweater, and Best Decorated Cubicle where the winners are voted on by teammates. The committee also works to rally teammates to help others, such as donating school supplies or winter-wear for kids, holiday gifts for people in need or in nursing homes, as well as a blood drive.

In April, we hosted our 1st annual Bring Your Sons/Daughters to Work Day. This wonderful all-day event was developed for kids to learn what all different people and divisions do for the Nebraska State Patrol. The kids were able to watch and sometimes take part in demonstra-

tions for the seat belt safety demonstrator, explosives technology, fingerprinting and police service dogs.

Committee members are also working with a couple of IT teammates on developing a SharePoint site where headquarters employees can easily access all information and scheduled activities through one site. Teammates will also be able to submit suggestions or ideas for consideration. (Currently there are boxes in both breakrooms where notes may be left.) It is hoped that the SharePoint site will be live for teammates to enjoy perusing sometime in January.

A challenge to the group now, is that what began as group of about ten members has reduced to three due to various conflicts. However, they are rallying together well, alternating who is working the various projects to keep the activities going.

During the work week, it is important for people to enjoy some fun with others. The greatest reward after creating an event is hearing people say, "We really enjoyed that, that was a lot of fun! Thank you!"





## Criminal Identification Division (CID)

The Criminal Identification Division (CID) is comprised of 11 teams. We currently manage a total of three grants, with the 2023 award amount exceeding \$5.2 million dollars. These grant funds drive projects and provide staffing for several CID teams, including: Centralized Protection Order Office (CPO), National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP), Concealed Handgun Permits (CHP), Sex Offender Registry (SOR), Administrative Office of the Courts/JUSTICE Program

(AOC), National Instant Criminal Background System (NICS), Quality Assurance Information Program (QAIP) and Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS). Each of these programs play a vital role in keeping all law enforcement safe.

A few of the projects we are currently working on include replacement of the Nebraska message switch, statute-based coding, court software upgrades, the protection order portal, the criminal history

audit program, facilitating partner agencies to enter mental health records into the NICS database, AFIS memory expansion and system upgrade, and many others.

## NSP, NDOT IT Partnership Receives National Recognition

A collaboration between the Nebraska State Patrol, Nebraska Department of Transportation, Nebraska Crime Commission, and Office of the Chief Information Officer has been awarded a national honor to their effort to streamline crash reporting and data collection for law enforcement agencies across the state.

The team was honored with the Cross-Boundary Collaboration and Partnerships Award at last month's National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) conference in Louisville, Kentucky. The Nebraska entry was selected as the winner from among ten programs from states across the country.

The effort focused on the development of a new statewide crash database. The partnership utilized the existing foundation of NSP's Traffic and Crime Software system (TraCS) to create the new crash reporting system. NSP's TraCS team onboarded 60 new law enforcement partners to the

TraCS system in a four-month period, bringing the total number of partners on the TraCS platform to over 130 agencies across Nebraska.

"I'm incredibly proud of the outstanding work that our TraCS team has accomplished over the last few years," said Colonel John Bolduc, Superintendent of the Nebraska State Patrol. "From our troopers, deputies, and officers on the front lines, all the way to our data analysts at NDOT, this tool has been invaluable and has been the ultimate collaboration."

Data collected through the TraCS crash reporting system is delivered to NDOT for research into Nebraska's roadways and how drivers are operating on roadways to evaluate improved safety features. Additionally, data collected provides information on future planning for transportation across the State.

"The safety of the citizens of Nebraska is paramount to mul-

multiple agencies and partners," said John Selmer, NDOT Director. "NDOT is proud to help advance TraCS with additional partners in the State and modernize both the collection of data, and how it is used."



## New Hires

### October 2022

- Jacqueline Lund, Backgrounds Office Tech, CID Lincoln
- Josue Sarazua, Communications Specialist, North Platte
- Lilian Chavez, Inv. Services Office Specialist, Grand Island
- Amanda Martin, Communications Specialist, North Platte
- Krystal Jelinek, IT Infr Support Analyst/SR, Tech

Crimes, Lincoln

- NiCole Blue, Paralegal I - Legal Division, Lincoln
- Jacqueline Beaton, Crime Analyst, Omaha

### November 2022

- Donnita Jimmis, Communications Specialist, North Platte
- Adam Ward, IT Bus Syst Analyst-CID, Lincoln
- Deborah Sweazy, Front Desk Office Specialist, CID Lincoln

- Deborah Hoffman, Wellness Coordinator, Lincoln
- Sean Dryden, IT Bus Syst Analyst-AFIS, Lincoln

### December 2022

- Khalia Westphal, Communications Specialist, Lincoln
- Devon Leimser, Communications Specialist, Lincoln
- Tori Adams, Security Guard, Lincoln

## Transfers

### October 2022

- Joel McGrew, NE City Patrol Trp. To Lincoln Patrol Trp.
- Bryan Woods, Scottsbluff Crim. Investigator to Scottsbluff Liquor Investigator
- Clint Zost, Wavery CE Trp. To NE City Patrol Trp.

- Neal Trantham, Beatrice Crim. Investigator to Lincoln Tech Crimes Trp.
- Tiffanie Caristo, Crime Lab Forensic Tech to AFIS/CID Forensic Tech

### November 2022

- Jonathan Schwarz, Lexington Patrol Trp. To Lincoln Patrol Trp.
- Abigail Joyce, Omaha Pa-

trol Trp. To Omaha Criminal Inv.

- Tyler Macnab, Omaha Patrol Trp. To Lincoln Criminal Inv.
- Brady Rump, Fremont Patrol Trp. To Fremont Scales CE Trp.
- Adam Wright, NE City CE Trp. To Lincoln Patrol Trp.

## Retirements

### October 2022

- Lewis Copp, CE Sergeant, Scottsbluff
- Leslie Peterson, HR Generalist/Asst., Lincoln
- Wendy Brehm, Patrol Division Trp., Grand Island
- Clint Bruhn, Liquor Inv., Chadron
- Margaret Wiesen, Forensic Technician, Crime Lab,

Lincoln

- William Cleveland, CE Trooper, North Platte

### November 2022

- Debra Underhill, Office Specialist CE, Lincoln

### December 2022

- Bruce Okamoto, Patrol Trp., Columbus
- Jon Goode, Patrol Trp.,

Norfolk

- Gerald Krolkowski, Pross Improvement Capt., Lincoln
- Ron Lehms, Electronics Manger, Lincoln
- Brenda Konfrst, Eastern Operations Major, Lincoln

## Resignations

### October 2022

- Stacy Frost, Communications Specialist, Lincoln
- Kristen Russell, Patrol Division Trp., Omaha
- John Hogan, Officer Candidate, Grand Island
- Deborah Sweazy, Front Desk Office Specialist, CID Lincoln
- Bailey Nesbitt, Patrol Division Trp., Omaha
- Brianna Villa, Communica-

tions Specialist, Lincoln

- Christian Jacobo, Forensic Scientist I, Crime Lab, Lincoln
- Ya Botti N'Da, AFIS Office Technician, CID Lincoln
- James Coon, Officer Candidate, Grand Island

### November 2022

- Matthew Sutter, Troop A Captain Commander, Omaha

### December 2022

- Stacey Znamenacek, HR Generalist/ Asst., Lincoln
- Eric Kloster, Patrol Division Trp., Hartington
- Melissa Fauver, NRAMS Office Specialist, Lincoln
- April Kleinschmit, IT Infrastructure Support Analyst/SR, Lincoln
- Lori Lueckenhoff, Records Analysis Supervisor, CID Lincoln

## Promotions

### November 2022

- Stephanie Frame, CID Front Desk Office Specialist to Criminal History Specialist Admin Tech
- Tracy Hays, CE Administrative Specialist to CE Research Analyst II
- Jacob Oshlo, Forensic Scientist III to Forensic Lab Supervisor

date to Omaha Trp.

- Clarissa Fitzgerald, Office Candidate to Omaha Trp.
- Mark Fluckey, Officer Candidate to York Trp.
- Anthony Franks, Office Candidate to Omaha Trp.
- Steven Johnson, Officer Candidate to Lincoln Trp.

### December 2022

- Jeffrey Roby, Troop C Captain Commander to Western Operations Major
- Jeffrey Wilcynski, Professional Standards Captain to Eastern Operations Major
- Ethan Broker, Officer Candidate to Beatrice Trp.
- Dylan Cramer, Officer Candidate to Broken Bow Trp.
- Ashley Elrod, Officer Candi-

- Logan Krein, Officer Candidate to Omaha Trp.
- Johnathon Lawrence, Officer Candidate to St. Paul Trp.
- Zachary Matthews, Officer Candidate, Omaha Trp.
- Anthony McGlade, Officer Candidate, Omaha Trp.

- Kailey Ortiz, Officer Candidate to Aurora Trp.
- Lazaro Pena, Officer Candidate to Grand Island Trp.
- Zachariah Sporer, Officer Candidate to Scottsbluff Trp.
- Justyn Stindt, Officer Candidate to Kearney Trp.
- Trysten Whitted, Officer Candidate to Lincoln Trp.
- Luke Splattstoesser, Executive Protection Lt. to Professional Standards Captain
- Jacqueline Lund, CID Backgrounds Office Tech to HR/Specialist/Asst, Lincoln



## Team Time Over the Holidays

The end of each year presents a great opportunity to spend time with family and friends over the holiday season.

Thanks to our troopers, investigators, dispatchers, and other teammates for sacrificing time with their families to continue the mission of keeping Nebraska safe.



From Thanksgiving dinners in the Troop Room, to Christmas Eve in the communications center, to a Christmas Day flight to monitor ice jams, the work you do when everyone else is at home speaks highly of your commitment to public safety and represents NSP well.

Thank you!















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For further information about what it means to be a Trooper, visit <https://statepatrol.nebraska.gov/nebraska-state-patrol-0>.



**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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