

# INFORMER

Volume 70

2021—First Quarter

## NSP Informer Staff

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## 2021: Off To A Busy Start

Troopers, Investigators, and Civilian Staff across the State of Nebraska have been busy in the first three months of the new year, picking up right where 2020 left off.

Years from now, Troopers will be telling tales of the winter of 2021. Over the last few months, Nebraska has been hit with multiple snowstorms that disrupted travel across large portions of the State. In January, the eastern half of the State received snowfall totals not seen in decades, including 14" of snow in Lincoln, 15" in Stromsburg, and many other areas with

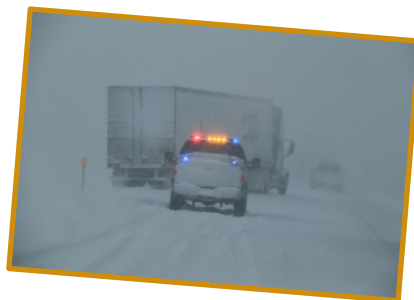
more than a foot of snow. While everyone stayed—or should have stayed—home, Troopers were out performing hundreds of motorist assists during these snowstorms.

February brought the frigid temperatures, with air temperatures reaching -20 to -30 degrees across much of the State on February 15th and 16th. Troopers reported car problems at times of extreme cold, but continued to assist motorists in need.

In March, the western part of the State racked up their snowfall numbers, with 19" in Gering, 11" in Valentine, and a reported 25" near Harrisburg. The storm was so severe in Wyoming that Interstate 80 was closed for multiple days, causing issues for travelers attempting to get through Nebraska to western

parts of the country. Again, Troopers were up to the task, performing motorist assists and assisting with road closures.

Those are just a few of the major winter events Nebraska dealt with in the first three months of 2021. Some broke records, others marked the worst conditions in decades, and others were just plain winter weather in Nebraska. Regardless, NSP's team stayed focused on the ever-present task of keeping Nebraska safe.



## COVID-19 Update: Vaccinations Roll Out

After a year of adjustments, quarantines, and masks, there seems to be a light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel.

During the first few months of 2021, many Nebraska communities dropped mask mandates as vaccines began rolling out across the State.

Thanks to the coordination between the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, local health departments and health professionals, and NSP leaders, all NSP personnel who desired to be vaccinated have received a COVID-19 vaccine.

Thanks to all of our personnel for their dedication and continued professionalism in serving Nebraska, while dealing with the challenges of a pandemic.



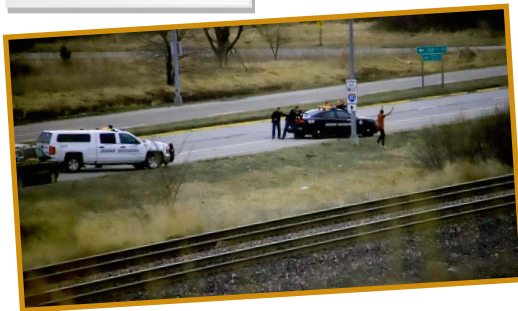
## Around the State

### Troop A

The first quarter of 2021 proved to be yet another fast paced quarter for Troop A. Record setting snowfall and bitter cold temperatures led Troopers to perform hundreds of motorist assist and weather related calls.

However, the beginning of March came with another challenge for Troopers to face—

apprehending a fleeing suspect who attempted to murder Omaha Police



Officer Jeffrey Wittstruck. Troopers responded to Westroads Mall where Officer Wittstruck was shot in the head multiple times after attempting to place a shoplifter under arrest. Troopers assisted OPD with searching for the shooter and evacuating the mall for approximately an hour before learning the suspect left the area in a white BMW sedan. A short time later, two units from the Troop H who had been sent to Troop A to assist with coverage on I-80 spotted the suspect's vehicle near the Gretna Interchange, and initiated pursuit. The suspect fled westbound on I-80, and was apprehended without further incident by Troopers when the BMW became disabled near the Waverly Inter-

change. Officer Wittstruck survived his injuries and is expected to make a full recovery.

Troop A Investigative Services also had a busy quarter as they investigated several cases at the request of the Attorney General's Office, assisted allied agencies, and participated in the OPD officer-involved shooting investigation.

The pharmaceutical diversion and prescription fraud Investigators have had great success with outreach to doctor's offices and pharmacies, resulting in several tips from prescribers via the NSP online reporting portal, and leading to multiple arrests.

### Troop B

It's safe to say that Troop B also had a busy first quarter as personnel diligently worked several cases and arrested multiple suspects.

The Patrol Division responded to several noteworthy calls throughout the first quarter. For starters, Troopers responded to a report of a naked male trying to enter businesses in Beemer. Use of force and ECW deployment was used to control the subject. Shortly after being detained, the subject was discovered to be under the influence of PCP, amphetamine, methamphetamine, cocaine, and THC. Troopers immediately took the gentleman

into Emergency Protective Custody for his safety, then placed him under arrest for resisting, obstruction, and assault on an officer.

Another noteworthy item comes in the form of assisting tribal nations within Troop B. There were multiple times throughout the first quarter that Troop B personnel worked side by side with various allied agencies. A fleeing suspect entered tribal land but turned around to head back south, a suicidal subject fled a traffic stop and rolled his vehicle then continued to barricade himself inside the overturned vehicle for 7 hours, and the Troop B accident reconstruction team assisted with mapping a fatal pedestrian-vehicle hit and run.

Investigative Services didn't



miss out on all the action either. Investigators worked a child sexual assault case and successfully received a confession from the perpetrator, and assisted a Sheriff's Office with a Snapchat search warrant regarding child pornography.

Furthermore, Troop B Investigators assigned to the DEA Task Force seized meth, currency, and weapons within the tristate area. Concurrently, a Troop B Investigator assigned to the United States Marshal Service apprehended 15 individuals with felony warrants.



## Troop C

The turn of a new year brought Troop C five new, eager Troopers to the area—Trooper Bauer (#103), Trooper Scott (#571), Trooper Hild (#128), Trooper Moody (#178), and Trooper Lonnborg (#169). All five Troopers graduated Camp 63 in December 2020 and are currently on schedule in their field training. Each Trooper was honored to receive their own patrol unit and license plates on the final day of March.

Aside from receiving and con-

ducting field training for new Troopers, Troop C personnel have not let up in enforcement efforts. Several interdiction stops have resulted in multiple arrests for approximately 205 pounds of marijuana, six pounds of meth, and one pound of cocaine since the start of 2021.

Furthermore, in a combine effort between Patrol and Investigative Services, Troop C safely recovered a juvenile female in York County along Interstate 80. The young female

was abducted in Illinois by a 42 year old California male.

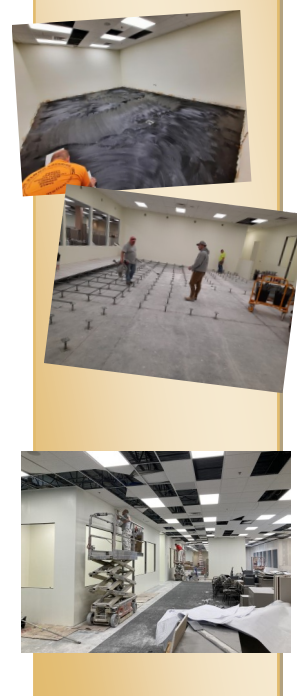
Investigative Services also took lead on an officer-involved shooting case involving a Hastings Police Officer.



## Progress Continues on the New Headquarters Building

A project years in the making is moving along nicely, as construction continues on what will be the new NSP State Headquarters Office in Lincoln. Move-in is scheduled to begin in late May and will take a few weeks to get everyone into their new workspaces.

Check out some of the latest progress photos:



## Colonel's Corner

Dear Readers,

We are quickly closing out the first quarter of 2021. What a fast start to the New Year! It is nice to say goodbye to 2020 in a lot of ways. Although we suffered loss and hardships due to the pandemic, none of our current NSP teammates were lost to the illness. For this I am very thankful.

Once again I have to spend these few moments thanking our outstanding team for a job well done in 2021. We were hit with two major storms in late winter and early spring that completely disrupted our transportation system. The March blizzard created one of the longer shutdowns of Interstate 80 in recent memory. Of course our Troopers and Dispatchers did a fantastic job coordinating our response and working with our stakeholders from Wyoming, Colorado, and across Nebraska. Thank you all for your teamwork and diligence.

Our CID team and Forensic Technicians in our Troop Areas have been processing a record number of fingerprints due to a blizzard of handgun permit applications, in addition to their normal work volume. Kudos to these teammates for keeping their sanity while dealing with this huge volume of work, always with an eye on customer service. Thank you for stepping up to the challenge!

Finally I have to thank you for the outstanding teamwork, care, and diligence that was on display during two officer-involved shootings this quarter. The first incident took place in Lincoln where two of our Troopers and a Lincoln Police Officer were compelled to use lethal force on two armed suspects. The teamwork, tactics, quality of communication, and after care of our teammates was simply outstanding! Thanks to everyone for their professionalism in this incident.



Next, the attempted murder of an Omaha Police Officer by an armed shoplifter came to a peaceful resolution due to the quick thinking, excellent skills, and teamwork of the NSP. I was so impressed with how everyone worked together in this high-stress incident to take this dangerous suspect into custody. Excellent work on display by the NSP throughout that incident as well. We are heartened to learn that the injured officer is on the road to recovery from his wounds.

These are a just a few reasons why I am incredibly proud of the NSP and the excellent work performed every day by our Sworn and Civilian staff. The aforementioned incidents are a true testament of how dedicated, skilled, and diligent our teammates are to the work they do serving Nebraska!

## Troop D



Troop D experienced several weather related events and hazardous conditions in the first quarter. Snow, ice, rain, and fires plagued their 27 counties. Communication Specialists played a key role during these events as they fielded calls, routed Troopers and Investigators to assist communities and other first responders.

While social media highlighted an intense fire along Interstate 80, there was also fires elsewhere—near the town of Ben-

kelman. The town was ordered to be evacuated during the early morning in January due to an out of control fire that had originated from a smoldering burn pit north of town. Luckily, no injuries were reported.

The first quarter also brought new equipment and training to Troop D investigators. They were trained in the use of the Trimble X7 Laser Scanner as a tool to be used at crime scenes. This scanner helps Investigators produce a court-

worthy product that will accurately depict a 3D image of a crime scene helping potential prosecutors, judges, jurors, and defense attorneys understand the physical layout of a crime scene. Shortly after the training, Investigators were able to put this new tool to use in an attempted homicide where the suspect fired a weapon through a window and struck the victim, and in a death investigation in a jail. The scanner will undoubtedly become an important part of most major crime scene investigations.

## Troop E



Although snow continues to linger in Troop E, the great work produced by Troop E personnel continues.

Captain Von Minden, Lieutenant Frerichs, and Trooper Flick had the opportunity to assist with and instruct Western Dakota Tech's academy.

Two new Troopers—Trooper

Brown (#524) and Trooper Ochoa (#194)—joined the team in January and continue making strides throughout their field training.

The Troop E Office even received some new features as well. Security cameras were upgraded and an additional wall was installed at the front of the building to enhance security for staff and visitors. Additionally,



the equipment used for fingerprinting was upgraded to a new, smaller version as well.

## Troop H

First quarter has been a whirlwind for Troop H as this has been one of their busiest quarters in a while!

During the 1st quarter of 2021, Troopers removed 122 motorists off the streets for DUI, along with 220 citations for drug and alcohol violations. Additionally, they made 65 felony arrests for various law violations and 64 were arrested

for outstanding warrants. One such highlight of the 1st quarter was an arrest made on March 3. Troopers located 770.5 lbs. of marijuana on Interstate 80 in Seward County. This arrest was a sizeable achievement in taking illegal drugs off the roadways.

Troop H ISO is responsible for a variety of criminal and drug investigations across 14 coun-

ties in SE Nebraska. During the 1st quarter of 2021, they started 88 new investigations. Additionally, a large part of their regular workload is not only conducting their own investigations, but also assisting allied agencies. In the 1st quarter alone, this group performed 101 agency assists as well. It's always great to see our personnel team with allied agencies to accomplish a common goal.

One noteworthy case Investi-



gators worked on is the unfortunate death of 2-year-old Hollen Siedschlag of Fairbury. The suspect, Jake Gonzalez, was taken into custody and charged with second degree murder, child abuse resulting in death, and obstruction of government operations. Gonzalez is currently awaiting trial.

Patrol Troopers and Investigators alike played significant roles in two officer-involved shootings during the first quarter as well. In one incident on February 20th, Troopers were involved in a pursuit of two

armed robbery suspects. Upon performing a TVI and successfully getting the suspect vehicle stopped near 56th and Arbor Road in Lincoln, suspects opened fire on Troopers and Lincoln Police Officers. Law enforcement returned fire, fatally wounding both subjects. One Trooper sustained non-life-threatening injuries during the incident and is recovering well.

The other incident happened a few weeks later on March 12th. An Omaha Police Officer was shot at Westroads Mall, and the suspect fled the scene. As

Troop A personnel assisted Omaha PD to ensure safety at the mall, Troop H personnel started heading that way as well. Two young Troopers located the suspect and vehicle at the Gretna I-80 interchange and initiated pursuit. With the assistance of numerous Divisions, the suspect was apprehended without incident near Waverly on Highway 6. The successful outcome was due to professionalism and teamwork displayed by many Divisions and the clear, concise communication.



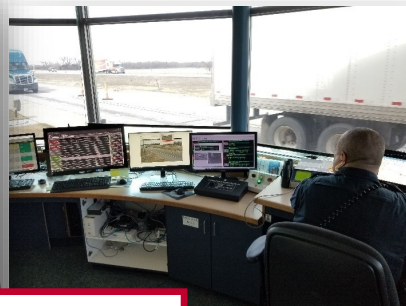
## Carrier Enforcement

Modern technology advances give us the opportunity to look back and see just how much Carrier Enforcement has advanced over the years.

The Carrier Enforcement Division added state of the art systems at the North Platte Eastbound Scale, the Waverly Westbound Scale, and will soon be installing the system at the Nebraska City Scale. The

IROC system checks FMCSA's SAFER database for registration, fuel tax, and DOT number compliance, which is all part of the sorting criteria to determine who needs to pull into the weigh station. Although there are numerous computer screens and large amounts of information available to the Troopers, the technology helps identify carriers that may have safety concerns.

The new system also includes a Tire Anomaly and Classification System (TACS), which detects flat and low inflated tires at high speeds and directs drivers into the scale for inspection. While it has been challenging to get all the new technology up and running, it certainly shows how far Carrier Enforcement has advanced from 1953 to 2021.



Weighing Trucks  
in 1953 vs. 2021

Trp. McCacy observed a phone attached to the steering wheel of a CMV. The driver was playing video games, had another phone in his hands, and was driving a CMV at the same time.



## Featured Divisions: IT and Communi- cations

### Information Technology

Several advances and upgrades in technology have kept the NSP Information Technology (IT) Division busy. They have recently completed a very large project, and continue chipping away at others.

In partnership with the Department of Transportation (DOT), the IT Division recently completed large upgrades to the Electronic Accident Form. This major upgrade was necessary as federal reporting specifications recently changed.

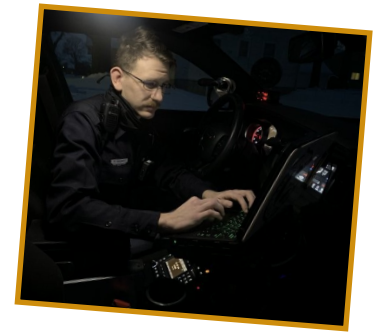
In addition to the major form revisions, the NSP is now sharing this accident form with 125 other law enforcement agencies. That means 2,500 officers throughout the State of Nebraska have access to this form, and nearly 70% of the State accident forms are now submitted through NSP's TraCS system!

The accomplishment of this major project reflects the outstanding teamwork performed by personnel with two State departments. A special thank you goes out to Chris Neu-

kirch, Charlie Lucas, Kim Mize, Andy Smith, Nathan Clement, Monica Spanke, Qian Cheng, Ron Adams, and Adam Johnson for their dedication and hard work on this project.

Additionally, IT is actively working to reduce the number of accounts each NSP Teammate has. Later this summer, you will just use your STN account (first.last) to log into almost everything. When the change occurs, you will not be prompted for a password multiple times when using SharePoint, or the ticket portal. During the switch-over process, the web address for your applications such as PSD, POLAR, and NSP Internal will slightly change. Our goal is to make this transition as easy as possible by updating links in the Launch Pad and updating standard favorites.

More details on this project are yet to come, but the IT Division is excited to see it come to full fruition.



IT is also in the process of upgrading the remaining 230 Agency computers to Windows 10. Once a computer is on Windows 10, the process of upgrades is a "self-service" process.

Instructions will go out periodically to tell teammates to upgrade their Windows. After the self-service installation period expires, the Windows update will be pushed out to their computer. A deadline for upgrades are given to minimize security risks of running outdated software.

Last but not least, the IT Division is in the process of evaluating new MDC's and should have a selection made by early May. Deployment of new computers will start shortly after a selection has been made.

### Communications

Communications – more widely known as "Dispatch"—is the first, first responder on scene.

Over the last several months, the Communications Division has been working towards consolidating the Omaha dispatch center with Lincoln's dispatch center. The full consolidation was projected to happen this summer, but had to

be moved up due to unforeseen circumstances.

On March 22nd the consolidation was completed. The Lincoln center officially began dispatching for Troop A, B and H, and the North Platte dispatch center took over dispatching for Troop C along with Troop D and Troop E.

We are proud to announce that this consolidation has been a smooth transition with small hiccups here and there. As a result of shift in dispatching responsibilities, dispatchers eagerly continue learning their new geographical areas along with the new Troopers on the other end of the radio.

With both dispatch centers handling 3 troop areas, expan-

sion was necessary. North Platte will be expanding their dispatch center from 4 consoles to 5 consoles and getting a complete remodel, to include new carpet and a fresh coat of paint. The Lincoln dispatch center is excited to move into the new Lincoln facility and will be upgrading from 6 consoles to 8 consoles.

If you are unfamiliar with the layout of a dispatch center, at each console you will find 5 monitors. This allows the dispatcher to track the movements of a Trooper's vehicle

throughout their shift. You will also find a monitor for the Statewide Radio System, also known as the SRS. This allows the dispatcher to talk to Troopers and other law enforcement agencies to coordinate emergency response to incidents.

Dispatchers speak their own unique language called ten (10) code. 10 code allows Dispatchers and Troopers to shorten the air time on the radio. However, it also offers a level of officer safety in the event when caution is needed. The most

unique skill of a veteran dispatcher is their ability to recognize the slightest change in pitch and tone, and the smallest difference in the cadence and pace of a Trooper's voice. This keen listening skill allows Dispatchers to know that something isn't quite right—even without the Trooper verbally communicating those words.



## Camp 64

Ten recruits began the journey to becoming a Nebraska State Trooper in January at the NSP Training Academy. Eight of those recruits remain at the TA after the first 12 weeks of training, and are more than halfway through the program.

The recruits have spent their time learning the culture of the NSP, gaining academic knowledge and skills, and start-

ing to train on the work that will be required of them once they graduate and hit the road on patrol.

Though Camp 64 is small compared to recent NSP camps, the group is tight-knit and are working well together!

Over the next three months, training will include Accident



Investigations, Building Search/Active Killer, Patrolling, and many more disciplines as they move toward graduation scheduled for June 18th.

*The gained skills and knowledge coupled with the relationships built really prepare recruits for a successful career with the Nebraska State Patrol.*



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S**New Hires****January 2021**

- Juan Garfio, Trp. Cand.
- Dalton Harrel, Trp. Cand.
- Walter Kirkland, Trp. Cand.
- Michael Kleich, Trp. Cand.
- Bailey Nesbitt, Trp. Cand.
- Eric Rosemann, Trp. Cand.
- Taylor Sauser, Trp. Cand.
- Kathleen Shriver, Trp. Cand.
- Brady Tophoj, Trp. Cand.
- Tyler Urbanec, Trp. Cand.
- Rachel Rial, Records Tech.
- Tianna Nitz, Paralegal
- Christian Jacobo, Forensic Scientist I

- Ingrid Peterson, Comm. Specialist
- William Cassell, Comm. Specialist
- Lyrica Baxter, Records Tech.

**February 2021**

- Patrick Hayford, Security Guard
- MiKayla Meyer, Comm. Specialist
- Katelyn Walker, Comm. Specialist
- Amy Douglas, Forensic Tech.-AFIS
- Catherine Dutour, Forensic Scientist I
- Shawn Koch, Records Analysis Supv.

**March 2021**

- Katelyn Harshman, Staff Assist. I
- Jennifer Russell, Comm. Specialist
- Seth Bohnart, Comm. Specialist
- Gabriella Mares, Comm. Specialist
- Stacey Snyder, Staff Assist. I
- Nathan Mersch, Records Tech.
- Michael Freeland, Crime Analyst

**Transfers****January 2021**

- Ron Kosiba, Criminal Inv. to Drug Inv.

Patrol Trp.

**February 2021**

- Richard Aldag, Cap. Sec. Inv. Sgt. to Special Ops. Inv. Sgt.
- Brad Wagner, Fremont Carrier Sgt. to Waverly Carrier Sgt.
- Trinity Jones, Columbus Patrol Sgt. to Fremont Carrier Sgt.
- Antonina Anderson-Trumble, Crime Analyst to Crime Analyst Supv.
- Alex Winters, Beatrice Patrol Trp. to Lincoln

**March 2021**

- Kara Simpson, Comm. Specialist to Staff Assist. I
- Cory Townsend, IA Lt. to Policy/Accred. Lt.
- Jonathan Royle, Bridgeport Patrol Trp. to North Platte Patrol Trp.
- Kevin Bruning, West Point Patrol Trp. to Criminal Inv.
- Marcus Warnke, Lincoln Patrol Trp. to Nebraska City Carrier Trp.
- Jay Irvin, Waverly Carrier Trp. to Nebraska City Patrol Trp.

- Courtney Cool, Waverly Carrier Trp. to Fremont Carrier Trp.
- Jordan Dostal, Ogallala Patrol Trp. to Lincoln Patrol Trp.



## Promotions

### January 2021

- Nancy Acosta, Records Tech. to Staff Assist. II-SOR
- Sean Wilson, Patrol Trp. to Patrol Sgt.

### February 2021

- Paul Hagen, TA Sgt. to Patrol Lt.
- Deborah Kasperek, Staff Assist. I to Records Supv.

### March 2021

- Daniel Doggett, Carrier Lt. to Carrier Capt.
- Nicholas Plate, TA Trp. to TA Sgt.
- Daniel McEowen, Admin. Assist II. to IT Business Analyst



## Resignations

### January 2021

- Dalton Harrel, Trp. Cand.
- Walter Kirkland, Trp. Cand.
- Catherine Dimitroff, Comm. Specialist
- Matthew Roe, Comm. Specialist
- Megan Liechti, Comm. Specialist
- Manuela Benne, Admin.

Assist. I

### February 2021

- Michelle Cruz, Comm. Specialist
- Nicole Enriquez, Forensic Tech.-AFIS
- Patrick Hayford, Security Guard
- Theresa Jones, Security Comm. Specialist

### March 2021

- Nathaniel Van Anne, Security Guard
- Lenay Kubes, Comm. Specialist
- Nathan Avery, Trp.
- Cody Potthast, Inv. Sgt.

## Retirements

### January 2021

- Steven Burke, Security Guard

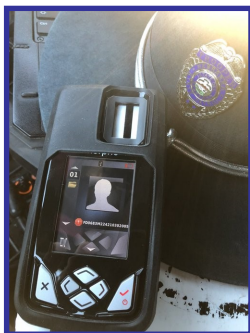
### February 2021

- Dale Beethe, Patrol Trp.
- Sharlene Carmichael, Records Tech.

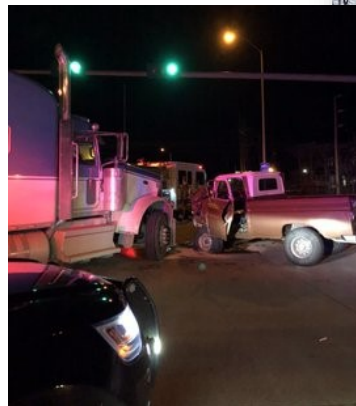
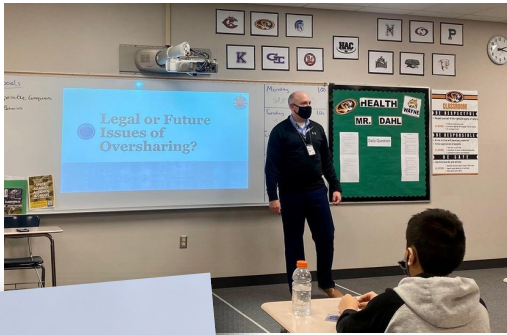




*All images were  
taken by  
various NSP  
personnel and  
friends around  
the State during  
the first quarter  
of 2021!*







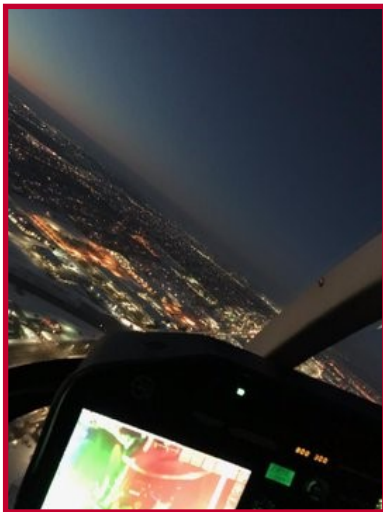
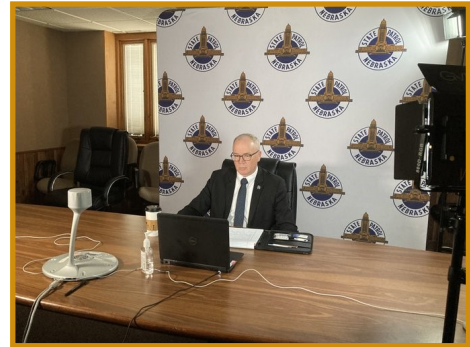
<b>Aurora</b> Mostly Sunny -24° H:-0° L:-24°	<b>Norfolk</b> Clear -22° H:-0° L:-22°	<b>South Sioux City</b> Sunny -22° H:-0° L:-22°	<b>Omaha</b> Haze -20° H:1° L:-20°
<b>Kearney</b> Mostly Clear -20° H:1° L:-20°	<b>Nebraska City</b> Sunny -20° H:1° L:-20°	<b>Columbus</b> Partly Cloudy -20° H:-0° L:-20°	<b>Lincoln</b> Sunny -20° H:-0° L:-20°
<b>Broken Bow</b> Partly Cloudy -18° H:1° L:-18°	<b>Grand Island</b> Clear -18° H:-0° L:-18°	<b>North Platte</b> Cloudy -15° H:-9° L:-15°	<b>Scottsbluff</b> Cloudy -0° H:-28° L:-0°


**Please be safe and stay warm!**






In violation of:	
O F F E N S	Statute/Ordinance Section
	60-6,18613
	Speed
	119 mph in 75 mph Zone
Comments:	



NEBRASKA STATE  
PATROL

1600 Hwy 2  
Lincoln, NE 68502  
PO Box 94907  
Lincoln, NE 68509

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

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*Pro Bono Publico*

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. Chad (#221)  
Donald Matejka (#192)  
Mark P. Wagner (#168)  
Jerry L. Smith (#373)

