

# Informer

## NSP Informer Staff

• Editors:  
Mikayla Hall

• Contributors:

Captain Miller  
Captain Frerichs  
Captain Hagen  
Captain Denton  
Captain Caradori  
Captain Riedel  
Captain Schmidt  
Captain Scott  
Lieutenant Elwood  
Lieutenant Jones  
Monty Lovelace  
Jason Linder

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Volume 83

2024—Second Quarter

## Graduates of Camp 69

Congratulations are in order for the members of our 69th Basic Recruit Class as they have received their badges and were sworn-in this quarter during a ceremony at the Nebraska State Capitol.

“Your public service starts today,” Colonel John Bolduc told the 13 new Troopers during the ceremony. “You are dedicated to serving others. That means putting others ahead of yourselves. It may even mean putting yourself in harm’s way in service to others. Thank you for being willing to do just that.”

The members of Camp 69 come to NSP from various communities across Nebraska, Iowa, and Pennsylvania. The newly sworn-in Troopers have completed 22 weeks of intense training, in-

cluding extensive live-action training scenarios and rigorous academic instruction.

Their training now continues with these graduates pairing with veteran Troopers in the field training process.

Outstanding performance in several areas of training was recognized with awards during the graduation ceremony. Recruit Garrett Swantek, of Genoa, received the Superintendent’s Leadership Award. Recruit Tomas Margritz, of Lexington, was honored with the D.R. Shearer



Marksanship Award. The O.H. Witt Academic Achievement Award was presented to Recruit Ryan Clark, of Kearney. Recruit Carissa Moore, of Crete, was awarded the Captain Mark Williams Core Values Award. Recruit Bryce Smidt, of Rockwell City, Iowa, was honored with the R. J. Buchholz Physical Fitness Award.

Governor Jim Pillen and Attorney General Mike Hilgers provided remarks during the graduation ceremony, which was held in the rotunda of the Nebraska State Capitol. Secretary of State Bob Evnen administered the oath of office.

“You’ve been through extraordinary challenges. You’ve overcome more than you probably thought you could 24 weeks ago,” said Governor Pillen. “I simply can’t say thank you enough. We are incredibly proud of you. You are answering the most noble calling of public service, taking care of the brothers and sisters of this great state.”

Congratulations Camp #69!

Name	Hometown	Badge	Duty Station
Gavin Boutin	Ogallala, NE	41	Ogallala
Ryan Clark	Kearney, NE	47	Kearney
Samuel Gustafson	Kearney, NE	206	Omaha
Ashley Jackson	Gering, NE	239	Scottsbluff
Jordan Jones	Marienville, PA	253	Scottsbluff
Samantha Ligenza	Lincoln, NE	297	Wahoo
Sinai Mandungu	Lincoln, NE	341	Lincoln
Tomas Margritz	Lexington, NE	351	Kearney
Carissa Moore	Crete, NE	352	West Point
Bryce Smidt	Rockwell City, IA	387	South Sioux City
Brian Smith	North Platte, NE	402	North Platte
Garrett Swantek	Genoa, NE	488	Scottsbluff
Seth Valverde	Pierce, NE	484	Norfolk

## American Association of State Troopers Inc.

The American Association of State Troopers, Inc. (AAST) is a national organization of active and retired state troopers, highway patrol officers, and state police officers. Membership is voluntary and individual. The Association is not a labor union or collective bargaining organization. AAST is managed by a member

Board of Directors who volunteer their time to

serve the Association.

The Association's purposes include the development of strong nationwide trooper camaraderie, providing benefits for members and their families, promoting professional law enforcement training, securing financial support for scholarships, and involvement in public safety and consumer information campaigns.

AAST fosters brotherhood, connects members to colleagues

through newsletters and social media, and supports troopers' families and local communities. Annual membership fees are \$35, and the benefits include a line of duty death benefit, bereavement assistance, wellness benefit, and dependent educational scholarships.

AAST provides valuable support and benefits to state troopers and their families. Find more information about AAST here:

[www.statetroopers.org](http://www.statetroopers.org)



## Troop A

Summer is in full swing, and Troop A just finished their yearly assistance with traffic control at the College World Series.

This year, members of the Troop A Honor Guard had the privilege of presenting the colors on day 2 of the series final. This opportunity put NSP on display in front of tens of thousands of people. Trp. Farmer, Chick, Fitzgerald, and McGlade did a great job showcasing the professionalism of our agency.

In late April, several Troop A communities were impacted by a tornado-producing storm. Troopers assisted the Omaha Police Department and Douglas County Sheriff's Office with clearing residences and providing traffic control in the area. In the weeks that followed, Troopers from every shift continued to provide security for the impacted communities alongside our law enforcement partners and the Nebraska National Guard. The efforts by our Troopers helped deter, and even led to the arrests of, several potential looters.

The Patrol Division continued to build off the success from Quarter 1. Troopers topped their

already impressive first-quarter DUI arrests by apprehending another 103 impaired drivers in the second quarter.

Investigative Services saw significant personnel changes in Quarter 2. Veteran investigators Paul Smoot and Anthony Sattlefield both retired the first week of April. Their contributions to the agency, citizens of Nebraska, and leadership among their peers will be remembered. Investigator Alberico has taken over responsibilities for pharmaceutical drug diversion and prescription fraud. In her short time in that position, she has fielded 51 reports from pharmacies across the state of suspected diversion or fraud, resulting in the issuance of 13 alerts and 2 arrests. Investigator Raes is also new to the office, joining the Criminal Division in June.

Members of CIU were responsible for a large interdiction on May 29th after encountering two subjects at the train station. A search of a subject's bag resulted in the seizure of 16,000 suspected fentanyl pills. Sgt. Meola and Investigator Jaworski also assisted Homeland Security Investigations and Nebraska DMV investigators with a large-scale auto



fraud case with ties to the Omaha area. Investigator Kroenke and the Overdose Response Task Force, in coordination with Troop C Drug Investigators and other allied partners, helped dismantle a fentanyl trafficking organization believed to be responsible for several overdose deaths in the region. Their diligent work has resulted in a decrease in overdose deaths in the area by roughly 40%.

The Criminal Division has kept busy with SOR compliance checks, two grand jury death investigations, several presentations to citizens, and assists for allied agencies and divisions. The entire group assisted with the officer-involved shooting investigation in South Omaha on May 30th. Thankfully, no officers were injured and two suspects were arrested.

## Troop B

In April, several Troop B Troopers assisted Madison County with a combative subject resisting arrest and getting into the patrol car, with no injuries to NSP personnel. The reason for contact is to assist Madison County with a 2nd-degree assault suspect; the suspect attempted to jump out the window and got stuck; officers pulled him from the window and placed him under arrest. The suspect kicked law enforcement multiple times and would not go into the patrol car cage.

Trp. Frerichs stopped a driver for an improper turn going from 1st to Omaha Ave westbound in Norfolk; the driver did not hit on mobile AFIS, NCIC check showed x60 Florida OLN, during inventory suspected meth located in purse on the back seat, field test done roadside had presumptive positive for amphetamines and fentanyl, meth specific test and fentanyl specific test done while processing evidence, both tests had presumptive positive results—driver lodged at Madison County Jail.

Troop B weekend night shift received the MADD award for the DUI team. The weekend night shift was Trp. Osuna-Salazar, Bestenlehner, Ayaj, Tighe, Duhsman, Miller, and Sgt. Pfeifer. Trp. Osuna-Salazar and Hartley each were awarded the Madd Adult DWI/DUI award. In Troop B, great work is being done, keeping our communities safe from impaired drivers.

In May, Trp. Huber responded to an x34 victim at Avera Hospital in O'Neill. Interviewed victim with substantial injuries and determined assault/strangulation took place in rural Wheeler County. Trp. Huber, Frerichs, Wiggins, and Sgt. Mobley contacted the suspect at his residence near Ericson, obtained partial admission, and arrested him without incident. Lodged in Valley County Jail.

In June, Trp. Lingren stopped a vehicle for a moving traffic violation and arrested the suspect for being a felon with a firearm, use of a firearm to commit a

felony, marijuana more than 10 oz. less than a pound, and amphetamine possession.

Troop B's recruiting team was very successful in recruiting for Camp 70. Consistent recruiting efforts over 2 years resulted in numerous applicants, and a high number of these applicants made it through the hiring process and are to start Camp in July 2024. This hard work and dedication doesn't go unnoticed for the future service to the State of Nebraska. Camp #69 recently graduated, and Troop B is excited to welcome 3 new Troopers. Trp. Moore (#352), Valverde (#484) and Smidt (#387). These Troopers will begin their field training phase, applying what they learned in the NSP academy to the FTO training phase, which continues to set the foundation for a successful career.

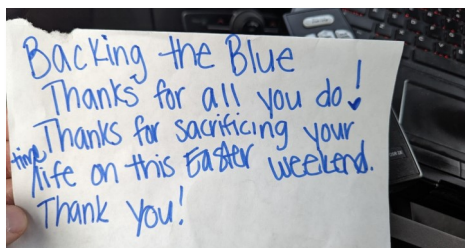


## Troop C

With the weather improving from the first quarter, business has picked exponentially. Trp. Ortiz stopped a vehicle in April with a smorgasbord of illegal substances including mushrooms, cocaine, Ketamine, methamphetamine, LSD and marijuana. In May, Trp. Winters stopped a U-Haul truck with multiple people

riding in the cargo area including 3 juveniles in poor living conditions. DHHS was called to take the juveniles to safe locations where they were cared for while the adults were interviewed and went to jail. Along with the rest of state, there is a growing number of people that don't want to stop a talk to us when we want them to. Motorcycles and cars, stolen and borrowed have tried avoiding us. Tenacious persistence and the cooperation of allied agencies have accomplished a great number

of apprehensions. The most notable this quarter involved an unfortunate situation resulting in the death and serious injuries of people passing through the state. We were at least able to catch the offender and hopefully help with healing process of the victim's family. Troop C continues to participate in the seasonal tradition of construction traffic control and programs in the community.



# Around The State

## Troop D

Quarter 2 started off in full force with recruiting as applications were open for Camp 70, scheduled to start on July 8, 2024. Troop D personnel participated in 14 community programs, multiple career fairs and many other events to connect with the public in the hopes of recruiting potential future Troopers. One question kept coming up... **"What does a Trooper make?"** Well...

Troop D faced severe weather, including late spring blizzards, high winds, hail, and tornados. Troopers responded to 450 motorist assists and 66 accidents in addition to aiding emergency management coordinators and allied agencies with rescue efforts and surveying damage. Sgt. Buhlke and Crawford coordinated rescue and response efforts as a result of tornado's in Lincoln and Keith Counties following tornadoes. Sgt. Mortensen provided a public safety announcement regarding weather conditions and high-profile vehicles. We also experienced an increase in traffic and visitors during the viewing of the eclipse.

Trp. Colindres met with a young brother and sister fostering a positive law enforcement contact. Trp. Martinez and Clouse attended a YMCA Healthy Kids Day event. Sgt. Veal coordinated the annual Torch Run which NSP staff participated. Several sworn and civilian staff attended Peace Officer Memorial Day events. We celebrated National Public Safety Telecommunicators week. Trp. Anderson provided traffic control and assisted an Ohio Army Reserve Unit which broke down along the interstate. All of these events involved interactions with several members of the public which resulted in positive community engagements.

Troopers have increased traffic enforcement efforts with a total of 4,764 traffic stops being made which has resulted in 162 restraint violations, 39 DUI's, 4 DUID's and a total of 86 arrests. A Trooper conducted a night time traffic stop on a vehicle for driving without headlights/taillights which resulted in the discovery of several thousand fentanyl pills and a firearm. A Trooper conducted a traffic stop of a license plate violation on a

straight box truck and discovered large fuel tanks in the cargo area which were related to fuel thefts in the area. 2 male suspects were arrested as a result.

Troopers assisted Lincoln County with a pursuit and arrest of a suspect who ran from a burning vehicle along the interstate, jumped the fence and stole a pick-up with camper. He ran over the owner. This case resulted in a manhunt, bringing in additional NSP personnel and resources. Troopers assisted Cherry County with a hit and run that resulted in the death of the bicyclist. Through dogged police work and collaboration between NSP and the Sheriff's office, a suspect has been identified. So...back to the question, "what does a Trooper make"?...**Our response... A Trooper makes a difference!**



## Troop E

Quarter 2 got off to a frosty start with severe winds and a snowstorm that swept through the Panhandle. The storm caused a wide electrical outage that resulted in approximately over 600 power poles were down and took multiple days before power could be fully restored.

Later that month, Troopers assisted local law enforcement agencies with a train derailment in Chappell resulting in Hwy 30 being closed for a couple hours. The incident also caused a small portion of town to be evacuat-

ed until it was confirmed that no hazmat was spilled. Power poles were also taken out to a portion of the town due to the derailment. Once the evacuation was lifted and railroad personnel arrived on scene, Troopers were released from the scene.

Unfortunately, Trp. Nutsch's unit was vandalized at his home this quarter. Preliminary information advises that all the windows in his unit and personal vehicle were broken out at his residence in Alliance, NE. Alliance P.D. is handling the investigation. Trp. Nutsch was not home at the time

due to being back east. The cost of damage is unknown at this time.

In June, Trp. Dillinger, Wells, Capt. Frerichs and Lt. Buxbaum attended the TIMS exercise at the airport in Scottsbluff. A 2 vehicle, intersection crash involving a fatality scenario was conducted. NSP, Scottsbluff Fire, Scottsbluff County Emergency Management participated with approximately 50 people in attendance. The scenario went very well with few minor issues that will be addressed for future exercises.

## Troop H

The Troop H Uniform Patrol Division proudly serves 14 counties in Southeast Nebraska. During this quarter, Troop H, along with many other troop areas, dealt with strong thunderstorms, tornadoes, and an abundance of rainfall. Troopers remained busy with accidents, removed 76 motorists from the streets for DUI, and issued 122 citations for drug and alcohol violations. Additionally, they made 85 felony arrests for various law violations. Troop H experienced a continuation of high traffic speeds along with a larger number of fatal accidents compared to last year at this time.

On April 2, troopers responded to the Casey's General Store near the Lincoln Airport Interchange and assisted the Lincoln Police Department with an officer-involved shooting, which turned into a barricaded hostage situation. Troopers provided resources for a tactical response along with traffic control. The suspect sustained non-life-threatening injuries and was taken into custody, with all the hostages unharmed.

On April 12, troopers responded to an injury accident just south of Ceresco on Highway 77. The accident involved an on-duty Ceresco police officer during a traffic stop. While in his unit, Officer Ross Bartlett was struck from behind by a pickup. Officer Bartlett sustained serious injuries in the collision and was flown by helicopter

to a Lincoln trauma center. Unfortunately, Officer Bartlett was pronounced deceased later that night due to the injuries sustained in the accident. Troopers conducted a full crash reconstruction and investigation, which was turned over to the Lancaster County Attorney's Office.

On April 25, NSP SWAT was activated in Seward County after a welfare check by the Milford Police Department resulted in a barricaded suspect. The suspect pointed a rifle at responding officers. NSP SWAT and negotiators arrived on the scene. A drone was utilized to determine the location of the suspect inside the residence. The suspect was observed unresponsive. NSP SWAT made a tactical entry, and the suspect was taken into custody unharmed.

On April 26, Troop H personnel assisted with the aftermath of the tornadoes that eastern Nebraska suffered, particularly in areas such as east Lincoln, Waverly, and several communities in the northern part of Troop A. Personnel from Patrol, Carrier, and ISO all worked together to handle multiple calls for service and provided security for those suffering from the devastating damage and subsequent events following the storms. Even though it was a state holiday and a majority of employees were not working, troopers and investigators stepped in to help wherever needed without being requested.

On April 27, Troop H handled the 2024 Husker Spring Football game traffic with no major incidents. The Husker Spring game is a welcomed event that brings thousands of people to Memorial Stadium.

On June 28, Troop H personnel responded to Crete for an active shooter event. Troopers arrived at the scene in a residential neighborhood and assisted with perimeter security and evacuation. The NSP SWAT team responded and located the suspect deceased in his home. There were seven victims, both children and adults, who were treated for their injuries. Troopers, along with allied agencies including the Crete Police Department, Saline County Sheriff's Office, and multiple fire departments, all worked together to resolve the situation.

Troop H welcomed two new troopers to the family: Troopers Samantha Ligenza (#297, Duty Station Wahoo) and Sinai Mandungu (#341, Duty Station Lincoln). Both troopers 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 promote Investigator Adam Strode (#242) as the newest Troop H Patrol Division Sergeant.

## Featured Divisions: Drug Division, Technical Crimes and Crime Lab

### Drug Division

Last quarter, our Investigative Services' Drug Units have been highly active in working towards making communities safer. According to the latest Midwest HIDTA Threat Assessment, methamphetamine is the second biggest drug threat in the region, following fentanyl.

The Troop H Drug Unit is part of the Lincoln/Lancaster County Narcotics Task Force, which is a local HIDTA Task Force comprised of the Lincoln Police Department and Lancaster County Sheriff's Office. Investigator Jonathan Schwarz, is a recent addition to the unit and is assigned to work on the task force's 2nd shift. In addition to working as part of the task force primarily in Lincoln/Lancaster County, the Troop H drug unit conducts drug investigations and provides support to allied agencies in 13 other counties within the troop area. The unit also regularly works with the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services to investigate the introduction of narcotics and other contraband into multiple state correctional facilities.

The Troop E Drug Unit initiated 10 new investigations, assisted the WING Task Force with several more, and made 2 arrests. They identified 2 drug trafficking organizations in the Panhandle and Colorado. Collaborating with the Patrol Division, a traffic stop led to the seizure of 1,000 fentanyl pills and 2 lbs. of methamphetamine. A major drug supplier in the Scottsbluff and Alliance area was sentenced to 20 years in prison, and 4 more arrests of associates are likely. In another successful operation, a Chadron city worker was arrested immediately after accepting a controlled delivery of a ½ lb. of

methamphetamine. Despite being short-staffed, the unit continues to be proactive.

The Troop D Drug Unit has been mostly focused on following up on a conspiracy case and the subsequent arrests during the Quarter 1 of 2024. The Investigators have been busy conducting proffer interviews and testifying in Federal and State level court hearings. Recognizing that drug conspiracy cases are expansive and extend beyond Nebraska's borders, the Investigators are collaborating closely with investigators from other states to further their investigations. Additionally, Sgt. Harris and Lt. Arnold attended the National Alliance of State Drug Enforcement Agencies (NASDEA) Conference, which provided valuable insights into combating illegal drug problems. The relationships established during this conference will be leveraged for partnering with other states on large drug conspiracy cases.

The Troop C Drug Unit, consisting of a Sergeant and 4 Investigators, is involved in working with the TRIDENT FBI-sponsored Drug Task Force and members from the Tri-Cities Sheriff's Department and Police Department Task Force Officers. They are dedicated to supporting the HIDTA programs in Nebraska and dismantling Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) operating in the area through coordinated efforts to build conspiracy cases for state or federal level prosecution.

The Troop B Drug division which is made up of one Sergeant and 3 Investigators that are involved with the SNARE Drug Task Force and an Investigator assigned to the Tri State Task Force. During Quarter 2,



Investigators along with CIU conducted a controlled delivery of a package containing five pounds of methamphetamine to a trailer in Columbus where one suspect was arrested after a search warrant was executed. The suspect was federally indicted in June. Another suspect in Norfolk was federally indicted after a surveillance operation led Investigators to the arrest of a second suspect and a subsequent search warrant on a residence. Investigators located 3½ pounds of methamphetamine in the residence. The Troop B Drug Investigators were recognized in receiving the Advancing Justice and Cooperation Law Enforcement Coordination Award at the 2024 LECC conference in Kearney.

In Troop A, Investigator Alberico has started overseeing pharmaceutical drug diversion and prescription fraud. In a short period, she received 51 reports from pharmacies across the state, resulting in 13 alerts and 2 felony arrests. The CIU was involved in a significant interdiction on May 29, resulting in the seizure of 16,000 suspected fentanyl pills after encountering two subjects at the train station. Moreover, the Overdose Response Task Force, in collaboration with Troop C Drug Investigators and other allied partners, helped disrupt a fentanyl trafficking organization believed to be responsible for several overdose deaths in the region.

## Nebraska Information Analysis Center & Technical Crimes Unit

The year is half over and in reflection of this the NIAC and TCU have continued to absorb more requests for service from internal and external partners from across the state and have met this increase of work with a high degree of efficiency and professionalism. As we see in many divisions within the Patrol, the NIAC and TCU are filled with employees that go above and beyond their call to service.

In the NIAC, the role of the crime analyst has evolved in the past few years, and it involves more than just simple data analysis. Analysts are tasked with conducting technical analysis of cell phones and computers, researching suspects involved in crimes, writing situational awareness bulletins, and conducting threat assessments of suspicious people and high-profile events across the state. The analysts continue to meet the challenges of the job and seek training so they can develop the proficiency needed to provide quality products to the field.

Since the beginning of the year, the NIAC has responded to 1,446 requests for services, which included major case assistance for homicides, officer involved shootings, and crimes against children. Additionally, the NIAC has pushed out 248 situational awareness and passthrough bulletins, 276 work-ups, 274 facial recognition requests, and provided 21 presentations. In the TCU, the ever-changing internet and corresponding applications continue to challenge the team in several ways. The overall volume of cases received from the National Center for Missing and Exploit-

ed children ballooned to an astounding 34 million tips worldwide in 2023. Nebraska alone saw nearly 4000 tips in 2023, which is a massive increase when compared to 601 in 2017. The TCU has worked hard to triage these leads and develop cases against the worst of the worst offenders in the state.

Since the beginning of the year, investigators have made 18 arrests and have several pending indictments of persons suspected of possessing, distributing, and manufacturing child pornography, child enticement, and child sexual assault. These cases are labor intensive, and cause all involved to invest themselves mentally and emotionally. Often investigators are exposed to suspects and children living in deplorable conditions that is incomprehensible to most people. Despite that, the team always responds professionally and works with a high level of proficiency to process digital evidence critical to proving the case in court and holding bad guys accountable.

With all the work that is done in the field to make these cases, there is an equal amount of work that occurs in the lab to process the evidence for court proceedings.

Since the beginning of the year, the lab has processed and examined 1,084 devices. In 2020,

the lab processed 735 devices. Last year the lab processed over 2,600 devices and will likely come close to the same number this year. Additionally, the lab has the capability of conducting forensic video analysis which has proven helpful in many cases.

The NIAC and TCU have many special people that give up a lot to do what they do. Many of them have talents that qualify them for other jobs that pay much more, but they stay. They stay because of the satisfaction of helping a child, the thrill of catching a bad guy, or the fulfillment of providing critical information to keep others safe. Most of all, they care about people and doing the right thing for the greater good.



Talk:  
#StartTheConversation



Monitor:  
Online Use & Connections



Set-up:  
Devices/Accounts/Passwords



Restrict:  
Content & Permissions



Approve:  
Apps & Games

## Featured Division: Crime Lab

### Featured Story: Tornado Season Causes Damage Across

#### Crime Lab

The Crime Laboratory is excited to embark on the next phase of its facility expansion project which will nearly double the size of the laboratory to accommodate for the continued growth in demand for services over the next two decades. The expansion involves enlarging the building in all directions and reconfiguring existing space. Despite construction set to start this fall, which will inevitably affect staff and efficiency, the Laboratory remains committed to delivering high quality, timely service throughout the anticipated two-year construction period.

Continuing its dedication to technological advancement, the Laboratory continues to upgrade technology across various sections. The Controlled Substances Section, with financial support from the Lancaster County Drug Board, has implemented a new method for the quantitation of methamphetamine utilizing a high throughput UV-Vis spectrophotometer. The Toxicology Section is transitioning to an ELISA based system for screening urine samples. Meanwhile, the Latent Print Section has acquired a Foster-Freeman

DSC 5 imaging system, currently undergoing validation for casework which will assist in the detection and documentation of fingerprints.

The Biology Unit recently purchased a RapidHit instrument in preparation for a rapid DNA program pending regulatory approval. This program will give Law Enforcement agencies in Nebraska the opportunity to partner with the Laboratory to utilize rapid DNA on select, qualifying case and sample types. Looking ahead, the Firearms/Tool Marks Section anticipates incorporating of VCM/3D microscopy and reintroducing NIBIN once the building expansion is complete.

Additionally, the Case Management Section, in collaboration with the IT Business System Coordinator, is developing enhancements to the LIMS system to eventually allow for the immediate and automated distribution of Laboratory Reports via an NCJIS portal. Beyond technological advancements, the Laboratory maintains compliance with industry standards and best practices. Quality

Assurance, alongside each Section's Technical Leader, ensures compliance to ISO:IEC 17025:2017 and supplemental standards as well as the FBI Quality Assurance Standards as demonstrated through regularly scheduled audits. The laboratory also monitors emerging standards being developed from various organizations implementing necessary adjustments to uphold the highest quality of service.

Lastly, the Laboratory would like to say Thank You to Pam Zilly for her 37 years of dedicated service, including 16 as Director, and congratulates her on her well-deserved retirement. Her leadership has significantly contributed to the Laboratory's commitment to providing exemplary service to the citizens of Nebraska.



## Tornado Season Causes Damage Across Eastern Nebraska

2024 has shaped up to be Nebraska's most active tornado season since 2004. In total, there have been over 60 tornadoes across the state. A majority of these tornadoes caused little to no damage. However, through the months of April and May, eastern Nebraska and areas in western Iowa received more notable damage.

Following the tornadoes on Arbor Day, troopers, alongside officials from multiple law enforcement agencies and the Nebraska National Guard, worked tirelessly to ensure the safety and well-being of the affected communities. Gov. Jim Pillen and Col. John Bolduc flew with the Nebraska State Patrol Aviation Support Unit to survey the damage caused. Several hundred homes suffered significant damage or were destroyed during the storms, which dropped multiple tornadoes in several counties. Thankfully, only minor injuries have been reported as a result of these storms. In addition to the immediate response efforts, troopers were involved in post-tornado

recovery. These efforts included patrolling affected areas to prevent looting, surveying damage, and ensuring public safety. Troopers continue to provide additional patrols in the Elkhorn area in partnership with Douglas County and the Omaha Police Department.

While Nebraska's typical tornado season occurs from April to June, it's important to remember that a tornado can happen at any time if weather conditions are met. The Nebraska State Patrol's commitment to public safety and rapid response during this active tornado season highlights the agency's readiness to handle natural disasters. The efforts, in collaboration with other law enforcement agencies and community partners, ensure that the residents of Nebraska are supported and protected in times of crisis.



## Featured Stories: High School Cadets Train Like Troopers at Junior Law Academy

### High School Cadets Train Like Troopers at Junior Law Academy

58 high school students got the chance to train like a trooper at the Nebraska State Patrol Training Academy. The cadets were all part of the 54th Junior Law Academy, which gives upcoming high school seniors a glimpse of what it takes to be a Nebraska State Trooper.

"These cadets worked hard throughout the entire week, taking on some of the same training that our troopers go through," said Captain Andy Ecklund, NSP Director of Training. "Junior Law gives these students an experience they'll remember for years to come. These young men and women showed determination to complete the training and the drive necessary to make a difference for our state. We'd love to have them become Nebraska Troopers in a few years."

During 28 boys and 30 girls graduated from the 54th Junior Law Academy. Several of the cadets received awards for their excellent performances during the week.



Junior Law is an annual program organized by the American Legion Department of Nebraska and hosted by the NSP Training Academy in Grand Island. High school juniors from across the state are eligible to apply for the program. Troopers from around Nebraska come together to teach the cadets and put them through several blocks of training. Several current Nebraska State Troopers are graduates of Junior Law.

2024 Boys Outstanding Cadet	Wesley Vick
2024 Girls Outstanding Cadet	Aubrie Seybold
2024 Boys Markmanship Award	Justin Haskins
2024 Girls Markmanship Award	Zylena Ramirez
2024 Boys Driving Award	Thomas Walker
2024 Girls Driving Award	Kelsi Cox

## Remembering Officer Ross Bartlett

On Friday, April 12th, the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services and the Ceresco Police Department lost one of their finest during a crash that occurred on Highway 77 just south of Ceresco, Nebraska. The crash included multiple vehicles, including Officer Ross Bartlett's Ceresco Police Department cruiser.

Officer Bartlett, 54, was life-flighted to Bryan Health West Campus by Star Care. Despite the efforts of many bystanders, first responders, and medical personnel, Officer Bartlett succumbed to his injuries and was pronounced deceased later that evening at the hospital. Troopers with the Nebraska

State Patrol conducted a full crash reconstruction and investigation, with the results subsequently provided to the Lancaster County Attorney's Office.

With heavy hearts, we remember Officer Bartlett's life. He dedicated his career to serving the citizens of Nebraska, working for several law enforcement agencies, and serving as an investigator for the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services for the past 7 years. Even off duty, Officer Bartlett volunteered for the Ceresco Fire Department, demonstrating his commitment to his community. Many of our troopers



and investigators knew Officer Bartlett and his family personally. On behalf of the Nebraska State Patrol, we'd like to extend our deepest condolences to Officer Bartlett's family, friends, and colleagues.



## New Hires

### April 2024

- Rachel Andrew, Office Specialist—CID Front Desk, Lincoln
- Carrie Masek, Office Specialist—CE, Lincoln

### May 2024

- Amber Green, Office Specialist—CID Backgrounds, Lincoln
- Penny Noto, Office Specialist—Patrol Division, Omaha
- Paul Payne, Attorney III,

Lincoln

- Anthony Asaro, Crime Analyst—Intelligence, Lincoln

### June 2024

- Lilyana Yebra, Accountant I, Lincoln
- Benny Feng, HR Generalist-Payroll Team, Lincoln
- Clay Zimmerman, Security Guard, Lincoln
- Payge Poulsen, Forensic Tech-Crime Lab, Lincoln

- Autumn Payne, Records Analysis Supervisor—Research Team, Lincoln



## Transfers

### May 2024

- Cory Comstock, Crime Analyst-NIAC to Administrative Specialist-CE, Lincoln
- Stacy Gage, HR Generalist/Payroll to Office Specialist/CID Backgrounds, Lincoln
- Cynthia Alberico, Investigator to Criminal to Drug

(Pharmaceutical Diversion), Omaha

NCHIP Team, Lincoln

### June 2024

- Jonathan Schwarz, Patrol Trooper to Drug Investigator, Lincoln
- Justin Raes, PSD Trooper to Criminal Investigator, Omaha
- Braxton Benes, Admin Tech—Research Team to

## Retirements

### April 2024

- Gary Stegman, Trooper-Patrol Division, Omaha
- Paul Smoot, Investigator-Criminal Division, Omaha
- Mick Downing Jr., Sergeant-Patrol Division, Chadron
- Anthony Sattlefield, Investigator-Criminal Division (Violent Crimes TF), Omaha

### May 2024

- Adam Strode, Drug Investigator to Patrol Sergeant, Lincoln

## Separations

### April 2024

- Haylee Rutt, Office Specialist—CE, Lincoln
- Robby Jackson, Trooper-CE Division, Scottsbluff
- Linda DeLancey, Office Specialist-Patrol Division, Omaha
- Jeffery Laabs, Procurement Specialist, Lincoln
- Theodore Bax, Security Guard, Lincoln
- Barbara Kohles, Office Specialist—Patrol Division, Omaha
- Tracy Hayes, Federal Aid Administrator III—Grants, Lincoln

### June 2024

- Lilian Chavez, Office Specialist, Grand Island
- Mike Ford, Office Specialist—CID Backgrounds, Lincoln
- Trent Papstein, Administrative Technician—
- David Burton, Security Guard, Lincoln
- Carrie Masek, Office Specialist—CE, Lincoln
- Derek Lohner, IT Infr. Support Analyst/Sr.—NIAC, Lincoln

## Promotions

### April 2024

- Bonnie Hopkins, Security Communications Specialist to Security Communications Shift Supervisor, Lincoln
- Paul Hagen, Patrol Lieutenant to Patrol Captain, Norfolk
- Miranda Voboril, Office Specialist/Backgrounds to Admin Tech-CHP, Lincoln
- Kara Peightal, Forensic Technician to Forensic Scientist I-Latents, Lincoln

### May 2024

- Nicholas Pollreis, Office Specialist/CID Front Desk to Communications Specialist, Lincoln
- Aubrey Dowling, Security Guard to Security Communications Specialist, Lincoln

### June 2024

- Jason Linder, Crime Lab Manager to Crime Lab Director, Lincoln
- Christine Reisen, Forensic Scientist III to Crime Lab Supervisor, Lincoln
- Gavin Boutin, Officer Candidate to Patrol Trooper, Ogallala
- Ryan Clark, Officer Candidate to Patrol Trooper, Kearney
- Samuel Gustafson, Officer Candidate to Patrol Trooper, Omaha
- Ashley Jackson, Officer Candidate to Patrol Trooper, Scottsbluff
- Jordan Jones, Officer Candidate to Patrol Trooper, Scottsbluff
- Samantha Ligenza, Officer

Candidate to Patrol Trooper, Wahoo

- Sinai Mandungu, Officer Candidate to Patrol Trooper, Lincoln
- Tomas Margritz, Officer Candidate to Patrol Trooper, Kearney
- Carissa Moore, Officer Candidate to Patrol Trooper, West Point
- Bryce Smidt, Officer Candidate to Patrol Trooper, South Sioux City
- Brian Smith, Officer Candidate to Patrol Trooper, North Platte
- Garrett Swantek, Officer Candidate to Patrol Trooper, Scottsbluff
- Seth Valverde, Officer Candidate to Patrol Trooper, Norfolk

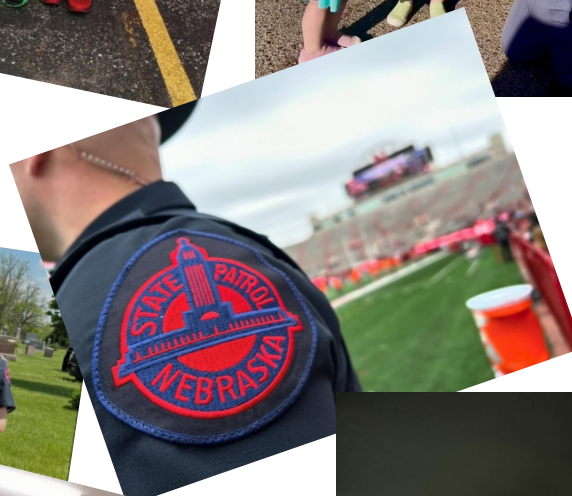




All images were  
taken by  
various NSP  
personnel and  
friends around  
the State during  
the first quarter  
of 2024!









## NEBRASKA STATE PATROL

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

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

### Business Tagline or Motto

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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