

INFORMER

Volume 81

2023—Fourth Quarter

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Here's to 2023

2023 was another busy year for the Nebraska State Patrol thanks to great teamwork and dedicated service across our agency.

The year was highlighted by many accomplishments and tremendous examples of public service. With acts of heroism, such as Trooper Coffman diving into freezing water to rescue a small child who has suspended upside down in her car seat and partially submerged in the water, to Trooper Nguyen and Capitol Security Guard Creps rushing into a residential fire before fire crews arrived on scene, the bravery and selflessness of our team was on full display.

Our team came together when some of our own were faced with life-threatening situations. We're thankful for the quick actions of Sergeant Eymann and Investigator Parsons when confronted with a violent felon

attempting to shoot them and an LPD Investigator. We're thankful for the ongoing recovery of Sergeant Henrichs after a suspect intentionally rammed his patrol unit during a pursuit and we're grateful for the quick care he received on scene and support ever since.

2023 was also marked with highlights at the NSP Crime Lab. Last year, our scientists completed work on a years-long testing project to eliminate a backlog of sexual assault kits held in evidence by the Omaha Police Department. Our Crime Lab is also in the process of preparing for expansion, with approval given by the legislature in 2023 and the design and preparation phase well underway.

Our Executive Protection detail not only successfully transitioned to a new Governor, but also took on the high-profile assignment of guarding.

Nebraska football coach Matt Rhule during gamedays and embedding troopers with the team throughout the season. The partnership brought two proud Nebraska brands together—Nebraska Football and the Nebraska State Patrol.

Our Aviation Support Unit brought on new pilots, new leadership, and launched a partnership with the Lincoln Police Department and Lancaster County Sheriff's Office to train some officers and deputies at Tactical Flight Officers. Combined with 10 troopers serving as TFOs, our AirWing has a more robust team than ever before.

As we turn the page to 2024, our team is poised for another great year. Our CID teammates will continue their recent successes of increasing efficiency in fingerprinting. Our IT teammates will continue to provide excellent support to our agency as well as dozens upon dozens of our allied agencies across the state. And our troopers and investigators will continue to answer the call, at any hour of the day, to keep Nebraska safe.

Thank you, NSP, for your great work in 2023. Have a great 2024!



Aviation Support Division

The Aviation Support Unit welcomed Trooper Steve Johnson #267 to the unit. Trp. Johnson brings many years of aviation experience from his military service and aviation jobs.

The ASU has never had this many pilots on staff. For the first time in the history of the ASU, it established a formal Tactical Flight Officer training course. In partnership with the Lincoln Police Department and the Lancaster County Sheriff's Office, sixteen candidates were interviewed and trained for this position. Four officers from LPD, two Deputies from LCSO, and Ten Troopers from NSP went through a one-week course at HQ in Lincoln. Those candidates are continuing their

training while working shifts with the pilots. This partnership will allow the ASU to cover more shifts, increasing the safety of those on the roads.



Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT)

NSP SWAT stayed busy during the fourth quarter of 2023. The SWAT team responded to eight different calls consisting of three warrant services, three barricade incidents, a hostage incident involving an 8 year old, and assisted with a transportation and court security assignment involving a homicide suspect.

Their continued use of technology and outside the box thinking has led to a several positive outcomes during these events.

- Troop E- Alliance joint effort with negotiators to rescue 8 year old hostage
- Troop B- West Point Unique call, armed suicidal male in a deer stand

discharging a firearm. Technology, teamwork with negotiators and perseverance paid off on this event. The use of drones, thermal devices, and chemical agents provided a positive outcome.



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

The NIAC and TCU saw increases in nearly every category for service in 2023 and still managed to return quality products to the field in a timely manner. The computer lab is now completely staffed and conducting examinations for internal and external partners across the state. The lab conducted 2,367 forensic examinations of cell phones, computers, and other devices. Additionally, the lab is now offering forensic video analysis. Trp. Neal Trantham is a certified video examiner and has the tools and capabilities to enhance video for further examination.

Our TCU investigators continue to make solid cases as cybertips from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

continue to grow. The ICAC taskforce vetted 3,989 cybertips which have led to well over 250 criminal cases for possession, distribution, or manufacturing Child Pornography. As a part of their efforts, Investigators conducted 37 knock and talks, executed 36 residential search warrants, and made 48 arrests of bad actors that exploit children. Many cases that were started in 2023 will lead to further state and federal arrests in 2024.

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 2,537 requests for service, completed 1,059 work-ups,

entered 3,700 deconflictions and put out 154 situational awareness bulletins. The NIAC hired several new people during the year. Tish Connelly moved from digital forensic examiner to Research manager, Cory Comstock was hired as a threat analyst, Sydney Bruggeman took over the Watch Center, and Jackie Thelen took over the analyst role in Troop D after Kari Day moved over to the TCU as a digital forensic examiner.

Emergency Preparation Coordination

The Emergency Preparedness side of the Special Operations Division continues to evolve.

Some of the items Sergeant Prante has been involved with include managing several alert systems NSP has regarding missing endangered persons along with anything meeting NEMA emergency alert requirements. He also is responsible for coordinating radiological shipments through our state. Sgt Prante continues to work toward finalizing the State Patrol's "Continuity of Operations Plan". He also had the opportunity to represent NSP at the ASHANTI Alert

Workgroup Conference in Washington DC.

Sgt Prante was also instrumental in working with NEMA to obtain a grant for NSP Downlink program for the amount of \$244,652.84.



Hazardous Device Technician (HDT)

The NSP HDT Unit continues to keep busy. For the fourth quarter of 2023 they have had nineteen activations.

One of these calls involved a home explosion killing one person in Hastings. Several technicians responded to this event. Their training, experience and dedication was shown in full swing while the scene was processed for additional explosive devices and injured parties. Over a dozen additional devices were located and rendered safe on scene.

HDT continues to assist during SWAT activations and University of Nebraska at

Lincoln home football games.

HDT also recovered and disposed of approximately 10 lbs. of explosive materials, secured \$375,000 in Homeland Security Grand funds for purchase of robots, bomb suits, trailer and Xray equipment, and issued over 100 Nebraska explosive permits.



Police Service Dogs (PSD)

With the passing of PSD Lee on 11/5/23, the Nebraska State Patrol added PSD "Frank" handled by Trp McKain to the PSD Unit. PSD Lee served courageously and selflessly for his handler and the State of Nebraska. He was a valuable asset and will be missed.

This was another productive quarter for the PSD teams. The ten members conducted approximately 45 narcotic PSD deployments locating about 1574 pounds of marijuana, 22 pounds of methamphetamine and over 13 pounds of other drug types along with seizing one weapon. The PSD teams also achieved over 48 arrests and were also involved in over 30 Tactical and Patrol related calls for service. During some of these calls for service homicide suspects and violent felons were located.

PSD handlers continue to use technology to their advantage using drones over 335 times this year to problem solve during events.

The PSD Unit is preparing for the upcoming Spring Camp hosted at the Nebraska State Patrol Academy.



NSP Hosts Officials from 11 States for Commercial Vehicle Training

The Nebraska State Patrol hosted troopers and officers from eleven other states for a week of training that will help keep roadways safe across the country.

NSP Carrier Enforcement Troopers provided a series of training sessions focused on commercial motor vehicle safety, including inspections and post-crash investigations. The training included troopers and officers from Wyoming, Missouri, Iowa, Vermont, Illinois, Wisconsin, Texas, Nevada, New Jersey, Alaska, and South Dakota.

“Sharing knowledge across state lines helps keep roadways safe across the entire country,”

said Captain Martin Denton, Commander of NSP Carrier Enforcement. “We shape these training sessions around what our troopers encounter in real life. We were proud to share those experiences with troopers and officers from many other states and continue the collaboration that has been ongoing for years.”

The training sessions provided both classroom and hands-on instruction in areas of forensic examination of commercial motor vehicles and completion of post-crash inspections of commercial motor vehicles. NSP received assistance from several local partners to make this training as valuable as possible.

Thank you to the Nebraska Trucking Association, Kearney Towing, Dowhy Towing, Coach Masters, Andersen Wrecking, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and others for their partnership.



Pink Patch Project

October marked the return of the Pink Patch Project for many law enforcement agencies across the state and many Nebraska State Troopers were wearing pink NSP patches to honor breast cancer fighters. The effort coincides with Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

The Pink Patch Project is a national campaign in which many law enforcement officers wear a pink version of their agency's shoulder patch. This is the sixth year that NSP has participated.

“We're proud to be part of the Pink Patch Project again this year,” said Colonel John Bolduc, Superintendent of the Nebraska State Patrol. “This nationwide campaign is a great

way to show support for millions of cancer fighters across the country. We're happy to be one of numerous Nebraska law enforcement agencies participating this year.”

Throughout October, troopers had the option to replace the standard NSP patch with a pink patch. NSP's pink patch features the NSP emblem in pink and black.

Pink NSP patches were available for purchase by NSP civilian employees and members of the public at local NSP offices. All proceeds from sales of the pink NSP patches benefited local organizations helping cancer fighters.



Featured Divisions: NSP HQ Activities Committee and CID

NSP HQ Activities Committee

The Nebraska State Patrol Headquarters Activities Committee officially organized in Fall 2021. After the move to our new headquarters facility with so many more teammates in one building, it was agreed this was 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/coffee trucks, food or dessert days for holidays, and a summertime cookout and potluck. We also have fun with contests such as the best chili or salsa, where the winners are voted on by teammates.

The committee also works to rally people to help others, such as donating winter-wear for elementary children and participating in the 2023 State Campaign Against Hunger. In

April we hosted our 2nd annual Bring Your Sons/Daughters to Work Day. This wonderful all-day event was developed for kids to learn about what different teams and divisions do for the Nebraska State Patrol, while also providing a glimpse of their parent/guardian day-to-day duties. The children observed and participated in a variety of demonstrations such as the Seat Belt Safety Demonstrator, Aviation Support Helicopter Tour, AFIS Fingerprinting, State Trooper Vehicle Tour and a K-9 Demo.

In 2024, we look forward to hosting our 3rd annual Bring your son's and daughters to work day, NSPHQ Annual BBQ

and more coffee and food truck options!

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!"

The committee would like to extend a huge Thank you, for participation in our 2023 events. If you have any questions or would like for us to reserve a coffee truck for large 2024 trainings/events, please email: NSP.HQActivitiesCommittee@nebraska.gov



Criminal Identification Division (CID)

The CID is composed of 65 teammates representing ten teams. 2023 ended with most teams fully or nearly fully staff. This allowed greater service to our law enforcement partners and citizen-customers.

Each legislative cycle usually brings additional duties to the CID teams. National background checks laws are always evolving, and CID works with NSP Professional Standards to ensure any new legislation has been vetted to avoid conflicting with current statutes. Recent legislation added household pets be included in protection orders. The Centralized Protection Order (CPO) team insures over 2400 POs in Nebraska are entered correctly

NSP IT division plays a large role in CID by developing and maintaining software and other technical aspects to keep CID

on an even keel. CID hopes to capitalize on an upgraded RITS program in 2024.

Many of the teams assist our Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) work with receiving, reviewing, processing, updating, and maintaining criminal based fingerprint records. CID also works closely with other state agencies in providing fingerprint-based backgrounds for those entering certain career fields in the state. In 2023, over 87,000 fingerprint cards were processed by CID. Law enforcement in Nebraska on average arrest 175 persons daily. When cards are forwarded to the FBI, the submittal error rate is always below 1%.

As expected with the passing of LB77 this year, our Permits group has seen new applicants for conceal handgun carry

dropped dramatically. Nebraska has over 90,000 CHP holders in the state.

CID continues to coordinate with state and federal agencies to ensure the fastest, most secure method of providing accurate criminal history information is available 24/7/365. Besides teams listed above, CID is also composed of personnel in the Sex Offender Registry, Backgrounds, Research, QAIP, Front Desk, NICS and NCHIP. Each team and each teammate is a valuable resource in providing professional service to our customers.



Governor Pillen Recognizes Trooper, Deputy for Heroic Action

Governor Jim Pillen recognized two law enforcement officers for their life-saving actions following a crash on Thanksgiving evening.

On Thursday, November 23, at approximately 9:45 p.m., the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office received a report of a two-vehicle crash on Interstate 80 near mile marker 163. Trooper Alex Coffman was the closest to the scene and responded immediately. Trooper Coffman located the two vehicles on their sides and partially submerged in the water of Fremont Slough. Trooper Coffman found two young boys standing in the freezing water and carried them to his patrol vehicle to get warm.

When he returned to the vehicle, the kids' mother was yelling that another child was still inside the vehicle. Lincoln County Deputy Tyler Schultz

arrived at the scene and assisted Trooper Coffman as they tried to extricate the one-year-old girl from the vehicle. The girl was still buckled into her car seat and was partially submerged in the water.

Trooper Coffman and Deputy Schultz both entered the freezing water to reach the girl. Coffman submerged himself to get inside the vehicle and cut the seat belt away. Deputy Schultz was then able to pull the girl out of the vehicle through a broken window.

In December, Governor Pillen and Nebraska State Patrol Colonel John Bolduc presented the NSP Life Saver Award to Trooper Coffman and the NSP Public Service Award to Deputy Schultz for their heroic actions on Thanksgiving evening.

All parties involved in the crash were transported to the hospital and treated for non-life-threatening injuries.

"Across our great state, law enforcement officers and first responders commit many acts of heroism, often without fanfare or recognition," said Gov. Pillen. "Honorees – Trooper Coffman and Deputy Schultz – represent the dedication and selflessness that defines all who serve and protect Nebraskans, each and every day."

The NSP Life Saver Award is presented to NSP personnel for their actions to preserve life while responding to a life-or-death situation. The NSP Public Service Award is presented to non-NSP personnel, including civilians, for heroic actions.



Camp 68

The most recent Nebraska State Patrol Basic Recruit Class finally gained their official "Trooper" title as they took the Oath of Office on December 15th, 2023 in a ceremony held at the Nebraska State Capitol. That silver Trooper badge is what these 6 individuals have been striving for during their 22-week long training camp.

Every trial and tribulation thrown at Camp 68 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 Spencer Kort addressed the crowd on behalf of him and his campmates about the how important the core value of being team oriented was important with being the smallest graduating class in the history of the State Patrol.

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!

Recruit Reutlinger 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

Recruit Braden Heidbrink 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, Recruit Braden Heidbrink received the Capt. Mark Williams Core Values Achievement Award.

Recruit Spencer Kort was given the O.H. Witt Academic Achievement Award for having the highest grade point average throughout camp.

Last but certainly not least, Recruit Marco Vera Chaez 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 68! The Nebraska State Patrol proudly welcomes you to the team and looks forward to watching you thrive.



Trooper	Badge #	Duty Station	Troop Area
Elizabeth Forbes	115	Nebraska City	H
Braden Heidbrink	155	Beatrice	H
Spencer Kort	122	Beatrice	H
Chad Reutlinger	163	Holdrege	D
Marco Vera Chavez	171	Alliance	E
Rylan Weaver	198	Omaha	A

PERSONNEL ACTIONS

New Hires

October 2023

- Manny Rivera, Security Guard, Lincoln
- Jason Dean, Procurement Officer, Lincoln
- Gabrielle Duffek, Forensic Scientist I-Biology Unit, Lincoln
- Rhonda Serna, Communications Specialist, North Platte
- Brandi Mitchell, Communications Specialist., Lincoln

- Sherrie McLain, Office Specialist, Omaha

November 2023

- LeeAnn Schwabauer, Communications Specialist, Lincoln
- Braxton Benes, Administrative Tech-Criminal History Specialist, Lincoln

December 2023

- Nicholas Pollreis, Office Specialist-CID, Lincoln

- Audra Ringenberg, Admin Programs Officer I-QAIP, Lincoln



Transfers

October 2023

- Tony Kavan, Criminal Investigator to Trooper-Patrol Division, Grand Island to Hastings
- Thomas Kavan, Trooper-Patrol Division to Carrier Enforcement, Norfolk
- Steven Johnson, Trooper-Patrol Division to Aviation Support-Lincoln

- John Lukesh, Investigator (Drug), Omaha to Lincoln
- Ryan Stirn, Patrol Trooper to Investigator, Hastings
- Colton Kirkendall, Patrol Trooper, South Sioux City to Beatrice
- Zenaida Crouse, Admin Tech-Research to NCHIP, Lincoln

- Bryan Walter, Trooper-Patrol to Carrier Enforcement, O'Neill

December 2023

- Alex Coffman, Trooper-Broken Bow to North Platte

Retirements

October 2023

- Matthew Maus, Trooper-Patrol Division, Grand Island
- Jeffrey Wallace, Trooper-Patrol Division, Scottsbluff
- Susan Chesnut, Office Specialist-Inv. Services, Omaha
- Kurt Von Minden, Investigative Sergeant, Scottsbluff

November 2023

- Lawney Knuth, Trooper-CE Division, Holdrege

December 2023

- Les Zimmerman, Sergeant -CE Division, Waverly
- Todd Wiley, Inv.- Drug Division, Omaha

Separations

October 2023

- Alysha Thomas, Communications Specialist, North Platte
- Gage Hyberger, Trooper-Patrol Division, Hastings
- Brandi Mitchell, Communications Specialist, Lincoln
- Alex Hutchison, Officer Candidate-Camp 68, Grand Island
- Meggan Macomber, Forensic Scientist III, Lincoln
- Zane Sackett, Trooper-Patrol Division, McCook
- Alyssa Gustafson, Office Specialist-CE, Lincoln
- Manuel Rivera, Security Guard, Lincoln
- Annette Newton, Records Supervisor, Lincoln
- Mark Fluckey, Patrol Trooper, York
- Jodi Mahan, Administrative Specialist-CE, Lincoln
- Jessica Forch, Attorney III, Lincoln
- Jenna Riddle, Trooper-Patrol Division, Lincoln



November 2023

- Tiffanie Caristo, Forensic Technician-AFIS, Lincoln
- Matthew Barnes, Security Guard, Lincoln

December 2023

- Rhonda Serna, Communications Specialist, North Platte
- Brayen Moreno, Security Guard, Lincoln

Promotions

October 2023

- Art Frerichs, Patrol Lieutenant to Troop Commander, Scottsbluff
- Nathan Veal, CE Trooper to Patrol Sergeant, North Platte
- Braden Heidbrink, Officer Candidate to Patrol Trooper, Beatrice
- Spencer Kort, Officer Candidate to Patrol Trooper, Beatrice
- Marco Vera Chavez, Officer Candidate to Patrol Trooper, Alliance
- Emily Shupe, Office Specialist to AFIS Forensic Tech, CID-Lincoln

November 2023

- Mark Boyer, Attorney III to Agency Legal Counsel, Lincoln
- Sean Wilson, Patrol Sergeant to Capitol Security Lieutenant, Lincoln
- Rylan Weaver, Officer Candidate to Patrol Trooper, Omaha
- Chad Reutlinger, Officer Candidate to Patrol Trooper, Holdrege

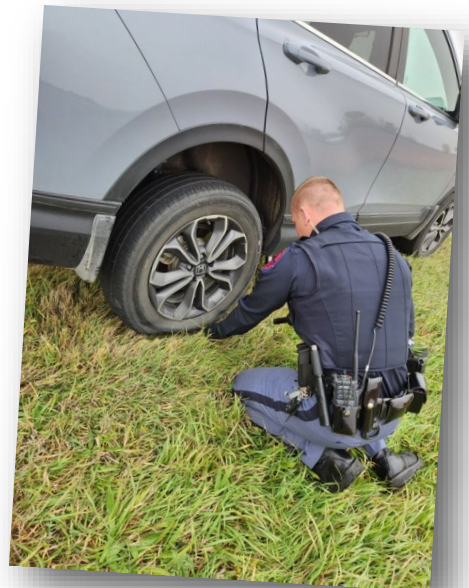
December 2023

- Elizabeth Forbes, Officer Candidate to Patrol Trooper, Nebraska City
- Cory Halverson, CE Sergeant to CE Lieutenant, North Platte





All images were taken by various NSP personnel and friends around the State during the fourth quarter of 2023!









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



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

- Loyal M. Zink (#43)
- John T. Meistrell (#67)
- Vernon C. Rolfs (#129)
- Marvin L. Hansen (#98)
- Duane F. Nichols (#133)
- Raymond M. Koerber (#108)
- George W. Amos Jr. (#9)
- Michael D. Farber (#427)
- Robert J. Chab (#221)
- Donald Matejka (#192)
- Mark P. Wagner (#168)
- Jerry L. Smith (#373)



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