

# Minnesota Department of Public Safety Minnesota State Patrol

## ANNUAL STATE PATROL AWARDS CEREMONY

### ***Meritorious Citizenship Award***

*This award is presented to individuals other than State Patrol employees who have assisted the Minnesota State Patrol in providing a significant service to the public.*

- **Shane Blair**

(Nominated by Lt. Paul VanVoorhis)

At approximately 9:30 pm on July 28, a two vehicle head on crash occurred on Highway 29 south of Starbuck. Shane Blair was the first person to come across the crash and stopped to help. When Trp. Amelia Churchill arrived at the scene, she observed Mr. Blair attempting to care for an injured infant. He was balancing the car seat and infant on the exposed rear seat of the damaged vehicle and his knee.

Trp. Churchill observed the infant was occasionally breathing with large gasps for air. She instructed Mr. Blair to gently slide his hand further under the infant's neck and head to slowly open the airway to allow better and stronger respirations. He maintained the infant's airway, allowing Trp. Churchill to assess the other injured victims.

Mr. Blair further assisted Trp. Churchill by cutting the seatbelt from the car seat and helping carry the infant to an ambulance when it arrived on scene. He then returned to the damaged vehicle and continued to be on scene. He waited until another trooper arrived and gave a statement of his observations.

Shane Blair provided care and did all he could to assist at the scene of a serious crash. He is commended for his actions and presented with a Meritorious Citizenship Award.

- **Jose Alvarado, Michael Remark**

(Nominated by Sgt. Dennis Koenen)

At 9:00 pm on August 17, Jose Alvarado came upon a two vehicle crash on Highway 12 in Kandiyohi Township. A woman was standing on the roadway screaming that a car was on fire. He observed that the fire was under the hood into the windshield area and approaching the occupants.

Mr. Alvarado ran down the embankment to the van and checked the pulse of the driver, finding none. He heard screaming and crying and saw a young boy belted behind the driver.

Michael Remark arrived on scene, heard a child crying from inside the burning van, and then heard an individual down at the van asking for help. He saw Mr. Alvarado trying to open the driver's side sliding door. Mr. Remark assisted with no success. They then noticed that the latch to the rear passenger window was broken and ripped it open. Mr. Alvarado entered the burning van, unbelted the boy and handed him to Mr. Remark, who ran the boy up to the road and his truck. Mr. Remark held on to the boy trying to calm him until emergency personnel arrived.



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Still at the van, Mr. Alvarado went to the passenger side where a young girl was seated and tried to open the sliding door but it was too damaged. He saw that the window was broken open so he reached in and felt a pulse on the girl, noticing that she was belted and one of her legs was trapped by the front passenger seat. At this point, it was hard for him to see inside the van because of the smoke. As a deputy was discharging his fire extinguisher on the flames, Mr. Alvarado unbelted the girl, freed her leg, and picked her up through the window. He then carried her up the embankment to the shoulder of the road.

Jose Alvarado and Michael Remarke put themselves at risk to try to save the lives of two children. For their actions, they are presented with Meritorious Citizenship Awards.

- **Charles Riechers**  
(Nominated by Trp. Tim Peterson)

On the afternoon of September 6, Trp. Tim Peterson responded to a call of a female pedestrian in the construction zone on I-694 by Highway 10. The pedestrian was described as barefoot and waving her arms at traffic.

Trp. Peterson made contact with the woman and tried to engage her in conversation. She gave no response and then walked away from him. Refusing his request to stop and come back to his squad, Trp. Peterson grabbed her arm by the elbow, but she jerked away from his grasp and started walking faster. Not wanting her to walk into traffic, he attempted to restrain her on the ground, but she resisted and placed her arms under her chest.

As Trp. Peterson was attempting to dislodge her arms, Charles Riechers stopped and asked if he needed help. Trp. Peterson asked for help in getting her hands out from under her so she could be handcuffed. With the assistance of Mr. Riechers, that was accomplished and the woman was placed in Trp. Peterson's squad.

Mr. Riechers stated he could see that Trp. Peterson could use some help and felt it was his duty to stop. His willingness to do that quite possibly prevented injury to Trp. Peterson or the woman.

For his assistance to Trp. Peterson, Charles Riechers is presented with a Meritorious Citizenship Award.

- **John Heidenreich, Travis Jurek, Ward Willms**  
(Nominated by Lt. Adam Flynn and Trp. Michael Cleveland)

On October 23, a vehicle traveling on the ramp from I-494 to Highway 77 started on fire. The 89-year-old driver was able to pull over to the shoulder and exit the vehicle, however his 92-year-old female passenger was not. The passenger compartment was filling with smoke and the engine compartment became fully engulfed.

The driver was not physically able to get the passenger out of the vehicle. John Heidenreich, Travis Jurek and Ward Willms observed the fire and stopped to help. Upon learning that someone was still



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inside, all three ran to the vehicle. After trying to open the driver's door but finding it too hot to even try to open, they ran to the passenger side door and were able to successfully remove the female passenger. They then carried her away from the burning vehicle, and remained with her until medics arrived on scene.

Another citizen who was stopped in the traffic back-up reported that the three men removed the woman with no time to spare. The entire vehicle burned, with only the metal frame remaining. Had it not been for these three heroic citizens, the woman would have perished inside the vehicle.

For their willingness to quickly help in a situation that put their own safety at risk, John Heidenreich, Travis Jurek and Ward Willms are presented with Meritorious Citizenship Awards.

- **John Sales**  
(Nominated by Trp. Renee Adrian)

At about 8:00 am on November 15, Jon Sales was on the ramp from Highway 610 to Highway 252 when he observed a vehicle drift across the lanes and hit the side guardrail. The driver appeared to be unconscious, but his vehicle was still moving. Mr. Sales used his own vehicle to stop the out-of-control vehicle and pin it against the guardrail.

Mr. Sales' quick thinking prevented a potential crash that would likely have occurred had the out-of-control vehicle not been stopped. Due to his actions, the driver, who was actually having a seizure, was safely stopped and able to quickly get medical attention.

Mr. Sales was more concerned with public safety and the treatment of the driver suffering a seizure than damaging his own vehicle. Unfortunately, the driver of the other vehicle had no insurance.

For his quick thinking, common sense and selflessness that prevented a potential crash, Jon Sales is presented with a Meritorious Citizenship Award.

- **Susan Bownes**  
(Nominated by Capt. Shelly Schrofer and Capitol Security Lt. Robert Metry)

Susan Bownes is the manager of the Traffic Violations Bureau of Ramsey County District Court. In that capacity, she has provided assistance to members of the State Patrol for many years. Whether it was for a simple question or a more complicated situation, Lt. Metry knew he could rely on her skills, knowledge and professional judgment. He said she strives to provide excellent assistance, answers to questions, or finds a way to solve the problem while, in the process, finds time to share a laugh.

Capt. Schrofer said that Ms. Bownes has been instrumental in advancing the State Patrol's progress toward the implementation of electronic citations in Ramsey County. She has been a true partner to the State Patrol, and is always willing to lend her knowledge and experience to assist with any issues encountered – even issues not directly related to her division or her responsibilities.



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Ms. Bownes genuinely cares about inter-agency relationships and finding the most efficient manner in which to accomplish our goals. She helped Capt. Schrofer understand the processes attorneys go through to get citations for court. They brainstormed ideas of how to avoid having citations returned for corrections because it was time consuming and there was too much of a chance they wouldn't make it back to the court. An email process was put into place that has proven to be extremely efficient, both in time spent on errors and ensuring citations are accounted for.

Susan Bownes has provided extraordinary service to the State Patrol. She is a trusted professional who works for a system that can be very frustrating to law enforcement. It has been a privilege to be able to work with her to achieve our common goals. In recognition of her efforts and support of our agency, Susan Bownes is presented with a Meritorious Citizenship Award.

### ***Minnesota State Patrol Commendation Award***

*This award is presented to members of another law enforcement or emergency service agency who have assisted the State Patrol in providing a significant service.*

- **Deputies Mark Empting and Sean Mork, Clay County Sheriff's Dept.; Cameron Janousek; Colton Janousek; Thomas Pink**  
(Nominated by Capt. Bruce Hentges and Lt. Charles Backes)

At approximately 9:30 pm on October 9, Thomas Pink heard a crash on Highway 75 near his residence in Moorhead. He went to the scene where he and other motorists, Cameron and Colton Janousek, discovered a head on collision with one of the vehicles on fire. The female driver of the burning vehicle was screaming, but unable to free herself. Thomas and Cameron tried to remove her from the vehicle, but due to the extensive damage from the crash, her legs were pinned under the dash.

Clay County Deputies Empting and Mork were the first law enforcement officers to arrive at the scene, and Mr. Pink advised them of the situation. By that time, the engine compartment was on fire and the flames were starting to come under the dash into the interior. Deputy Empting tried a pry bar, but was unable to find a suitable leverage point on the damaged vehicle to free the driver. With the flames spreading, he and Mr. Pink took hold of the driver by the waist and arms and tugged until they were able to free her. At that point, the fire had spread to the interior and they had to move the driver a considerable distance from the vehicle as the fire intensified.

While that rescue was occurring, Deputy Mork, along with Cameron and Colton, were attending to the severely injured driver and passenger of the other vehicle. They assisted them out of their vehicle and away from the fire, caring for them until troopers and emergency personnel arrived.

With great risk to themselves, these gentlemen saved the lives of three people that day. For their actions, Deputies Mark Empting and Sean Mork are presented with Minnesota State Patrol Commendation Awards and Cameron and Colton Janousek are presented with Meritorious Citizenship Awards.



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**Officer Casey Jansky, Avon Police Dept.; Firefighter William Beumer, Eden Prairie Fire Dept.; Trp. Mike Bell, District 2600, St. Cloud**

At 12:30 pm on July 4, 2012, State Patrol dispatch received a call about a truck traveling eastbound on I-94 in the St. Johns area that had swerved off the roadway, hit a light pole, went through the freeway fence, and came to rest in a pond. The vehicle quickly submerged, with water filling the passenger compartment half way over the steering wheel. Troopers were dispatched to the scene.

Off duty Eden Prairie firefighter William Beumer was travelling directly behind the truck and witnessed the event. He immediately stopped to render aid. In a selfless act of bravery, he ran into the swamp and eventually gained access to the driver by breaking out the rear window. He then secured the unconscious driver by holding him up and began to assess his injuries and medical condition.

A few minutes later, Trp. Mike Bell arrived at the scene, along with off duty Avon Police Officer Casey Jansky. They both removed their duty belts and went into the swamp to assist Mr. Beumer. The three of them worked together to assess the driver's injuries and medical condition, and then removed him from the vehicle and brought him to the shoreline for additional medical care.

The quick actions of Mr. Beumer, Trp. Bell and Officer Jansky resulted in saving the man's life. It was later determined that he had suffered a seizure and lost consciousness throughout the event. If they had not responded as they did and secured him from falling over into the water-filled passenger compartment, he would have drowned.

For their life saving actions, William Beumer is presented with a Meritorious Citizenship Award, Officer Casey Jansey is presented with a Minnesota State Patrol Commendation Award, and Trp. Mike Bell is presented with a Life Saving Award.

### **Chief's Commendation Award for Communications/911**

*This award is presented to radio communications operators who provide vital life saving services that lead to the rescue of a person, provide outstanding performance during a special event, or provide a consistent, sustained high level of customer service.*

- **Radio Communications Operator Kim Jech, Rochester Regional Comm Center**  
(Nominated by PSAP Manager Chris Jacobson)

On the night of October 9, 2012, RCO Kim Jech assisted Trp. Grant Fedderson with locating and apprehending a fleeing felon.

As Trp. Fedderson was sitting in his squad while conducting a traffic stop, RCO Jech called him and asked if he saw that the driver had fled on foot. Trp. Fedderson looked up and saw the driver's door open and the vehicle unoccupied. RCO Jech reported that the driver fled eastbound from the stop and ran between two buildings. Trp. Fedderson went after the driver as RCO Jech informed him that the subject had a felony warrant for 5<sup>th</sup> degree drug possession.



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While searching a backyard, Trp. Fedderson found the subject hiding behind a picnic table propped up against the back of a garage. With assistance from a deputy who had arrived on scene, the subject was taken into custody without incident.

When Trp. Fedderson made the traffic stop, RCO Jech took the time to get the proper traffic camera focused on the vehicle and paid attention to it. As a result, she was able to advise Trp. Fedderson that the driver fled on foot before he was aware of it, advise him of where the driver ran to, and that the driver had a felony warrant.

Because of her professionalism and dedication, the best outcome was achieved in this situation – the subject was arrested and no one was hurt. In recognition of her efforts, RCO Kim Jech is presented with the Chief's Commendation Award for Communications/911.

- **Radio Communications Operator Liz Solseth, Rochester Regional Comm Center**  
(Nominated by PSAP Manager Chris Jacobson)

At approximately 8:00 pm on May 5, 2012, RCO Liz Solseth received multiple calls of a possible impaired semi driver. The incident lasted about one hour from the time of the first call until the semi was stopped. The distance traveled was 48 miles.

During the incident, RCO Solseth spoke with three credible caller/witnesses, got all of their information, continued getting driving conduct, speed of the semi, and location updates. All the while she was relaying the information to troopers. She spoke with six troopers, giving them vehicle information, driving conduct, speeds and locations until they were behind the semi and in a position to deploy stop sticks.

RCO Solseth's updates helped coordinate successful stop stick deployments, however the driver refused to stop until enough were used to flatten all of the semi's tires finally bringing it to a stop. RCO Solseth also coordinated assistance with four allied agencies.

RCO Solseth was professional and maintained a calm demeanor throughout the event. The driver, with a BAC of .16, was taken into custody and no one was hurt. For her efforts, RCO Liz Solseth is presented with the Chief's Commendation Award for Communications/911.

### ***Life Saving Award***

*This award is presented to members of the State Patrol who distinguish themselves by performing acts that prevent the death of another.*

- **Trp. Chris Fredrickson, District 2200, Mankato**  
(Nominated by Trp. Preston Cruser)

At approximately 6:40 pm on December 16, 2011, an ATL was sent out by Brown County for a man driving a white pickup truck who was confused and possibly having a diabetic reaction. Trp. Fredrickson went to the man's residence and spoke to his wife. After talking to her, Trp. Fredrickson believed the man was in real trouble and needed to be found as soon as possible.



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A ping of the man's cell phone showed that he was within a mile of the college in New Ulm. Around 9:30, Trp. Fredrickson observed a white pickup truck at an apartment complex and decided to check it out. He quickly realized it was the same vehicle from the ATL.

When Trp. Fredrickson found the man, it appeared he was having a stroke. He was cold, disoriented, couldn't talk, and his right side was droopy. Once transported to the hospital, it was discovered that he had a severe bleed in his brain and was flown to Abbott Hospital for treatment.

If it wasn't for Trp. Fredrickson's perseverance in looking for him, the man would have died before being located. For his actions, Trp. Chris Fredrickson is presented with a Life Saving Award.

- **Trp. Derrick Hagen and Trp. David Kalinoff, District 2400, East Metro**  
(Nominated by Lt. Jeremy Geiger)

At 1:30 pm on April 2, 2012, Troopers Derrick Hagen and David Kalinoff were leaving the district office in Mankato following canine handler training. Two blocks away they came upon a two vehicle crash with injuries that had just occurred. Blue Earth County deputies, who had also just arrived at the scene, asked the troopers to check on the driver of a pickup that had struck a tree and was in the ditch. When they got to the vehicle, they saw the driver lying on the front seat with his head towards the passenger side. They noted that his face was turning blue and he did not appear to be breathing.

The driver was removed from the vehicle and placed on the ground. Trp. Hagen inserted an airway and began chest compressions as Trp. Kalinoff provided rescue breathing. An AED was attached, but a shock was not advised so the troopers continued with chest compressions and rescue breathing until ambulance personnel arrived, took over, and transported the victim to the hospital. Prior to departure, he was breathing and his pulse was strong and steady.

The actions of Troopers Hagen and Kalinoff saved the driver's life at the scene. For their efforts, they are presented with Life Saving Awards.

- **Trp. Dan Anderson, District 2200, Mankato; Deputy Jared Thelemann, Nicollet County Sheriff's Office**  
(Nominated by Lt. Jean Cemensky and Nicollet County Deputy Jon Hughes)

On May 8, 2012, Trp. Dan Anderson and Deputy Jared Thelemann responded to a call of a physical domestic incident in progress at Seven Mile Park in rural Nicollet County. As they were responding, they received additional information that a male suspect was stabbing a female victim with a knife.

As Trp. Anderson and Deputy Thelemann arrived at the scene, they witnessed the male stabbing the female. Deputy Thelemann ordered him to stop and Trp. Anderson assisted with detaining him. Once the suspect was in custody, Trp. Anderson worked on the victim to stabilize her and save her life. He worked to stop the bleeding, and held pressure on a deep stab wound near her neck.



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The male suspect was on a day pass from the St. Peter Regional Treatment Center. The female victim was his mother who had taken him out for the day. She had been stabbed 23 times, including the life threatening cut on her throat. Had Trp. Anderson not been quick to act, she would have succumbed to her injuries or gone into shock.

For their actions that saved the life of the victim, Trp. Dan Anderson is presented with a Life Saving Award and Deputy Jared Thelemann is presented with a Minnesota State Patrol Commendation Award.

- **Chief Warrant Officers Craig Benz and Jim Englin, Flight Section**  
(Nominated by Lt. Matt Nelson)

On May 11, 2012, Chief Warrant Officers Craig Benz and Jim Englin responded to a call for assistance in Hubbard County requesting an aerial search for a missing person who was reported to be caught in a bog in knee deep water. The person had been gone since 3:00 pm when the call for help came in at 6:00 pm. The father of the victim had made an unsuccessful attempt to locate him.

The initial search using the thermal imager was not successful. Knowing that ground units had cell phone contact with the victim, CWO Englin and Benz extinguished the lights on the helicopter and asked the ground units to have the victim hold up his cell phone. In the darkness, using night vision goggles, the pilots saw a faint glow approximately one mile from the search area. They flew to the location of the glow and were able to identify that it was indeed coming from the victim's cell phone.

With fuel becoming a concern and knowing it would be significant time before ground rescuers would get into place, the pilots made a decision to land on the bog and attempt to pick up the victim. They were concerned about hypothermia because of the cold temperature and that he was not dressed for the elements.

CWO Englin landed the helicopter on the bog and held it light on the skids. CWO Benz exited and immediately sank half way to his knees in the wet bog. He made contact with the victim, who was initially not cooperative most likely due to the onset of hypothermia. CWO Benz was finally able to get the victim into the helicopter and they flew to a waiting ambulance.

For their rescue actions that saved the life of the victim, Chief Warrant Officers Craig Benz and Jim Englin are presented with Life Saving Awards. This is CWO Englin's second life saving award.

- **Sgt. Rod Trunzo and Trp. Eric Maikkula, District 2500, West Metro; Deputies Sean Connolly and Dave Matchinsky, Isanti County Sheriff's Office**  
(Nominated by Lt. Craig Isaacson and Sgt. Steve Hanson)

On July 1, 2012, Sgt. Trunzo, Trp. Maikkula, and Deputies Connolly and Matchinsky responded to a reported vehicle off the road on Highway 65 north of Cambridge. Trp. Maikkula arrived first and observed a vehicle with a boat and trailer attached to it well off the roadway in the waist deep water and mud of a swamp.



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Trp. Maikkula proceeded through the swamp to the vehicle where a Good Samaritan was attempting to hold an open airway on the driver. He took over for that person as Sgt. Trunzo and Deputy Connolly arrived on scene. Deputy Connolly inserted an airway and they laid the driver across the front seat and began administering CPR. Sgt. Trunzo prepared and administered an AED on the driver.

Deputy Matchinsky arrived on scene and immediately assisted in assembling the bag/valve mask with oxygen tank to assist with the driver's respiration. As they continued to perform CPR, ambulance, fire and rescue personnel arrived to assist. The driver was backboarded, moved out of the vehicle, and transported through the swamp by multiple personnel from multiple agencies to ambulance personnel who then took over medical care.

The victim had suffered a major heart attack and required quadruple bypass surgery. The day after the incident he was alert, responsive and in stable condition. He would not have lived without life saving intervention.

For their efforts, Sgt. Rod Trunzo and Trp. Eric Maikkula are presented with Life Saving Awards and Deputy Sean Connolly and Deputy Dave Matchinsky are presented with Minnesota State Patrol Commendation Awards.

- **Trp. Tyler Struck, District 2100, Rochester**  
(Nominated by Lt. Dan Lewis)

At approximately 7:00 pm on August 26, 2012, Trp. Struck was dispatched to a medical on I-90 in Winona County. Upon arrival, he found that a four year old boy was having a seizure and had stopped breathing.

The parents of the boy were on scene, and the father was attempting to give him mouth to mouth breaths. Trp. Struck recognized that with the positioning of the boy's head and the speed on the breaths, the air that was going in was not having time to exhale. He repositioned the boy's head and coached the father's pace of breathing. The resuscitation was then successful.

Recognizing the seriousness of the situation, Trp. Struck carried the boy to the ambulance upon their arrival and briefed them about the situation. The ambulance personnel transported the boy to the hospital where he was later stabilized.

There is no question that Trp. Struck's calm, professional demeanor and actions saved the young boy's life. For his efforts, Trp. Tyler Struck is presented with a Life Saving Award.

- **Trp. Kristie Sue Hathaway, District 2400, East Metro**  
(Nominated by Lt. Jeff Schroepfer)

On October 9, 2012, Trp. Hathaway responded to a medical on I-35E in Eagan. The 911 caller stated that her sister had had surgery earlier that day and now felt like she was choking. When Trp. Hathaway arrived at the scene, the woman was having difficulty breathing.



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Trp. Hathaway kept speaking with the woman to help slow her breathing so it wasn't as difficult for her to get the needed air. She was also able to position and maintain the woman's airway to keep it open until an ambulance arrived.

Once paramedics were on scene, they placed the victim in the ambulance. A short time later they advised that they needed additional help in the ambulance to immediately do a surgical airway because the woman's condition had deteriorated. Trp. Hathaway assisted the paramedics and then rode in the ambulance to the hospital to continue assistance.

Following the incident, the ambulance crew remarked how calm and professional Trp. Hathaway had been, and what a great help she had been to the sister and crew. For her efforts, Trp. Kristie Sue Hathaway is presented with a Life Saving Award.

- **Lt. Mike Wedin, District 2300, Marshall**  
(Nominated by Capt. Mike Hanson)

This incident took place when Lt. Wedin was a trooper in District 3200.

On the evening of October 22, 2012, Trp. Wedin monitored a call from Beltrami County regarding a capsized boat and people in the water on a small lake in the Bemidji area. Since he was the closest officer to the scene, he responded to the resort where he could hear the victims yelling for help.

Trp. Wedin and a Beltrami County deputy quickly boarded a boat brought to the area by a citizen who had also heard the calls for help. They went out onto the lake and towards the sounds of the people in the water. They located four persons in the water clinging to the side of another small boat that had gone out onto the lake to search.

Trp. Wedin quickly deployed his issued Nebulus raft which allowed them to begin getting the victims out of the frigid water. Additional deputies and rescuers arrived and all four victims were transported to shore where they were treated for hypothermia.

Without the quick thinking and actions of Trp. Wedin and the deputy, as well as the two citizens who helped, the four hunters very likely would not have been able to get to shore and may have died due to exposure.

Lt. Mike Wedin and the deputy both received life saving awards at the annual Beltrami County Sheriff's Department meeting. For his actions, Lt. Wedin is presented with the Minnesota State Patrol's Life Saving Award.



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## ***Meritorious Service Award***

*This award is presented to employees for acts involving personal risk posing hazards which could lead to serious injury or loss of life to the employee.*

- **Trp. Aaron Nevala, District 3100, Virginia; Parole Agent Jeff Oja, Arrowhead Regional Corrections**

(Nominated by Capt. Murray Herrboldt)

On May 5, 2012, Trp. Aaron Nevala was dispatched to a report of a pickup striking a mailbox north of Virginia. Upon responding to the location, Trp. Nevala observed were a vehicle had driven into the ditch, struck a mailbox, and then drove back onto the highway. Individuals at the scene told him the vehicle was located in the next driveway. At that location, Trp. Nevala found two males standing next to a pickup on the driver's side. One of them got into the truck and locked the door as Trp. Nevala approached, and refused multiple requests to put the window down and unlock the door.

Trp. Nevala called for backup, but before help arrived the driver put the vehicle in gear and drove down the driveway. With Trp. Nevala following in his squad, the driver continued down a short trail to a dead end, at which point he put the vehicle into reverse and accelerated backwards violently colliding with Trp. Nevala's squad. The collision tripped the fuel pump switch on the squad, thereby rendering it inoperable.

The subject continued to push Trp. Nevala's disabled squad backwards at significant speed. While being pushed with no control of his car, Trp. Nevala drew his service weapon and fired multiple shots through the windshield at the pickup. The squad was pushed approximately 60 yards before the subject disengaged his vehicle from the squad and drove back towards the highway.

Trp. Nevala proceeded on foot down the driveway and was picked up by Parole Agent Jeff Oja who was in the area and had been monitoring the radio traffic concerning the incident. They followed the subject's vehicle southbound on Highway 53 while Trp. Nevala provided location and updates to other law enforcement personnel via radio. Agent Oja's vehicle was not equipped as an emergency vehicle with lights or siren, nor was he armed, so they could not engage in a police pursuit.

Lt. Ron Silcox was monitoring the radio traffic and proceeded northbound on Highway 53. Upon observing the subject vehicle, he began pursuit. The subject continued to flee from Lt. Silcox and other officers into the city of Virginia. Stop Sticks were deployed, flattening the front tires of the pickup. Lt. Silcox executed a PIT maneuver, ending the pursuit. The subject was taken into custody and processed as a DWI suspect; a PBT test showed an alcohol concentration of .217.

During the entire incident, Trp. Nevala remained calm and professional – before, during and after he was feloniously assaulted by the suspect's vehicle. Even though Parole Agent Oja was unarmed and not driving an emergency vehicle, he provided assistance to Trp. Nevala that was crucial to the successful arrest of the subject.

For their actions, Trp. Aaron Nevala is presented with a Meritorious Service award and Patrol Agent Jeff Oja is presented with a Meritorious Citizenship award.



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## **Exceptional Service Award**

*This award is presented to employees who have provided extraordinary service in the performance of their duties.*

- **Sgt. Eric Barthel, Training & Development Section**  
(Nominated by Lt. Jason Bartell)

Sgt. Eric Barthel has been the State Patrol's Technology Coordinator since 2008. His dedication to propelling the agency into the future of technology is unmatched. He continues to be a constant and reliable resource for troopers around the state, and troubleshoots problems day and night.

Sgt. Barthel has led numerous training endeavors and projects having an enormous influence on the agency. His innovative ideas and actions continue to have a positive influence on the job each trooper performs on a daily basis. He's been instrumental in bridging the gap between road troopers and the Information Technology Section, while helping produce products beneficial to all those involved. He continually looks for new ways to create efficiency while making the trooper's job more effective, and uses his years of law enforcement experience to balance the needs of the agency with technology advancements and the realities of the job.

Sgt. Barthel's online videos and distance training ideas have revolutionized the future of law enforcement training and decreased the impact on the agency's budget. Having State Patrol employees receive training remotely and within their work area has saved time and money, allowing employees to dedicate more time performing job number one.

Because of Sgt. Barthel's dedication, insight, and personal drive to go above and beyond, our agency has moved forward exponentially in areas of technology. His accomplishments and leadership as Technology Coordinator have greatly enhanced the jobs of every employee within the State Patrol. Many of the pieces of technology each trooper uses today are directly linked to Sgt. Barthel. He effectively impacts all areas of the agency's strategic plan, and his contributions ensure that the mission of the State Patrol is met on a daily basis.

For his efforts, Sgt. Eric Barthel is presented with an Exceptional Service Award.

- **Carol Conrad, Headquarters**  
(Nominated by Capt. Sean Meagher)

Carol Conrad is a programmer with the State Patrol Information Services Section. In that capacity, she has co-chaired the Workflow Group for all of calendar year 2012 and continues in that role today. Her planning, coordinating, and innovating skills have been instrumental in developing a new reporting system for troopers assigned to road patrol. She documented user requirements and, in most cases, took vague user ideas and developed a creative approach to CAD use and reporting. The resulting reporting system is robust and a paradigm shift for our agency.

The new reporting system reduces redundancy and improves timeliness, accuracy and efficiency. Carol's initiative and organizational skills are enviable. She coordinates meetings, develops the



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agenda, serves as recorder, molds ideas into programming specifications, spearheads testing and validation, and oversees the development group.

For her contributions to improve a critical reporting system, Carol Conrad is presented with an Exceptional Service Award.

- **Radio Communications Operator Nick Carlson, Roseville Regional Transportation Management Center**

(Nominated by Capt. Bruce Brynell, Statewide Comm Coord. Rick Juth, and Radio Comm Supervisors Blake Freeman, Twylla Vickmark, Bill Lewis, Todd Philippi and Sarah Johnson)

At approximately 11:30 pm on January 21, RCO Nick Carlson was on his way home from work driving through New Brighton when he noticed an elderly man walking down the side of Rice Creek Road with a walker. It was 12 degrees below zero, and it didn't appear that the man had a jacket on.

Nick made a U turn and stopped by the man, noticing he was wearing only a sweater, light weight pants, and socks with no shoes. The man, who suffers from Alzheimer's, had walked away from an assisted living center two blocks away. He told Nick that he had been with a bunch of guys and they left him.

Nick, who was wearing his State Patrol jacket, convinced the man to get into his vehicle to stay warm. He then drove to a nearby Super America and called Patrol dispatch to send paramedics. The man was transported to the hospital for treatment.

Needless to say, the man's family was very grateful for Nick's help and appreciative of his kindness that night. For his efforts, Nick Carlson is presented with an Exceptional Service Award.

- **Trp. Kevin Adrian, District 2400, East Metro**

(Nominated by Lt. Adam Flynn)

During the 2011 – 2012 school year, Trp. Adrian was in charge of District 2400's Young Forever program. Even with other troopers delivering presentations, he went above and beyond with his involvement, setting himself apart from everyone else by delivering 143 presentations that were attended by 7,392 students and adults.

Trp. Adrian conducted those presentations while working in his assigned station where he maintained above average traffic enforcement activity, assists to the public, and crashes attended. He never turned down a presentation request, and always made accommodations to fulfill each one. After the school year, he continued to recruit other troopers to assist with the presentations. The program continues to be delivered to students throughout the district.

For his efforts to deliver an important traffic safety message to students, Trp. Kevin Adrian is presented with an Exceptional Service Award.



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- **Lt. Tom Nelson, District 4700, Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Section**  
(Nominated by Capt. Tim Rogotzke)

For the last two years, Lt. Nelson has been working on the pilot car and escort vehicle training curriculum and rulemaking. He facilitated two public hearings at the State Capitol, as well as heated discussions from the public in opposition to the rulemaking of the new law. He coordinated with Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to facilitate meetings to provide guidance and direction on the creation of a curriculum that will be required for every police officer and civilian engaged in a wide load escort business in the state. He also formulated the wording of the rules that will be incorporated into state law.

Lt. Nelson contacted and worked with numerous people in the industry and multiple states to determine a path for the program. He is the designated state representative responsible for reviewing other states' training to determine if we will honor their program and grant reciprocity.

The pilot car and escort vehicle training program has taken a significant amount of time, and has progressed because of the creativity and skills that Lt. Nelson has used to facilitate the process. The states of North and South Dakota, Iowa and Wisconsin have no formal program and have all indicated they will adopt Minnesota's curriculum.

Lt. Nelson has performed this task over and above his normal duties, including managing the statewide mandatory inspection program, maintaining his Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance certification by performing commercial vehicle inspections, responding to post crash calls, and doing public speaking events on a regular basis.

For his efforts and outstanding work with the pilot car and escort vehicle program on behalf of the State Patrol, Lt. Tom Nelson is presented with an Exceptional Service Award.

- **Sgt. Steve Zerwas, District 2400, East Metro**  
(Nominated by Lt. Jonathan Olsen)

Station Sgt. Steve Zerwas is an active leader in District 2400 and the State Patrol. The contributions he makes to the agency are countless and the definition of exceptional.

As a firearms instructor, Sgt. Zerwas has been instrumental in the firearms training program for a number of years. In the past year, he assisted a number of times with the State Patrol's Explorer program by introducing the Explorers to firearms and range shooting.

The district supervisory staff placed the responsibility of the firearms qualification portion of fall in-service training on his shoulders, knowing it would be handled well. He arranged the location for the shoot, created the schedule, and designated other instructors to assist. The supervisory staff expected it would be a "stand at the target and fire three rounds" type of shoot. Sgt. Zerwas built a make shift house using two by fours, a wooden door, open windows, and snow fence to give everyone the most realistic training possible. The forethought, creativity and passion he has for firearms training is extraordinary and far exceeds expectations.



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Sgt. Zerwas took over the duties of station sergeant in the 2440 station a year ago. He goes above and beyond to make things work in his station. Being short on staffing levels, he adjusts his own schedule to allow his partners the time off they need, and has designed a new schedule that will provide better station coverage in the busy summer months.

Despite the time Sgt. Zerwas spends being tasked with other duties and training, he remains a leader in his station and district with regard to proactive enforcement. He has the highest number of speed citations in District 2400, and his overall activity levels are stellar.

Off duty, Sgt. Zerwas has represented the State Patrol for a number of years in pistol shooting competitions. He serves on the city council in his community.

Sgt. Zerwas takes pride in the agency he works for and the city he lives in by committing to activities and responsibilities beyond what is expected of him. For his efforts, he is presented with an Exceptional Service Award.

## ***Eagle Squadron Award***

*This award is presented to the Minnesota State Patrol trooper who arrested the greatest number of impaired drivers the previous year.*

- **Trp. Gordon Shank, District 2500, West Metro**

DWI enforcement continues to be job number one for every State Patrol trooper. Aggressive enforcement in this important area saves countless lives and injuries each year.

In 2012, Trp. Gordon Shank arrested 269 impaired drivers. In recognition of his efforts, he is presented with the Eagle Squadron Award.

Trp. Shank's dedication to making an impact in the critical area of removing the impaired driver from our roadways has earned him this award.

Congratulations on a job very well done.

## ***Leadership Award***

*This award is presented yearly to the employee who consistently exhibits outstanding leadership and excellence in public safety through their personal actions, guidance, direction and professional involvement.*

- **Trp. Scott Barstad, District 2100, Rochester**  
(Nominated by Capt. Mark Holm and Lt. Heath Dienger)

Trp. Scott Barstad has served with the State Patrol since 1996. Since that time, he has worked the Olmsted and Dodge County station, spending a majority of the time on the dog watch. For over 16



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years, he has demonstrated a dedication to traffic and DWI enforcement. Each night he works hard towards arresting impaired drivers and removing them from the roadway.

Trp. Barstad is the partner we train troopers to be and the partner each trooper wants to work with. Earlier this year, he called the office asking for a schedule change on a regular day off knowing one of his partners was going to be working alone on an evening when inclement weather was coming. He asked that he be able to work the snow event so his partner would not be working alone. That speaks volumes to the person he is and his thought process. He has great concern for the people he works with and the citizens of Minnesota.

Trp. Barstad should be considered a benchmark for troopers. His character and core values reflect those of a model trooper. He has continually maintained a tremendously strong work ethic throughout his career, and is highly respected throughout the district by fellow troopers, allied agencies, and outside stakeholders. On several occasions there have been discussions among district leaders and staff about Trp. Barstad's work. When brainstorming about district issues, how to solve them, and who should be used as a role model, his name continually comes to the forefront.

Trp. Barstad is well respected by local law enforcement, county attorneys offices, defense attorneys, and local stakeholders. Many times he is called by agencies to answer questions or assist with DWI arrests forfeitures, and criminal vehicular operation charges. He is known as an expert in the area, and is always willing to spend time with each officer making sure there is an understanding of procedures to ensure each case is prosecuted – even if it's not his direct case.

Trp. Barstad is an informal leader in his district. He understands his role and contributes his best efforts towards the goals of the Minnesota State Patrol. He is a servant leader – always putting the needs of others before his own. He has accepted the challenge of serving as a field training officer for District 2100. He understands the importance of what he does on a daily basis, and has accepted the opportunity to pass his knowledge on to new troopers. Over the years, he has influenced many troopers to work to their full potential by his dedicated work ethic.

Trp. Barstad has consistently been an exemplary trooper. Everyone who interacts with him recognizes his character, attitude, and appreciation for others. We are pleased to present him with the 2012 Leadership Award.

### ***Civilian Employee of the Year***

*This award is presented to the non-sworn employee who best demonstrates outstanding work performance, initiative, leadership and effective interpersonal relations.*

- **Dianne Reuter, District 4700, Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Section**  
(Nominated by Capt. Tim Rogotzke)

Dianne Reuter has been involved in the progress and development of District 4700 for many years. She serves as the office manager, is involved in the State Patrol's workflow group, and coordinates



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and negotiates civil weight cases up to \$10,000. She has been a valuable resource to the four new lieutenants assigned to the district in the last year and a half.

Dianne is also responsible for installing updates on laptops for the State Patrol and allied agencies involved in commercial vehicle enforcement efforts. On multiple occasions, she has been asked to run data requests through the various commercial vehicle federal databases for ICE and other federal and MnDOT agencies.

Dianne supervises five office support staff and one IT person, completing performance reviews, counseling, discipline, and on-the-job training for multiple functions. When a staff vacancy occurs in the office, Dianne takes on the added job responsibilities until she can hire and train a new employee.

Dianne serves on the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance IT Infosys Committee. In that capacity, she has been instrumental in developing elements for recording and reporting information on a timely basis.

Dianne consistently performs her job responsibilities in a most efficient and effective manner while assigned to the largest State Patrol district that is faced with the logistical challenge of enforcement personnel assigned statewide.

The Minnesota State Patrol is pleased to honor Dianne Reuter as the 2012 Civilian Employee of the Year.

### ***Trooper of the Year***

*This award is presented to the trooper who best demonstrates outstanding work performance, initiative, leadership and effective interpersonal relations.*

- **Trp. Alan Thompson, District 2500, West Metro**  
(Nominated by Lts. Chris Edstrom and Tiffani Nielson)

Trp. Al Thompson has served with the Minnesota State Patrol since May 15, 1999. Prior to coming to the State Patrol, he served with the Renville County Sheriff's Office for 8 years. During his years of service, Trp. Thompson has consistently exceeded performance standards, and contributes daily to reducing serious injuries and fatalities through his enforcement and education efforts. On average, he makes 3,122 enforcement contacts per year.

Trp. Thompson is an effective investigator. He handles property damage to fatality crashes with the same high level of professionalism, regardless of the severity of the crash.

Trp. Thompson instructs in various capacities for the State Patrol and in the private sector, including teaching skills to law enforcement students at South Central College in North Mankato. He is regarded as a respected resource among the troopers and other agencies he works beside.



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Trp. Thompson has served as a vehicle contact instructor since 2005, and can be considered an expert in that capacity having conducted thousands of traffic stops year after year. He has instructed at Trooper Candidate Schools and numerous centralized in-service training sessions, and is an excellent instructor in both classroom and field settings.

Trp. Thompson teaches at several driving schools, and has developed relationships with various high school drivers' education programs and is invited back year after year. His creation of a power point program has changed his instruction from a piece of chalk and chalkboard to an interactive presentation with questions and discussion from students and parents. He also teaches the "Forever Young" and "How to Save a Life" curriculum throughout schools in Scott and Carver Counties.

Trp. Thompson participates in the bi-annual Bears that Care effort where troopers visit the U of M Amplatz Children's Hospital and Shriner's Hospital to deliver candy and stuffed animals to children with cancer and other serious illnesses.

Trp. Thompson is an exceptional trooper. His commitment to the State Patrol's mission of reducing serious injuries and fatalities on our roadways is nearly unparalleled. His contributions can be counted on – not as an exception, but as part of his standard daily performance. Each year of service Trp. Thompson exhibits the same discipline and commitment to our agency and the citizens of Minnesota. His actions while on duty, and service off duty, live up to our organizational core values of respect, integrity, courage and honor.

Trp. Al Thompson is an asset to the Minnesota State Patrol, and we are pleased to honor him as the 2012 Trooper of the Year.

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