The official monthly publication of the Alabama Department of Public Safety

The BLUE LIGHT

June 2006

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Assistant Director

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Protective Services

MAJOR CARY SUTTON
Service Division

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CLASS 2006-A COUNTS DAYS TO JUNE GRADUATION

JUST DAYS TO THE HIGHWAYS
Tpr. Robert Burroughs observes trainee on firearms course.

Calendars are under close watch as 37 trooper recruits anxiously count the days to their June 22 graduation. During week 19 of training — amid a resounding chorus of "Sir, Yes, Sir! Sir, No, Sir!" — *The BLUE LIGHT* traveled to Selma's Alabama Criminal Justice Training Center, where the recruits had completed crash investigation, pursuit driving and were in firearms training on the day of our visit.

As DPS eagerly awaits their work in Highway Patrol, the troopers-to-be reflected on their career choice and the training they're completing.

Tpr. Trainee James Hendricks explained, "It is a job that I've been pursuing since I got out of the Marine Corps. Their expectations and standards are what I was looking for. It took me several years to finally get here, but it is something I have always wanted to do."

"The academy is tougher than I thought it would be," said Hendricks. "It is very physically and mentally demanding. The long hours and being away from my wife and kids made it even more difficult. In addition, the ability to live with 36 other bodies was challenging."

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The Colonels' Corner

Col. W.M. Coppage, Director

I hope that you all enjoyed the last edition of *The BLUE LIGHT*. A tip of the trooper hat to the folks up in PIO for a great job in producing a quality publication. I think it was great that we got an opportunity to highlight some of the people behind the scenes that really make DPS what it is.

Lately I feel as if I have been sitting at my kitchen table trying to balance my checkbook. We have been going over the DPS budget trying to balance all of the various needs of the department, given the pay raises and the increasing gas prices. Just like at home, I kept asking, "Where did all the money go?"

Fran Copeland and all the penny-pinchers up in the Administrative Division have been assisting in re-evaluating our wants and needs so that we can make it through another fiscal year.

Despite our budget concerns, I have decided that one of the "big-ticket" items we need to address is the condition of our training facilities in Selma. Since my second week here with DPS, I have been struggling with how to fund the academy so that we can have first-rate facilities for training. While some of the buildings are a little old and worn in places, the major concern is the chow hall.

We are currently planning to build a completely new dining hall that would not require you to use an

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Lt. Col. Glenda Deese, Assistant Director

As I watch employees going to and from their jobs each morning, I am reminded how our work as employees here at DPS is simply defined by our inability to function without one another. By serving in one capacity or another, we are all here to take part in accomplishing the vital mission of DPS.

Each day customers come to us for service and assistance. They obtain our support, help and insight daily through face-to-face contact, telephone, e-mail or other communications. Who are our customers? First and foremost, they are members of the public; they are our fellow citizens.

They include the Selma/Dallas County Leadership Alabama group, who recently visited headquarters accompanied by Attorney General Troy King. The ABI staff conducted a demonstration of its automated fingerprint identification system, and needless to say, Mr. James Potts and Lt. Frank Higginbotham were shining stars with their vast knowledge and expertise on the fingerprinting process. Their skillful and interesting hands-on demonstration captivated the visitors' interest, and time expired with the pair still trying to answer the group's many questions.

Second, we look at our coworkers, whom we depend upon and whose success at work is tied to our own. We need their expertise in order to get the job done correctly and professionally, just as they need ours.

A case in point is the Public Information/Safety Education Unit, which steps up to the plate each time I have called them for assistance — even if it is at the last minute. A special thanks to all of them!

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Robert L. Chesnut

DPS Mourns Charter Member, Alabama Highway Patrol

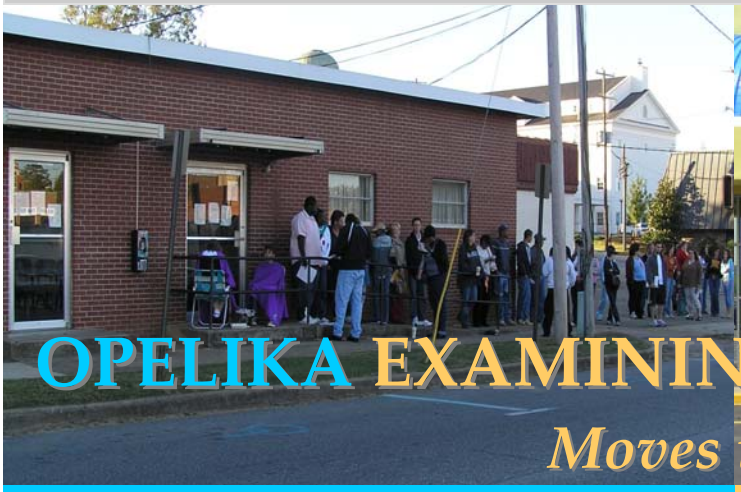
The DPS family was saddened by the loss of Robert L. Chesnut, the sole surviving charter member of the Alabama Highway Patrol. Chesnut was 94 at the time of his death in mid-May and had been in declining health.

At 23, Chesnut was the youngest member to join the original 75 Highway Patrol officers employed Dec. 5, 1935, by then-Gov. Bibb Graves. Chesnut's father, former state Sen. Webb Chesnut, had promised Graves that one of his nine sons would join the Highway Patrol. As the oldest son, Bob Chesnut was selected.

With the advent of World War II, Chesnut resigned from the Highway Patrol to serve in the U.S. Navy. He returned to Alabama after the war and worked for the State Employment Service until his retirement in 1977.

Chesnut maintained a close relationship with Public Safety, and it was a delight to welcome him and his wife, Dot, to the 70th anniversary celebration of DPS in December 2005. All who met him will fondly recall his wit and vivid memory of his early experiences with the Highway Patrol.

The DPS family salutes this pioneer in state law enforcement. Our sincerest condolences are extended to his wife and family.

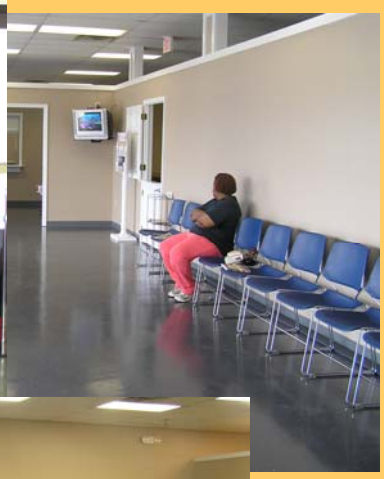


OPELIKA EXAMINING

Moves to New Home

You'll no longer find Lee County residents waiting in long lines along South Railroad Avenue in Opelika. That's because — somebody say, Hallelujah! — the Opelika Driver License office has moved to a new location.

Driver License staffers now work in new offices on Foxrun Parkway adjacent to their colleagues in the Highway Patrol Division at the USA Town Center shopping mall. Capt. Harry Nail said the response from the community has been positive and appreciative. "The new facility is spacious, professional, provides ample parking and as an added bonus, Commercial Driver License testing will now be done on site on a paved area. This was previously done at the Lee County Fairgrounds on a dirt lot," said Nail.



The petite South Railroad Avenue location served the Opelika area for 13 years, but growing population in east Alabama and increasing demand for driver license services made the office overcrowded and unable to meet demands. Cpl. Susanna Capps said that, without an adequate waiting room, driver license customers frequently lined the street waiting for service.

The bright, new office space on Foxrun provides ample waiting room and a spacious exam room. Designed with future expansion in mind, the office boasts some 4,000 square feet and will be able to accommodate the growing population of Lee County and the future requirements of the Department of Public Safety. The new facility is large enough to accommodate additional Examining personnel and workstations. Data and phone lines are already in place so that any additions can be done with ease.

"The Driver License Division is proud of this new office and we thank Col. W.M. Coppage , Lt. Col. Glenda Deese and Maj. Roscoe Howell for making it a reality," said Nail.

Feds Herald Good News for I-20 Patrols

Motorists along St. Clair County's stretch of highway dubbed "death valley" now travel with added peace of mind due to continued extra trooper patrols.

The Federal Highway Administration recently renewed a $500,000 contract between the Alabama Department of Public Safety and the Alabama Department of Transportation. The contract requires ALDOT to provide funding to DPS to pay for the extra trooper patrols.

Gov. Bob Riley said the contract provides for the continuation of extra patrols in targeted high-risk construction areas of Interstate 20. "The increased law enforcement presence along I-20 has succeeded in saving lives and now we've gotten assurances that we can continue them," said Riley. "This is great news for motorists and for construction workers doing work on I-20."

The department reported seven fatalities on I-20 through St. Clair County in 2003, two fatalities in 2004, and only one fatality in 2005.

Birmingham Troop Capt. Robert Goodner said, "There is no doubt that the enforcement patrols have made an impact on the motoring public. We've seen a decrease in fatalities in the areas we've focused on."

Agreements totaling nearly $3 million have been funded statewide to assign extra troopers to trouble spots, including increased enforcement in the Jefferson and Shelby County areas. The project has resulted in thousands of motorist contacts, yet the most significant success of the enforcement efforts is the overall reduction of fatalities and injuries.

The Colonels' Corner, continued from Page 2

umbrella to keep the rain off when you sit down to eat. We hope to have the initial plans drawn up and some sort of groundbreaking before the fall.

Speaking of training, I have encouraged each of our division commanders to begin looking at increasing our training opportunities for field troopers so we can ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate in a variety of training. I am especially excited about the opportunities for training at the Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston. This is a great facility, and most of the training can be obtained at no cost to the department.

As I mentioned in the previous *BLUE LIGHT*, our current class of recruits is expected to graduate in June, and we are working very hard to screen the applicants for the next class. I believe that we have a tremendous opportunity to make significant gains with regard to recruitment and retention of personnel this year.

We also are currently working on a policy that would allow our troopers assigned to the Driver License offices across the state to start carrying conducted energy devices, sometimes referred to as tasers. Given some of the situations that they encounter, this may be the most effective way to handle some arrests.

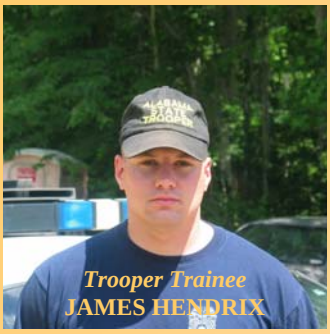
Of course, this will allow us to evaluate the feasibility of deploying these tools to other field units in the future.

Thanks to everyone for the great job they did at Talladega. Someone said they liked it so much that they decided to stay an extra day. OUCH! Keep up the good work, and thank you for what you are doing.

Class 2006-A Counts Days to Graduation, continued from Page 1

All things considered, Hendricks said the academy met his expectations and that he's excited about graduation. "I'm ready to get back out on the road and start working again," he said.

Hendricks questioned, with a chuckle, whether personal stories from his academy experience were appropriate for print. "Seriously, just going through the basic police academy and also the trooper academy, I really understand why state troopers are held to a higher standard in comparison to the basic police academy. The training was far more physically demanding than I could imagine and was evidenced in my first 10 days here," said Hendricks.

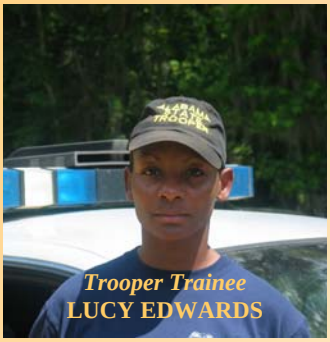


Trooper Trainee
JAMES HENDRIX

Tpr. Trainee Lucy Edwards of Montgomery, one of only two female recruits in the class, said her experience has not varied greatly from prior training with the military, Montgomery police and fire academies.

"I am really used to being the only female in classes of this nature," said Edwards. "It helped to have another female, but really, I'm used to it."

Edwards said the biggest challenge for her was "the weapons." "I'm used to shooting an M-16, and I had to get used to the handgun. I didn't qualify with the rest of the class, but I got some extra training and then it was no longer a challenge for me anymore."



Trooper Trainee
LUCY EDWARDS

"It came down to, 'you have to do it or you go home,' and home was not an option. Other than that, everything else I've been able to maintain," said Edwards.

Edwards described the training as excellent preparation for what she will face on Alabama's roadways and said she was "a lot stronger, tougher and ready to go out on the road." She, too, expressed excitement about the upcoming graduation and receiving her assignment of choice in Macon County.

Tpr. Trainee Kerry Horton of Selma is attending the trooper academy right in his own backyard. Horton, a five-year veteran with the Selma fire department, said, "I knew for a long time that I wanted to be in law enforcement, even before I went to the fire department, but I had not reached the age requirement. The Alabama state troopers gave me the opportunity that I desired," said Horton.

Trooper Trainee
KERRY HORTON

"For me the academy experience can best be described as 'unexpected,' because you never know what's going to happen or when it will happen," said Horton. "It is 'hurry up and wait' and be prepared for the head games and mental things that you are put through to prepare you for what's to come in your career as a trooper.

"When I got here, I learned that troopers do things differently, which attests to why they receive the respect that they do. That respect is well deserved because of what is endured during the course of training. The academy is hard, and rightly so," said Horton.

Horton said he felt it would be unfair to reference being away from home as a challenge for him, when there were others who are several hours away from home. "Other than being away from home, there is no rest," he said.

"Law enforcement is a 24/7 job. We get accustomed to intense training. Three, four, five hours of sleep, and we still have to do eight hours of class work. On top of the mental and physical stress, you are still held to a certain standard. It is hard to adjust. You really have to be ready for it," said Horton.

Recruits ranked the caliber of instruction highly. "The instructors were all great," said Horton. "They have all been exceptional instructors in their own different ways."

Horton tagged Cpl. Darryl Moore as a "funny guy, always laughing, joking and smiling. He's so outgoing. I've never seen him without a smile, unless he has his game face on."

Horton said he believes the training has adequately prepared trainees for what they will encounter on Alabama's highways. "The first 17 weeks we were here, some of the things seemed extreme, and there were times we sat in our rooms, yelling, cursing and fussing, 'this ain't necessary,'" said Horton. "But once you go out there on the highway, I had a moment to reflect and wanted to go back and tell my instructor 'thank you' because this is exactly what we need."

As class coordinator, the ACJTC's Cpl. Gary Hetzel has worked to learn about each recruit individually. He said it better equips him to perform his duties as training officer, and he comfortably demonstrates his knowledge of the recruits' names, previous employment and family information.

CPL. GARY HETZEL

"This is my first class coordinator assignment," said Hetzel. "I've been told that I was a little harder on them than previous classes. That happens sometimes.

"Some of the things that I tried to implement were different physical fitness programs. I got them in the weight room center to try to build their bodies up before they went out on the road. We did more firearms training and defensive tactics training than we have in previous classes," said Hetzel.

When asked if he would miss his recruits, Hetzel said, "No, I'm not a warm and fuzzy type of guy. That's probably why I got this job." He then confessed that, "Yes, there will be parts I will miss. It is like watching your children develop over 18 years except in this instance, you only have six months."

With graduation day for this class only a few weeks away, the corporal already is preparing for a new group of recruits that will begin June 19, a few days shy of 2006-A's graduation.

One of the recent highlights of training for the recruits was to go on the road with veteran troopers. Following the experience, the consensus was that they are ready to hit Alabama's highways to continue the proud trooper tradition of providing courtesy, service and protection.

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The Colonels' Corner, continued from Page 2

There is so much virtue in working together. You see, two are no doubt better than one! When we work together toward one common goal, to serve the customers, then we cease needing all the attention for ourselves and we can begin to experience an inner peace and a sense of calm. Surrendering our need to glorify ourselves and our accomplishments, we will find a sense of satisfaction that makes the day fly by and prevents the trivial things from consuming our lives.

It was once said, "you get one chance to make a first impression." As public servants, we may not be able to control what the customer says or does, but we can control what others see us do and hear us say. At the end of the day, "Set the Example!"

People You Know!

New Employees

Titus Ashley	4/3/06	Warehouse Worker	SER/Supply
Emily Dean	4/3/06	DL Examiner I	DL/Decatur
Shanique N. Milledge	4/3/06	State Capitol Police Officer	PS/Capitol Police
Carolyn Nelson	4/3/06	DL Examiner I	DL/Mobile
John Perdue	4/3/06	Retired State Employee	ABI/Investigative Services
Mark Sansone	4/3/06	DL Examiner I	DL/Mobile
Jimmy Stone	4/3/06	Service Patrol Operator	HP/Birmingham
Belinda Tilley	4/3/06	PCO I	HP/Tuscaloosa
James Baker	4/17/06	Warehouse Worker	SER/Fleet Maintenance
Vonamechi Mooney	4/17/06	PCO I	HP/Opelika
Meredith Stokley	4/17/06	PCO I	HP/Montgomery
Mary Williams	4/17/06	PCO I	HP/Montgomery

Promotions

Misty Price	4/16/06	ASA II	DL/Montgomery
Lisa Reeves	4/16/06	PCO II	HP/Mobile
Tonia Wimberly	4/16/06	Forensic Tech. Examiner	ABI/Internet Crimes
Thaddeus Chandler	5/1/06	Trooper Corporal	HP/Quad Cities
Bruce Irvin	5/1/06	Trooper Corporal	HP/Opelika
Michael Smith	5/1/06	Trooper Corporal	HP/Dothan
David Turman	5/1/06	Trooper Corporal	HP/Evergreen
Timothy White	5/1/06	Trooper Sergeant	HP/Decatur
Brenda Glasheene	5/16/06	PCO II	HP/Decatur
Dustin Lewter	5/16/06	PCO II	HP/Decatur
Johnice Danner	5/16/06	ASA II	HP/Montgomery
Nadria Sanders	6/1/06	Fingerprint Classifier I	ABI/Montgomery
Angela Knight	6/1/06	Fingerprint Classifier I	ABI/Montgomery
Ruthie Allums	6/1/06	Fingerprint Classifier II	ABI/Montgomery
Theresa Ellis	6/1/06	Fingerprint Classifier II	ABI/Montgomery

Transfers

		From	*To*
Jamie McGregor	4/1/06	Medical Unit	DL/Information Services
Clayton Barnes	5/1/06	HP/Montgomery	ABI/Technical Services
Byron J. Piggott	5/1/06	HP/Mobile	ADM/PI/E
Hugh Stinson	5/1/06	DL/Hearing Unit	HP/Evergreen
Kenny Waldrop	5/1/06	HP/Montgomery	HP/Birmingham

Clyde Warren	5/1/06	HP/Mobile	HP/Hamilton
Thomas Whitten	5/1/06	HP/Birmingham	ABI/Investigative Services
Claude Wiggins	5/1/06	HP/Mobile	HP/Selma
Terry Windham	5/1/06	HP/Decatur	HP/Tuscaloosa

Retirements

Beverlee Brown	March	Fingerprint Classifier I	ABI/Identification
Charles Leach	March	DL Examiner I	DL/Jacksonville
Emma Smith	March	Custodial Worker	SER/ACJTC

Resignations

Diane Gilmore	3/17/06	DL Examiner	DL/Mobile
Jesse Thornton	3/31/06	Trooper	HP/Opelika
Joni Ward	3/31/06	Fingerprint Classifier II	ABI/Identification Unit
Pamela Barner-McCorvey	4/14/06	Staff Accountant	ADM/Financial Services
Dorothy Allison	4/15/01	ASA II	ADM/Standards and Integrity

Births

Grace Ambrose Piggott, born 5/4/06 to Trooper Byron J. Piggott and wife Barbara

Deaths

Robert L. Chesnut	5/10/06	Patrolman	Alabama Highway Patrol

READY, AIM, FIRE !!!

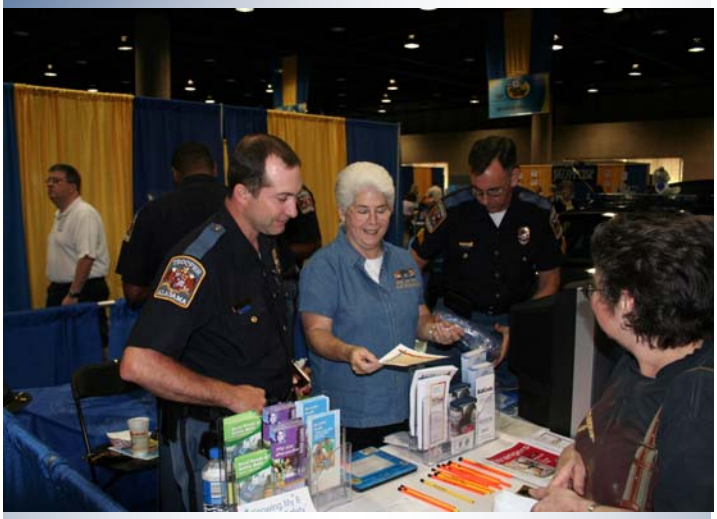
In-service is under way,
and the last scheduled dates are

September 7-8, 2006.

Please check with your supervisors to attend on one of the scheduled dates.

No make-up dates are scheduled due to the level of commitment for the increased number of recruit classes being conducted this year.

ABI and PI/E Deliver Safety Message at Wellness Fair



Tpr. Paul Mashburn, Faye Hester and Sgt. Tim Sartain share safety tips with visitors at wellness fair.

Birmingham's NBC 13 Health and Wellness Fair provided the perfect venue recently for DPS to promote its message of public safety. The annual community outreach event highlighted awareness of wellness and health by featuring exhibits and programs by Public Safety and other organizations.

Public Information/Education staff joined with ABI personnel to share tips on driving safety, Internet and child safety, seatbelt usage and child safety seats.

The two-day event drew 23,000 spectators to the Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center, where they learned from exhibitors about all aspects of safety, health and wellness.

ABI's Faye Hester and Sherry Barfoot joined PI/E's Sgt. Tim Sartain and Tprs. Janice Collins, Eric Dowdell, Donald Frazier, Paul Mashburn and Curtis Summerville in staffing Public Safety's exhibit.

Sartain said organizers were impressed with Public Safety's presence and an invitation for next year's fair was guaranteed.

"Excuse me, sir, can you bring that down to my level?"

Operation C.A.R.E. at Heart of DPS

The fervor that drives troopers to save lives, protect the public and serve others is the force behind Operation C.A.R.E., or "Combined Accident Reduction Effort." In a spirit of camaraderie, this valuable initiative binds state police agencies in a single focus: curtailing the mounting number of traffic crashes and fatalities on some of the nation's major thoroughfares.

Operation C.A.R.E. began July 4, 1977, when Michigan State Police Sgt. Gary Ernst and an Indiana State Police officer, Gene Neff, joined in a traffic safety effort along Interstate 94. The two men quickly recognized the increase in crashes and hazardous violations on summer holiday weekends between Chicago and Detroit. A massive media campaign by the two partnering states to announce increased patrols and strict enforcement on the inter-

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Troopers Join CIOT Blitz; Motorists Urged to *Buckle Up,* Drive Safely

Sgt. Damon Summers and Deputy Denise Ingram of the Lee County Sheriff's Department in a scene from "Click It Or Ticket" PSA. *Photo courtesy of OIT Media Production Group, Auburn University*

"My clothes were raggedy, I had holes in my shoes, I didn't click it, I got a ticket!" Alabama blues legend Jerry "Boogie" McCain sings the blues about his personal story in a 30-second public service announcement informing motorists that seat belts save lives. The PSA also features Public Safety's own Sgt. Damon Summers in a cameo appearance to convince Alabamians to "Click It or Ticket."

The CIOT safety belt enforcement blitz, which covered Memorial Day and runs through June 4, involves state troopers, local law enforcement and traffic safety agencies in a combined effort. The blitz includes checkpoints and increased patrols statewide, along with a series of PSAs advocating the life-saving benefits of buckling up.

In announcing DPS involvement, Col. Mike Coppage said, "Buckling up can save you from getting a ticket, but more importantly, it can save your life in the event of a traffic crash." Despite reported gains in statewide restraint usage, more than half of vehicle occupants killed in rural crashes in Alabama this year were not buckled up.

The blitz serves as a proactive effort to reduce traffic crashes, especially during holiday periods. Last year, 13 people died in traffic crashes in the state during the 78-hour Memorial Day holiday period. At least three of the fatalities involved alcohol, and none of the vehicle occupants was buckled up.

With the help of Boogie's blues, Summers' admonition and plenty of enforcement, buckling up is something we can all live with!

C.A.R.E., continued from Page 10

state marked the birth of Operation C.A.R.E.

C.A.R.E. membership has grown to include all 50 states, and Alabama remains an active member. Last year the Department of Public Safety was privileged to host C.A.R.E.'s annual conference in Birmingham, and Maj. Charles Andrews serves as outgoing chair of the organization.

This year's conference, recently held in Albuquerque, recognized DPS for its public information and safety education efforts during the six C.A.R.E enforcement periods.

C.A.R.E.'s mission has remained constant: the reduction of traffic crashes and the resulting human suffering. The project covers six periods, including heavily traveled holidays and two special enforcement campaigns. Through the coordinated efforts of state police nationwide, C.A.R.E. seeks to deter three key causes of highway fatalities: speeding, impaired driving and failure to use occupant restraints. C.A.R.E.'s tools are aggressive enforcement and safety education.

Due to the program's success, it has received the endorsement of the U.S. Department of Transportation and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which furnish member states with posters, brochures and a variety of other safety education materials. Additional information is available at Operation C.A.R.E.'s Web site, www.careofnorthamerica.org.

Alabama State Troopers in Spotlight with Immigration Enforcement

On a recent day at work in Dothan, Examiner II Susan Cobb began reviewing the application of a male immigrant who wished to obtain an Alabama driver license. The man presented a California driver license, Social Security card and employment authorization card. After examining the documents, Cobb referred the application to ICE-trained trooper Cpl. Jesse Williams, who ran a background check through the federal Law Enforcement Support Center.

The corporal learned the applicant had entered the United States "EWI" (entered without inspection, or undocumented) and was a convicted sex offender from California. Williams detained and arrested the man at the Dothan driver license office, and then turned him over to federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents.

Such apprehensions and arrests have become routine in Alabama, thanks to the state's immigration-trained trooper program. And with proposals to reform immigration in the United States at the forefront, the initiative has attracted nationwide attention.

Dubbed "287(g)," for the enabling section of the 1996 Immigration and Nationality Act, the program allows local and state agencies to enforce federal immigration law. In 2003, Alabama became the second state to be granted that authority under its Memorandum of Understanding with the federal Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Since that time, 44 state troopers have received training and been authorized to enforce federal immigration law. The ICE-trained troopers have made more than 160 arrests of illegal immigrants in the course of their regular duties, and the success of the program has prompted Gov. Bob Riley to request that a third class of troopers receive ICE training.

DPS lawyer Haran Lowe termed the program "strictly reactive. Alabama's troopers are not out there conducting work-place raids to round up illegal immigrants. Their contacts are based on state probable cause. They enforce federal immigration law only as called upon to do so in the course of their regular duties on the road and in driver licensing."

Troopers have apprehended a number of illegal immigrants with previous felony convictions, including armed robbery, drug smuggling and rape. In addition to the convicted sex offender, Lowe said recent cases include the speeding motorist who had been deported twice previously, and a driver license applicant with a valid North Carolina license. In addition to the North Carolina license, the applicant presented a Social Security card and EAD card when applying for an Alabama license. Both cards were fraudulent, but had been used successfully to receive the North Carolina license.

Lowe said troopers participating in the 287(g) program are certified after successfully completing five weeks of intensive training in federal immigration law at the Center for Domestic Preparedness.

As an outgrowth of the program, DPS is planning a series of classes across the state to assist jail administrators in identifying fraudulent immigration documents, and Riley has directed Public Safety to assist local police departments that may be interested in establishing an MOU with DHS and receiving ICE training for their officers.

TROOPER AVIATOR

Locates Missing Georgia Aircraft

Tpr. Pilot
DANNY COONE

When a small private plane was reported missing over east Alabama during the severe storms of mid-May, one of the first calls for help went to the Alabama State Trooper Aviation Unit. The plane, flying en route from Clayton, Ga., to Pensacola, disappeared amid high winds and thunder storms; and the Federal Aviation Administration contacted Tpr. Pilot Danny Coone after being notified of a possible plane crash near Camp Hill in Tallapoosa County.

Chief Tpr. Pilot Kris Helton and Coone canvassed the area for about four hours the first day in search of the lost aircraft, although their search efforts were somewhat hampered due to continued inclement weather. The following day Coone continued the search, this time solo, without the assistance of a spotter.

"We had searched for about 12 hours," Coone said, "but I was prepared to pursue the search for as long as possible until the aircraft was located." Late that afternoon, about 5 p.m., Coone spotted the wreckage of the twin engine Piper Aerostar in a wooded area near Dadeville. John Martin and Warren Palmer, both of Clayton, Ga., had died in the crash.

In addition to DPS, the Civil Air Patrol and Tallapoosa County Sheriff Jimmy Abbett assisted with the search. Abbett, a retired state trooper captain, said the crash appeared to have resulted from strong storms in the area.

Experience Provides Impetus for Hurricane Awareness

It is difficult to believe that it has been almost a year since Hurricane Katrina ravished the beautiful coastal areas of our state. The devastation to Alabama was considerable, yet our neighbors in Louisiana and Mississippi endured even greater destruction. Families uprooted, homes lost; and life returns, but so unlike before.

Experience is the best teacher about the importance of hurricane awareness and preparedness; and as the hurricane season approaches, Public Safety and emergency responders throughout the gulf region are reviewing last year's lessons.

The National Weather Center designated last week as Hurricane Awareness Week. As a part of its efforts, the center set up a Web site to inform the public about hurricane hazards and to provide useful information about measures to take should a hurricane threaten. "Preparation through education is less costly than learning through tragedy," said Max Mayfield, director of the National Hurricane Center.

"Learning from experience is invaluable," said Col. Mike Coppage, DPS director. "DPS, along with the Alabama Department of Emergency Management, Alabama Department of Transportation and the Alabama National Guard, have worked closely together to prepare for and respond to any weather-related incident anywhere in the state. The lessons learned in the past few years in dealing with the numerous hurricanes and other weather incidents in the state have provided valuable experiences which are shared by each of the organizations responsible for emergency response and recovery in our state," said Coppage.

As we enter into the hurricane season, it's important to take the necessary measures, not only to protect your family and those close to you, but also to assist others in need. Learn more about hurricane preparedness by visiting the National Weather Center's Web site, www.nhc.noaa.gov.

HP Troopers Take 'Crash Course' in Investigation

Six Highway Patrol crash reconstructionists recently returned from Jacksonville, Fla., where they took part in a conference on Crash Course Investigation. Tprs. Douglas Huntley, James H. Johnson, David McGowan, Shane Porter, James Ray and David Steward Jr. were among 200 investigators from around the world who gathered to gain a broader perspective on crash investigations.

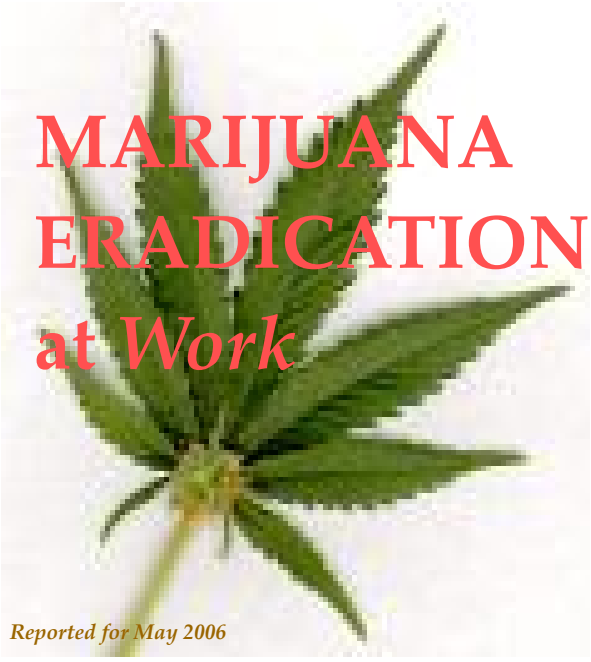
Hosted by the Institute of Police Technology and Management at the University of Florida, the conference focused on equipping investigators to do a better job in drawing conclusions. Information garnered from the conference also may prove valuable in producing safer vehicles.

Steward, a 10-year DPS veteran with four years in traffic homicide, said he valued most a demonstration of live crash testing involving a tractor-trailer and an SUV. The training exercise involved ramming a tractor-trailer into an SUV at 45 mph to help train detectives who investigate traffic crashes.

The simulation was unique in that it allowed participants to observe the crash as it occurred, as opposed to viewing only the aftermath of a crash. The investigators employed physics and calculations to determine speed, impact and trajectory. They then were challenged to comb through the small pieces of evidence to determine how and why the crash took place.

"It was amazing to witness just how much damage the truck could do to a car," said Steward. He said the conference also included other interesting topics, "such as court preparation, that will be valuable in my document preparation for court proceedings, as well as many vendors on hand with new technology such as the animated crash software. It was interesting to see how far the area of crash reconstruction has advanced."

Crash investigators from as far away as Sydney, Australia, and Northern Ireland attended the conference.



Counties Worked	Plants	Street Value	Arrests
Choctaw	275	$550,000	2
Coffee	26	$52,000	1
Conecuh	64	$128,000	0
Crenshaw	10	$20,000	0
Geneva	37	$74,000	1
Hale	5,981	$11,962,000	0
Marengo	224	$448,000	0
Sumter	24	$48,000	1
Washington	8	$16,000	0
Year-to-Date TOTALS	6,913	$13,826,000	11

Troop C Increases
Enforcement, Visibility

Aggressive enforcement programs and special details have added up to a busy spring for Highway Patrol's Troop C, and the welcome result has been safer roadways for Alabama's motorists.

Efforts kicked off in mid-April, according to Troop C Capt. Robert Goodner, with an enforcement detail in the Kilpatrick Community, activated at the request of area citizens and the DeKalb County Sheriff's Department. Personnel from the Highway Patrol Division coordinated with local agencies and federal Immigration agents in making 276 arrests, adding to the more than 4,200 traffic arrests made in March by Jacksonville Post troopers.

A special enforcement detail later in the month targeted Jefferson and Shelby counties to facilitate public safety during the Honda Superbike Weekend at the Barber Motorsports Raceway. DPS personnel from Highway Patrol, Service, Driver License, ABI and Administrative divisions implemented a proactive program to target aggressive driving practices.

Goodner said a major impetus for the detail was the 10 high-speed pursuits logged during last year's event, each in excess of 120 mph. DPS coordinated the detail with the Jefferson and Shelby County sheriff departments, as well as Leeds and Irondale police departments. Bottom line: 0 crashes.

Troop C was a driving force during the spring races in Talladega, where traffic operations began the Thursday prior to the April 27 races. The proactive measures for the spring race included aggressive driving patrols and DUI enforcement, along with traffic management before, during and after events.

Finally, the 6BHM project continues to show great success in Jefferson and Shelby counties. This aggressive enforcement program targets Interstates 459, 65 and 59 and U.S. 280 to increase traffic safety and reduce fatalities and injuries. Personnel from all DPS divisions are participating in 6BHM, which has netted more than 10,000 motorist contacts since March.

Goodner said the enforcement is paying off by reducing fatalities and increasing safety in the targeted areas. "Additionally, we've received many positive comments from the public regarding increased visibility and enforcement actions," said Goodner.

"Overall, we are accomplishing our goal of influencing motorists in a positive way. By doing that, we directly influence the safety of the motoring public."

Just the Stats, Please!

Source: Alabama Accident Summary, 2005

2005 TRAFFIC CRASHES	*Total Crashes*	*Fatalities*	*Injuries*
Interstate	**13,615**	**140**	**4,063**
Federal	**25,913**	**238**	**9,114**
State	**31,028**	**275**	**10,248**
County	**24,149**	**363**	**9,743**
Municipal	**49,243**	**118**	**10,987**
TOTAL	***143,948***	***1,134***	***44,155***

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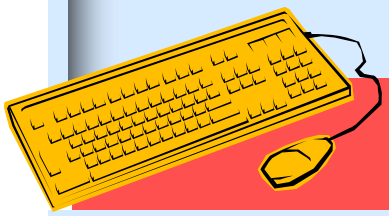

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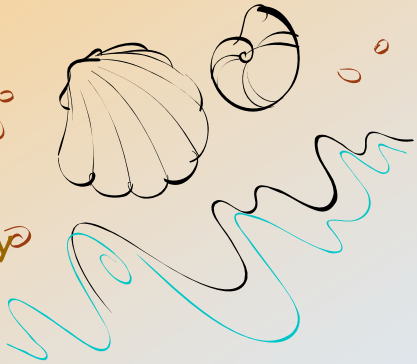
Upcoming State Holidays

JEFFERSON DAVIS' BIRTHDAY
June 5

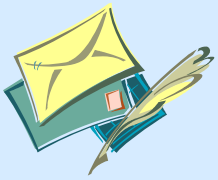
INDEPENDENCE DAY
July 4

LABOR DAY
September 4

Columbus Day
October 9



Got a great story idea? We'd love to hear from you!



Send all news items, updates and comments to:

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