



*The official monthly publication of the Alabama Department of Public Safety*

# THE BLUE LIGHT



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Director

LT. COLONEL F.A. BINGHAM  
Assistant Director

MAJOR JERRY CONNER  
ABI Division

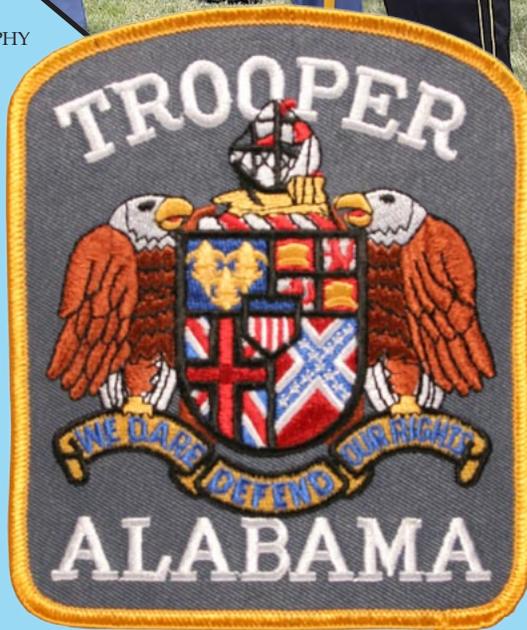
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Administrative Division

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Driver License Division

MAJOR ROSCOE HOWELL  
Highway Patrol Division

MAJOR HERMAN WRIGHT  
Protective Services Division

MAJOR CHARLES ANDREWS  
Service Division



**JUNE 2009**

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# BUCKLING DOWN



## *May Initiatives Emphasize Seat Belts, DUI*

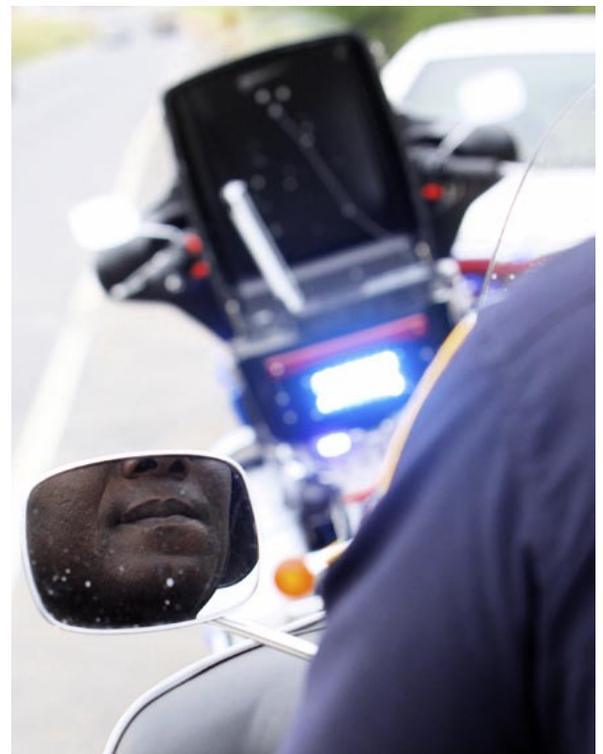
**T**hroughout the month of May, Alabama state troopers conducted a series of enforcement initiatives statewide, focusing specifically on two areas of persistent concern: seat belts and impaired driving.

“Thanks to aggressive enforcement targeting specific driving behavior, Alabama motorists are responding to trooper enforcement and education initiatives,” said Col. J. Christopher Murphy. “Despite these improvements, alcohol involvement remains high, and too many motorists fail to buckle up.”

Even though total fatalities in Alabama continue to decline, an estimated 40 percent of trooper-worked deaths on Alabama’s roadways involve alcohol, a figure 8 percent higher than the national average.

The May initiative, itself a fourth-generation “Take Back Our Highways” safety campaign, put troopers from all ranks and divisions on patrol to focus on reducing crashes and continuing to change bad driver behavior. Troopers aggressively worked line patrols, saturation patrols, and LIDAR details, specifically targeting driver behaviors that contribute to crashes and crash severity, including speeding, failure to yield the right of way, following too closely, driver inattention, and DUI.

“Task Force Zero” details were a major component combating impaired driving during the May initiative. TFZ details specifically target impaired driving, using specially equipped BAT-mobiles to handle DUI enforcement. Assigned to troops statewide, the BAT-mobiles are mobile breath alcohol testing laboratories, bringing testing equipment into the field. The mobile labs,



purchased with grant funds awarded by Gov. Bob Riley and administered through ADECA, allow state troopers to conduct roadside breath alcohol testing of suspected drunken drivers on site. They save time and money, while also being effective in apprehending impaired drivers.

Falling squarely in the middle of a national “Click It or Ticket” campaign, the May initiative also engaged troopers with setting up checkpoints to target compliance with the state’s seat belt and child restraint laws.

Even though seat belts can reduce the risk of fatal injury by 45 percent, the majority of motorists killed on Alabama’s roadways fail to buckle up. In 2008, 61 percent of all fatality victims were not wearing seat belts. Through April 2009, the figure had increased to more than 67 percent.

Murphy urged motorists to focus on their safety and that of others when traveling. “Do the right thing for yourself and your family and buckle up,” he said. “Seat belts and child restraints should be the rule, not the exception, on every trip. Too many motorists in Alabama fail to buckle up, and the result is a tragic loss of life.”



## ERADICATION Update 09

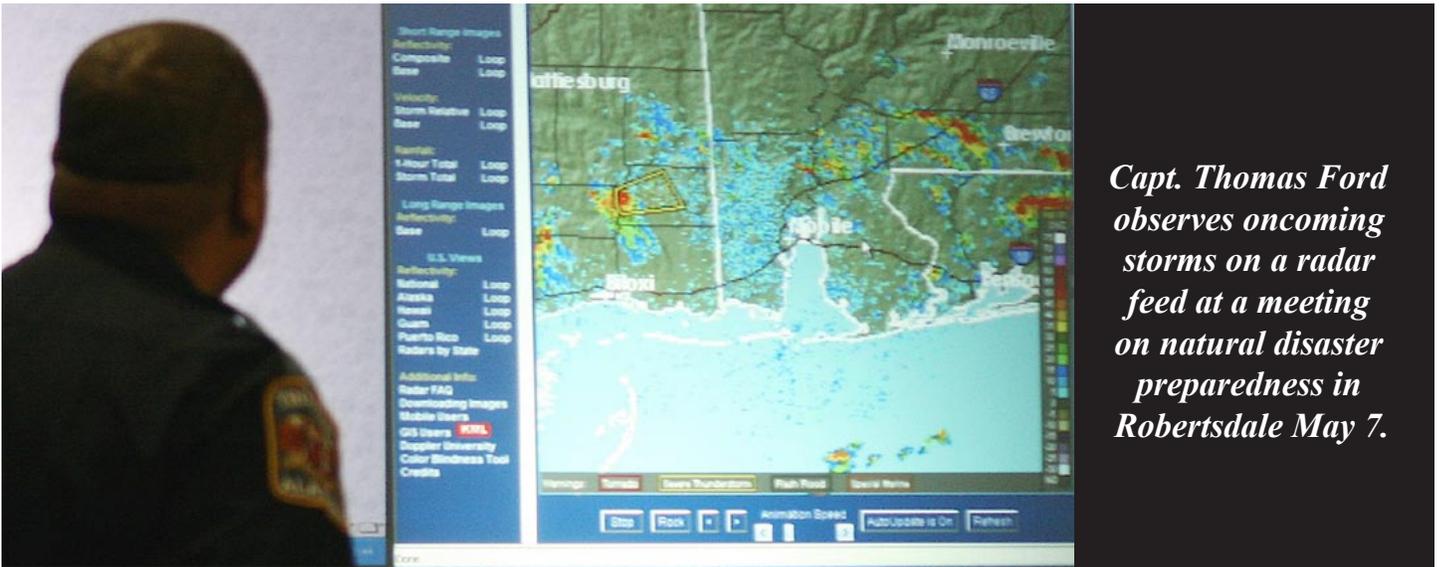
Marijuana eradication season opened with a bang in 2009. In the first three weeks of the season, ABI seized more than \$2,524,000 worth of marijuana and made 26 arrests.

Several of these plants had evidence of indoor grows, which is becoming an increasing problem for marijuana eradication teams.

Despite these difficulties, these initial statistics indicate the 2009 season will be an extremely busy and productive year for eradication teams.



***Plants found by Eradication Commander Sgt. Gary Whitaker and team leaders Cpl. Robert Saffold and Cpl. Kevin Souders May 13.***



*Capt. Thomas Ford observes oncoming storms on a radar feed at a meeting on natural disaster preparedness in Robertsdale May 7.*

# Hurricane Preparedness a Priority

By: Lakecia Easley

The 2009 Gulf States Hurricane Conference gathered emergency personnel from Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama in Biloxi, Miss., to discuss hurricane preparedness and response; and on the heels of the conference, the Alabama Department of Public Safety is planning to increase its hurricane preparation efforts, according to Capt. Marc McHenry.

Although DPS representatives were unable to take part in the conference, McHenry said Public Safety still will benefit from conference developments, including a handful of proposals that will help DPS better prepare for hurricane season.

First, efforts will be directed at the 2009 ALDOT reverse lane plan. “A scheduled exercise of the reverse laning plan took place May 19-20,” McHenry said. “The reverse laning of Interstate 65 to evacuate the Gulf Coast areas is a concerted effort with DPS, ALDOT, state and county EMAs, law enforcement agencies in the affected areas and local vehicle recovery companies to assist motorists who become disabled or need assistance.”

Second, staff will continue working with the Alabama Department of Homeland Security to achieve statewide communications interoperability.

McHenry described interoperability as “the ability, through technology, to allow different types of communications to be bridged together.”

This would involve bridging together cellular, hard-line phone systems, satellite and radio frequencies. The result would allow different agencies using different types of communication systems to speak directly to each other and help circumvent any disabled communications caused by weather hazards such as tornados and hurricanes.

Finally, DPS has worked to identify and secure safe housing for its Special Operations platoons in the Mobile area. McHenry said, “Our Special Operations teams have needed to be staged further south into the affected areas for more efficient response after landfall.”

With improvements in these three areas, DPS is working with other agencies to enhance both emergency preparedness and response.



Anticipation is mounting at the current ACJTC as Public Safety's new academy begins to take form on Wallace Community College-Selma's campus. While much of the enthusiasm is aimed at the progress at the construction site, Lt. Keith Jackson indicates there is a great deal more to the excitement than mere buildings.

"Our new academy is the perfect marriage of law enforcement training and academia," said Jackson. "Dr. James Mitchell of WCCS and Col. Murphy have carefully collaborated to develop a system which will benefit all."

Completion of the trooper academy will now earn successful graduates 12 hours of college credit to apply toward a degree. Basic police will earn nine hours. The college credit offer is extended to all troopers graduating the academy in the past 10 years. Additionally, college credit also will be offered for other classes taught at the ACJTC, including in-service, continuing education programs, and leadership development courses.

"I don't think we have ever had a director so focused on the importance of education," Jackson said. "Dr. Mitchell and Col. Murphy have created an awesome opportunity for all DPS employees with this partnership."

Any credit earned at WCCS is transferrable to any other state institution, and Athens State University also is working with this partnership to transition WCCS students to receive a four-year degree following receipt of an associate's degree.

The partnership also aims to benefit WCCS by breathing new life into the school. WCCS is set to kick off a criminal justice program in the fall, greatly expanding the program with the completion of the new academy.

Excited by the partnership, WCCS also extended DPS access to its newly completed Hank Sanders Technology Center, a state-of-the-art center with classrooms, computer laboratories, and conference facilities to serve as a training area for business and industry.

"This partnership is a really big deal for us and is one of those things that you almost think is too good to be true," said Jackson. "Honestly, I cannot think of anything better that has ever happened to this department, *ever*."



## Geneva Says 'Thank You'

Law enforcement personnel from more than 20 different agencies were invited by the Geneva County Commission to an appreciation dinner May 7 in Geneva, thanking the quick action of first responders rushing to help in what became the deadliest shooting rampage in Alabama history.

Col. J. Christopher Murphy, ABI chief Maj. Jerry Conner, and numerous representatives of DPS, including troopers and special agents, were present for the gathering.

“We are just so appreciative for everybody,” said Geneva County Commission chairman Judge Fred Hamic, who helped organize the event. “We could not have done it without their assistance.”

Danny McKinley, law enforcement coordinator for the Alabama Office of the Attorney General, was guest speaker at the occasion.

“There’s no telling how many lives you have saved because of your quick action and quick thinking,” said McKinley.

While several attending law enforcement officers agree that none of them first recognized the magnitude of the event, Hamic said he just wanted to get everyone together one more time to say “thank you” and attempt to move forward.

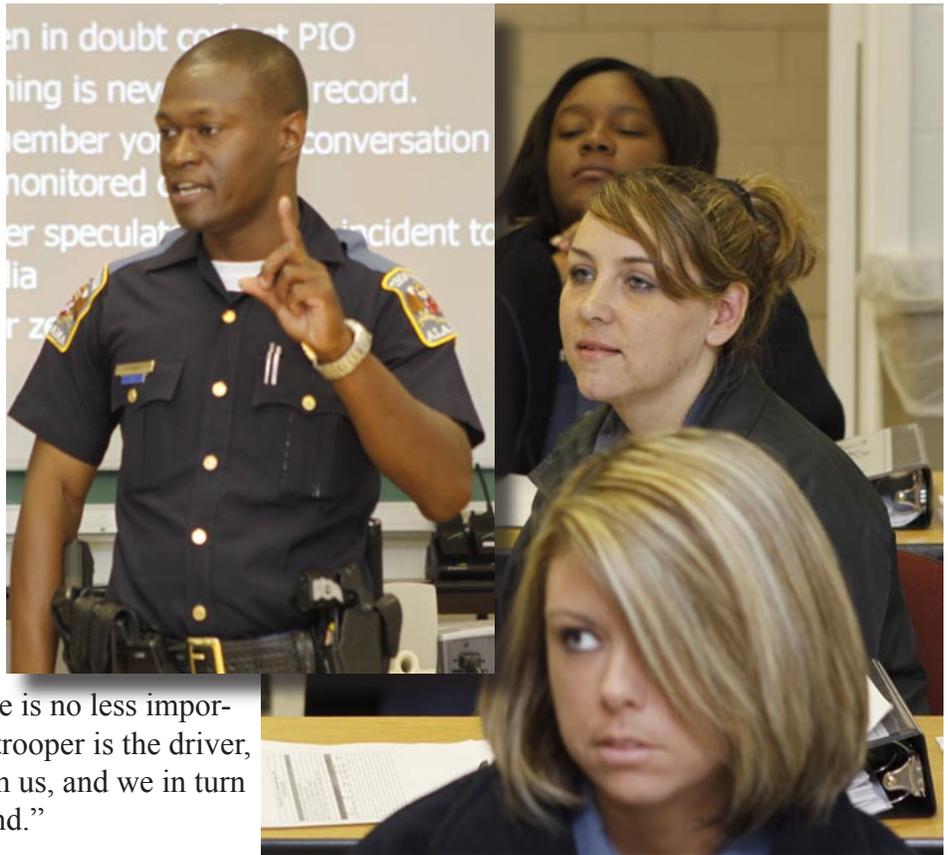
“Samson and Geneva will never be back to like it was, but we are in a healing process,” said Hamic. “And everybody that has come together and helped, it’s just amazing.”



# PCO: The Voice of DPS

Of all of the positions that are considered “behind the scenes” at DPS, only one so closely fits that description that its most recognizable factor is a mere voice on the other end of the radio.

“Since we are behind the scenes, we are often overlooked,” said PCO III Dana McGee. “Really, though, our role is no less important than the role of our troopers. If a trooper is the driver, PCOs are the pit crew. They depend on us, and we in turn make sure they go home safe and sound.”



Fourteen PCOs came to grips with the importance of their jobs as they completed PCO Basic Communications Certification at the ACJTC in Selma May 11-15. Leading the course were PCOs Susan Chandler, Lynn Golden, Amelia Batchelder and McGee.

The course focused on procedures, policies, and responsibilities of DPS’s police communications officers, and presented real-life scenarios in which crucial decisions need to be made in mere moments.

*The Blue Light* listened in on a class led by Tpr. Charles Dysart on procedures regarding media policy. During class, Dysart took time to show a video clip of a traffic stop in Texas in which a Texas trooper was shot and where several costly errors were made by the PCO.

“Everything we do as troopers starts with a police communications officer,” Dysart said. “Without that voice, without that connection, what we do would not be possible.”

Recent efforts to acknowledge the dedication and professionalism of the department’s outstanding PCOs shows that their hard work does not go unnoticed.

ABI Capt. Larry Flippo recently sent letters of commendation to PCOs Brandyn Willis and Linda Cagle for outstanding service to the department by proving themselves tremendously helpful in bringing a high-profile quadruple homicide investigation to a successful conclusion.

“This job is all about helping people,” said PCO Crystal Jackson. “As public servants, that is exactly what my job is about, and it is one I take seriously.”





*Honoring Fallen Heroes*

The Alabama Fraternal Order of Police held its annual state memorial service for fallen officers on the south lawn of the state Capitol in Montgomery May 8. Col. J. Christopher Murphy spoke at the service honoring officers who died in the line of duty in 2008 in Alabama.

That next evening, the Alabama Chapter of Concerns of Police Survivors held its annual candlelight vigil on the steps of the state Capitol. The service remembers officers killed, not only in the previous year, but also in prior years. Attorney



General Troy King participated in both events, in support of the law enforcement community.

Then, on May 14, Cpl. Steve Jarrett and the legendary state trooper AMC Javelin made a special appearance at the U.S. Veterans Administration Hospital in Montgomery for Police Day. The memorial service honored all members of the law enforcement community by recognizing the service and sacrifice of officers, with special recognition to those officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

These three events all tie into the nationwide celebration of National Police Week, occurring annually the week of May 15. Established by a joint resolution of Congress in 1962, National Police Week is a collaborative effort of several organizations dedicated to honoring America's law enforcement community. Major contributors and organizers of National Police Week include C.O.P.S., the Fraternal Order of Police Auxiliary, and the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund.



In addition to taking the Javelin to Police Day, Cpl. Steve Jarrett also showcased the car at the First Annual Elmore County Fire Department Car and Antique Tractor Show. The car, restored in-house, looks as good as it did when the original law enforcement pony car owned Alabama's highways in the early 1970s.

Always attracting a crowd, the Javelin drew remarkable crowds at both the car show and the V.A. hospital, said Jarrett.

"The car looks great," Jarrett said. "The problem with driving it, though, is that you feel like you are literally driving a time machine. The modern conveniences that we have grown accustomed to having in automobiles just don't exist in the Javelin. For instance, I had to actually demonstrate to my son how to roll down the window; he had never seen a window crank before."



# dps gets moving

Alabama state troopers joined hundreds of officers representing more than 30 law enforcement agencies to take part in the 2009 Alabama Law Enforcement Torch Run for the Special Olympics May 14-15. The torch run is an annual event in which Alabama law enforcement personnel participate to support the Special Olympics, alongside Special Olympics athletes.



This year, the Flame of Hope entered Alabama north of Decatur and travelled south through Hartselle, into Pelham, and through Montgomery to its destination

at the opening ceremonies for the games in Troy. Both troopers and local law enforcement were on hand to present the torch to Attorney General Troy King on the steps of the state Capitol, where he greeted the runners and presided over the transfer of the flame for the final leg of its journey.



Leading up to the state event, Dothan-area troopers also assisted in a torch run carrying the Flame of Hope through the city to open the 33rd Annual Dothan/Houston County Area Special Olympics Track and Field Day April 16. Following the torch run, more than 200 participants joined in opening the Dothan ceremonies with the Parade of Athletes.

Several DPS employees took steps towards healthier living by participating in National Employee Health and Fitness Day May 1 in Montgomery. All participants performed warm-up exercises to elevate their heart rate, before taking two laps around the grounds of the state Capitol.

The annual event is held to promote health awareness by focusing on the many benefits of physical activity through employees' work sites.





## *Fishing Tourney, Bike Ride Support Grieving Family*

Two events supported by troopers helped raise money in May for Deputy Josh Myers, who recently lost his wife and daughter in the Geneva County shootings in March.

The Seven Bridges Road chapter of the Iron Warriors Motorcycle Club, a club of active, former and retired firefighters and law enforcement officers, raised \$3,000 to benefit the Josh Myers Family Tragedy Relief fund, an amount being matched by SouthernLINC Wireless.

State troopers provided escort, while several current and retired troopers and DPS personnel made the trek alongside other motorcycle enthusiasts to deliver the \$6,000 check to the

*Continued on next page.*

## *Trooper Locates Missing Juvenile Trio*

In the evening hours of May 7, Tpr. Scott Smith performed a routine traffic stop of a vehicle on County Road 1 in Bibb County. The occupant of the vehicle proceeded to tell the trooper that they were in the area looking for her 13-year-old son and two other 13-year-old boys who had run away from home earlier that week.

The juveniles had been reported missing to both the Chilton County Sheriff's Office and Brent Police Department, and they were processed and entered into NCIC. Smith told the distraught mother that he would stay in the area and remain on the lookout for the missing boys. The mother described the three boys to Smith and handed the trooper a flyer containing further information on the missing juveniles.

Fifteen minutes after ending the traffic stop, Smith spotted a boy fitting the description of one of the missing boys, walking from a convenience store across a four-lane divided highway toward a wooded area. Smith approached the juvenile and determined that he was, indeed, one of the missing boys.

After engaging the boy in conversation, he told Smith that the other two boys were hiding in the woods. Using the PA speaker on his patrol car, Smith told the other missing youth that unless they came out on their own, he would send dogs into the woods to find them. Five minutes later, both boys emerged from the wooded area, and Smith took all three boys into protective custody, notifying the sheriff's department and eventually returning the boys to the custody of their parents.

Later, it was determined that one of the boys had taken a vehicle belonging to one of the parents. Disabled in the woods since the previous day, the vehicle apparently served as shelter for the boys. The juveniles spent the night in the car and were preparing to do so again the evening they were located.

The mother whom Smith originally encountered during the traffic stop expressed great gratitude and appreciation to him for his efforts in locating the three boys. In fact, when a local officer arrived to take her and the children to the station, the mother refused the ride and insisted on riding with a state trooper instead.

Myers family on the steps of the Geneva County Courthouse May 9.

That next Saturday, Lt. Karl Youngblood helped raise additional funds to deposit in the tragedy relief fund by staging a fundraising fishing tournament to benefit the Myers family. The event brought members of DPS, Department of Corrections, and Alcoholic Beverage Control Board to the Alabama River to have fun competing, while also raising funds for the Myers family by pooling entry fees and concession earnings. One quarter of all fees paid to compete in the fishing tournament was donated to the Myers family, and an additional 10 percent of all concession earnings also went to the family.



*Jarrett Brown with "Jumping Fish."*

## ...And the Results are In

Sixteen boats turned out for the tournament, and more than 100 pounds of fish returned to land for weigh-in. A four-pound 12 ounce fish caught by Mark Kelley and Billy Blue from DOC was the largest, and Allen Smith and John Norris, also of DOC won first place with a gross total weight of 10 pounds 13 ounces.

Rounding out the top three are DL technician Monica Chandler and her husband, Brad, with 10 pounds two ounces, and Lt. Kevin Wright and H.T. Walters with nine pounds 11 ounces.

Receiving an honorable mention for catching perhaps the most memorable fish of the day is Sgt. Chris Brown and his son, Jarrett. Dubbed, "Jumping Fish," the bass literally leapt into their boat without being either hooked or netted.

Special thanks to Col. J. Christopher Murphy, Lt. Karl Youngblood and everyone who participated in this fundraiser.



# KIDS, COPS COME TOGETHER FOR FAMILY FUN

Millbrook’s first annual Cops and Kids Day took place at the town’s Village Green Park May 30, with Alabama state troopers on hand to take part in the family-friendly event.

DPS joined local law enforcement agencies to encourage children to promote better communication, cooperation, understanding, trust, and respect between area youth and law enforcement.

Troopers were more than eager to demonstrate to children the importance of wearing seat belts, with the ever-popular rollover simulator, funded through a Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration grant. There were also plenty of fun and educational games and activities on crime prevention, in addition to the free t-shirts and delicious food and drinks. Adding “wow factor” to the event were the many police cars, motorcycles, and fire trucks on display.

DPS’s Cpl. Steve Jarrett said the event was a great success and provided an excellent opportunity for children and law enforcement officers to interact in a casual setting.



## Zoo Walk Raises Funds, Awareness Against Drunk Driving

Tpr. John Reese served as team captain of the Road Runners as DPS assisted with Mothers Against Drunk Driving’s annual Walk at the Zoo May 2 in Montgomery.

Since 2003, DPS has provided services to the event, including the rollover simulator and talks on DUI, Internet, and other safety issues.

This year, however, MADD asked DPS to take on a broader role, and DPS picked up a team to participate in the actual walk, raising funds to provide financial assistance to families in the state who have had a family member injured or killed by a drunken driver.

Of the five law enforcement agencies to participate in the event, DPS was the top agency, raising \$1,902.

Special thanks to team captain Reese and team members Sgt. Daniel Dean and daughter Essie, Cpls. Steve Jarrett, Melissa Hubbard, Terry King, Edward Bennett, Chad Blankinchip and wife Marsha and two daughters, Tpr. Kevin Cook, Lanette Williams, Mona Lisa Hall, Rachel Fields, and Dewaine Fields.

Contributing financially were Lt. Karl Wade, Lt. John Malone, Cpl. Rick Ward, Susan Mann, Martha Earnhardt, Dorris Teague, and Bonnie Steele.

# 75 Heading Towards

1935 - 2010



*Above: Highway Patrolmen Disaster Control Group training at the Alabama Police Academy on Gunter Air Force Base, Montgomery, May 1968. Officers in white shirts are Montgomery police, also training.*

*Right: The famous Alabama Highway Patrol "Flying Squad" headed by Sgt. Tom Carlisle (left front). Carlisle later became HP chief. The others are unidentified with the exception of Edward S. Owens (right front) and Patrolman Claude Prier (left rear). Prier later became chief of DL. The Flying Squad traveled across the state providing assistance to city police and county sheriffs, assisting with other special details involving crowds and special events. This photograph dates to the mid 1940s, and was taken on the south side of the Capitol.*



*Above: Gov. George C. Wallace speaking at the dedication ceremony in 1970 of the department's new museum, later renamed the Col. E. C. Dothard Safety Education Museum. Dothard is pictured behind Wallace with his wife, Virginia. Others pictured include Capt. Ben Gamel, Chief of Safety Education Capt. John Henderson, and Maj. Claude Prier.*

*Right: Weapons confiscated during the wildcat coal strike in Dekalb and Jackson counties in north Alabama. Several pitched battles were fought across north and west Alabama with striking Alabama coal miners in the late 1970s. Pictured from left are Col. E. C. Dothard, the Dekalb County sheriff, and Maj. James Fuqua, HP chief.*



# People You Know!



## *New Employees*

Theresa Ellis	5.01.09	Retired State Employee	ABI/Identification
Julie Fuller	4.22.09	Clerical Aide	ABI/Sex Offender Registry
William Hicks	4.16.09	PCO I	HP/Huntsville

## *Promotions*

Amy Cobb	5.01.09	Latent Print Examiner	ABI/Identification
Jack Clark	5.01.09	Captain	HP/Motor Carrier Safety Unit
Amanda Heaps	5.01.09	PCO II	HP/Decatur
Brenda Hall-Thomas	5.01.09	Fingerprint Classifier II	ABI/Identification

## *Transfers*

David Fagan	5.01.09	Trooper	ABI/Investigative Services
Reginald Harkins	5.01.09	Trooper	PS/Dignitary Protection
Charles Joiner	5.01.09	Trooper	ADM/Public Information
Tasha McGee	4.16.09	Investigative Technician I	ABI/Fusion Center
Carolyn Nelson	5.01.09	DL Examiner I	DL/Fairhope Examining
Robert Thornton	5.01.09	Sergeant	HP/Headquarters
Angela Washington	4.16.09	ASA III	ABI/Criminal Investigation
Will Wright Jr.	5.01.09	Corporal	SER/Administrative Unit

## *Resignations*

Gregory Mayo	4.16.09	Trooper	ADM/ACJTC
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## *Retirement*

Kenneth Kelley	4.30.09	Lieutenant	HP/Dothan
Kenneth Price	4.30.09	Sergeant	HP/Motor Carrier Safety Unit

Alabama Department of



Public Safety

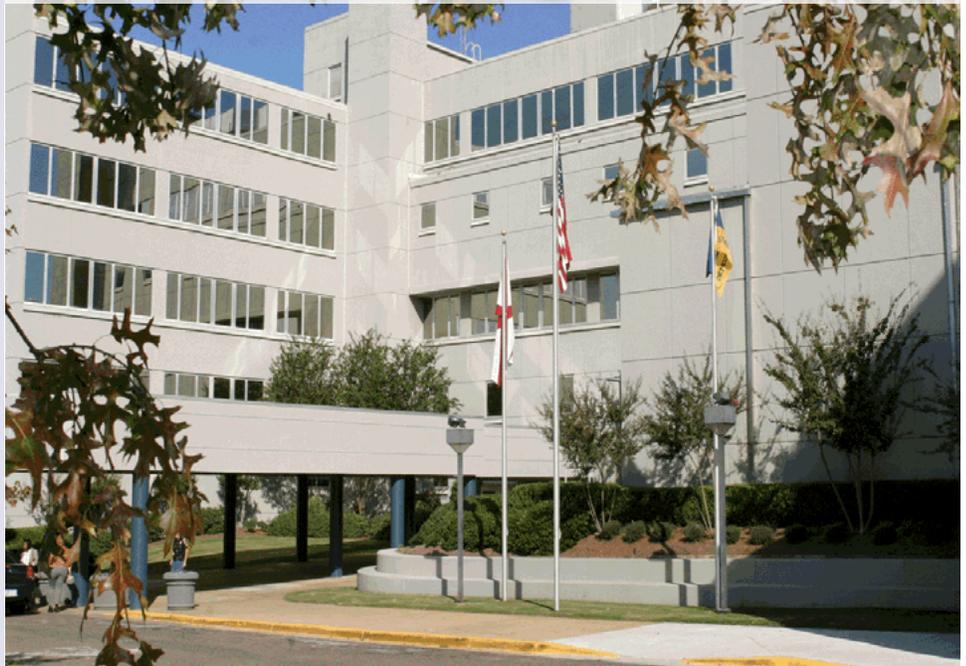
**CONTRIBUTING:**

- Maj. Hugh McCall, DL
- Capt. Charles Ward, PS
- Lt. Clay Barnes, ABI
- Lt. Jack Clark, HP
- Tpr. John Reese, ADM
- Tommy Giles, Photography

**EDITOR:**

Ryan Godfrey

# RSA Criminal Justice Center Montgomery, Ala.



## WE'RE ON THE WEB!

DPS.ALABAMA.GOV

Questions? Comments? Concerns?

STAY IN TOUCH WITH *THE BLUE LIGHT*.  
PLEASE E-MAIL ALL REQUESTS TO:

RYAN.GODFREY@DPS.ALABAMA.GOV

## On Your Calendar

**Monday, June 1**

*Jefferson Davis' Birthday*

**Friday, July 3**

*Independence Day (Offices closed)*

**Monday, September 7**

*Labor Day*

**Monday, October 12**

*Columbus Day*

## ACJTC TRAINING SCHEDULE JUNE '09

Date	Event
June 1-30	Trooper Class 2009-A
1-30	Basic Police Session 135
2-3	NIMS ICS 400
3	SFST Refresher Course
4	Driving School
8-11	PCO & CTO Training
10-11	NIMS ICS 400
15-30	ABC Training
18	SUID Training
23	Computer Basics
23-24	Basic Rappel
23-24	FTO
24	Excel 2007 Introduction
24-25	NIMS ICS 400
25	Outlook & Webmail
29-30	Active Shooter
30	Excel 2003 Introduction