



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



# THE BLUE LIGHT



**THE HONORABLE ROBERT BENTLEY**  
*Governor*

**COLONEL HUGH B. McCALL**  
*Director*

**LT. COLONEL KEVIN L. WRIGHT**  
*Assistant Director*

**MAJOR NEIL TEW**  
*ABI Division*

**MAJOR MARC McHENRY**  
*Administrative Division*

**MAJOR TERRY CHAPMAN**  
*Driver License Division*

**MAJOR HERMAN WRIGHT**  
*Highway Patrol Division*

**CAPTAIN DEENA PREGNO**  
*Service Division*

**MAJOR F.A. BINGHAM**  
*Special Projects*

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*Aerial view of tornado damage in Tuscaloosa.*

# LONG ROAD TO RECOVERY

**M**ore than 300 Alabama state troopers are assisting with search and rescue efforts after violent tornadoes and storms flattened entire neighborhoods throughout the Southeast, killing at least 250 and injuring more than 2,000 in Alabama alone. The April 27 tornado outbreak was the deadliest since the tri-state tornado of 1925 and represents the worst U.S. natural disaster since Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

The unprecedented twisters left up to one million Alabama homes without power and forced the nation's second largest nuclear power

facility, Browns Ferry, to temporarily shutter. Projected recovery costs are in the billions of dollars.

With these unheard of statistics, President Barack Obama met Gov. Robert Bentley in the wrecked city of Tuscaloosa to view, firsthand, the wide brown scar carved upon the earth in what many consider the epicenter of the deadly storm's strike.

"I've never seen devastation like this," Obama said, after touring the area by motorcade, while state troopers and local authorities patrolled the bombed businesses and

homes along McFarland Boulevard, one of Tuscaloosa's busiest streets before the violent tornado touched down.

During his visit, President Obama praised Gov. Bentley's efforts on starting Alabama's journey along the long road to recovery.

"Fortunately, the governor has done an extraordinary job with his team in making sure that the resources of the state are mobilized and have been brought in here," Obama said.

In Tuscaloosa and throughout Alabama, troopers served a vital role

in beginning that long road to recovery by sifting through rubble looking for survivors amidst the dead.

Violent weather, including tornadoes, is a regular component of living in the Southeast. As the chaotic scene played out during that first night, troopers and other first responders were quick to realize that this storm was unlike any other in recent memory.

“Tornadoes are always dangerous, but I don’t think anyone expected destruction quite like this,” said Tpr. Eric Salvador. Working 12-hour shifts, Salvador was part of a six-trooper team working with local authorities in the hard-hit areas in Elmore County, where six people perished. In addition to the search and rescue missions, troopers directed traffic around devastated areas, restricted access to affected areas and guarded against looting.

“Residents in the Windemere community were really thankful of our presence there,” Salvador said. “Even with the area closed off and a heavy law enforcement presence, we found looters trying to get away with a television found among the rubble.”

These storms come less than two weeks after another deadly outbreak of tornadoes claimed 43 lives in the Southeast, including four in Alabama.



***Above, Tpr. Earl Wootson directs traffic in Madison County at one of the many areas hit hard by a massive tornado outbreak.***

***Below, Sgt. Steve Jarrett, Tpr. Kevin Cook, Tpr. Greg Eubanks, and Tpr. Charles Dysart assisted with President Obama’s motorcade.***



# E-Weight Readies Statewide Rollout

**M**otor Carrier Safety Unit weight crews in Tuscaloosa and Montgomery are currently field testing E-Weight, an innovative electronic and completely paperless system for filing weight reports, said Sgt. Philip Taylor.

“We are really excited about E-Weight because it benefits everyone involved in the process,” Taylor said. “The system is fully automated, and data is transferred immediately, completely eliminating man-hours spent manually inputting paper forms. With 4,000 to 6,000 forms to process each month, this new system will enable us to save a lot of time.”

The E-Weight system follows other electronic systems such as E-Citation and E-Crash. Similar to these other systems, data compiled from the E-Weight system is used to generate advanced statistical information to further improve efficiency of weight crews.

Alabama Dashboards for Visualization Analysis and Coordinated Enforcement (ADVANCE) will generate various maps, graphs and charts with compiled data to produce a more effective interface to deliver the information.

“The electronic system also benefits truckers by dramatically reducing the time taken to weigh trucks,” Taylor added. “The intuitive interface saves time by speeding up data entry and automatically calculating axel weight, and that is very important to many truckers when time is money.”

“Although still in a testing phase, it is already clear that E-Weight will benefit Motor Carrier tremendously,” Taylor said. “This system has been in the works for 18 months, and although it is not quite ready to roll out statewide, when it goes live, it will forever positively impact how efficiently we operate.”



# ABI Arrests Suspect in 1999 Murder

Nearly 12 years after the body of Petaluma, Calif., truck driver Bob Nelson was found dumped off the side of Interstate 85 in Macon County, the Alabama Department of Public Safety helped bring some closure for his family by solving his murder.

Gary Lee Poisel Jr., 39, was arrested March 22 in Texas for suspected murder and first-degree robbery. ABI obtained warrants following DNA evidence linking Poisel to Nelson's truck.

In coordination with the Texas Department of Public Safety, ABI took Poisel into custody and placed him in

Randall County Detention Facility in Amarillo, Texas, where he awaited extradition.

Nelson's body was found July 2, 1999, by an inmate work crew along a rural stretch of Interstate 85 approximately 20 miles outside of Montgomery. Nelson had been stabbed multiple times with a small knife, including a jab that opened an artery in his neck.

The Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences, Macon County Sheriff's Office and the 5th Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office played an important role in Poisel's arrest, and the ABI extends its gratitude.



## DL Check in Bay Minette

The following photos are from a driver license check performed jointly by Highway Patrol and Bay Minette Police on April 22.



# ***Troopers Assist in Recovering Lost Boy***



Alabama state troopers were requested to assist Talladega Police, the Talladega County Sheriff's Office and the Talladega Fire Department in searching for a 2-year-old boy who wandered from his residence on April 15.

Alabama State Trooper CRT team members were deployed alongside area troopers to assist in the search for the missing boy.

Shortly after troopers arrived at the location, the boy was found sitting on a log with his pet labrador mix puppy. The boy, the dog and two deputies were brought out of the wooded area by the CRT team's six-wheeled ATV. They were followed by two firefighters and a paramedic on a Talladega Fire Department ATV.

# ***Willingham Named ASTA Member of 2010***

The Alabama State Troopers Association honored Tpr. Norman Willingham with its 2010 Member of the Year award in a ceremony April 5.

Willingham, recently retired from ABI, narrowly edged out Tpr. Adam Robinson of Evergreen for the award.

Both Willingham and Robinson were noted for their strong work ethic, degree of professionalism and representation of the department.

Congratulations to both!



***From left, Col. Hugh B. McCall, Lt. John Malone, Tpr. Adam Robinson, and Lt. Col. Kevin L. Wright. Willingham was unable to attend.***

# Troopers Tame Talladega



For years, Alabama state troopers have dutifully worked to rein in the traditionally rowdy and raucous behavior many race fans exhibit at Talladega.

The latest tool troopers are using to maintain order at the race is Task Force Zero. Specializing in DUI detection and enforcement, TFZ troopers conducted several patrols around the Talladega Superspeedway property from the Thursday before race weekend through mid-night Sunday.

In that time frame, nine TFZ

troopers from Troop E reported making 72 DUI arrests. While these numbers are considerably lower than in previous years, extremely violent weather threatened throughout the night of April 15, and crowds were nonexistent during that time. Still, TFZ managed to make six arrests the night of the storm.

Despite the threat of severe weather, Alabama state troopers reported that race weekend got off without a hitch, attributed somewhat to lighter than average crowds, but largely to smooth operation plans.

“One thing you can always expect at Talladega is a mad rush for the exit following the race,” said Tpr. Chad Joiner. “This year was different. Crowds were quiet and mostly well-behaved, and traffic was smooth and flowed steadily throughout the event.”

“Talladega has become much more family-friendly in recent years,” Joiner added. “Still, the reason we are here is to enforce traffic laws, apprehend drivers and ensure everyone gets home safely.”

It appears troopers did just that. With the 72 DUI arrests TFZ troopers made during the four-day Talladega race weekend, there were zero traffic fatalities that could directly be linked to race weekend.

Grant funding for BAT-mobiles used by TFZ troopers was awarded by Gov. Bob Riley and administered by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs. Testing equipment was provided by the Department of Forensic Sciences.



# Stay Safe All Summer Long!

**W**ith the long days of summer, people are out and about from morning till night: bicycling, walking, jogging, motorcycling, even in-line skating and skateboarding, as well as driving. When so many people are on the move in so many ways, we all need to be alert and be on the lookout for others, no matter how they – or we – are traveling. Here is some advice on how to get there safely.



- Check your car or have it serviced before any long trip (battery, tires, belts and fluids).
- Have a qualified technician check the air conditioner.
- Check your oil. If you will be towing a trailer or boat, or driving in the desert, switch to a motor oil with higher viscosity.
- Pack an emergency kit that includes water, jumper cables, flares, a flashlight, equipment to change a tire, and a first aid kit.
- Fill up your gas tank at night or early in the morning to minimize damage to the ozone layer.
- Pack non-perishable snacks and plenty of juice and water (individual water bottles for each family member helps you monitor intake to avoid dehydration).
- Make sure your child safety seats and booster seats are properly installed.

- Require all occupants to buckle up, with children in the back seat.
- Obey speed limits and all roadway signs.
- Drive calmly and avoid entanglements with aggressive drivers.
- Take frequent breaks — at least every two hours — and avoid driving when tired.
- Be especially careful around railroad crossings.
- Avoid driving in the “No Zone” around trucks. If you cannot see the truck driver in the truck’s mirror, the truck driver cannot see you.
- Slow down in work zones, obey all signs and flaggers and pay attention to the vehicle in front of you (most work zone crashes are rear-end collisions due to an inattentive driver).

- When crossing streets, remember to look left, right, then left again, before you step off the curb.
- Don’t play, walk or bicycle along railroad tracks.
- Parents, be sure to review the bicycle and pedestrian safety rules with your children.
- Check the fit of your bike helmet.
- Always wear your helmet while bicycling or in-line skating.
- Don’t wear your bike helmet on the playground, climbing trees, or at other types of play.
- Before riding your bike, do a quick maintenance check of the bike, including brakes, tires, air pressure, chain, handlebars and loose parts. Whether you use your bike a lot or are just dusting it off, do a maintenance check every time you ride.

## Stay Safe (continued)



- Dress for the heat. Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing. Light colors will reflect away some of the sun's energy. It is also a good idea to wear hats or to use an umbrella.
- Drink water. Carry water or juice with you and drink continuously, even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which dehydrate the body. Avoid using salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.
- Eat small meals and eat more often. Avoid high-protein foods, which increase metabolic heat.
- Slow down. Avoid strenuous activity. If you must do strenuous activity, do it during the coolest part of the day, which is usually in the morning between 4 and 7 a.m.
- Stay indoors when possible. If air-conditioning is not available, stay on the lowest floor out of the sunshine. Remember that electric fans do not cool, they simply circulate the air.
- Be a good neighbor. During heat waves, check in on elderly residents in your neighborhood and those who do not have air conditioning.
- Learn first aid and CPR.

*Sources: the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, HSRC, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, and the American Red Cross.*

## Bentley Visits ACJTC



Before giving a speech in Selma the evening of April 4, Gov. Robert Bentley stopped by the Alabama Criminal Justice Training Center for an impromptu tour of the academy.

After greeting the governor, ACJTC Commander Capt. Damon Summers demonstrated the many capabilities of the state-of-the-art facility to him before eating supper in the dining hall.



# People You Know!



## *Promotions*

Eugene Mattox	4.01.11	Sergeant	ABI/CISG EOD
Claude Wiggins	4.01.11	Lieutenant	ADM/Homeland Security

## *Transfers*

Eric Bryant	3.16.11	Trooper	HP/Dekalb County
Darrick Dorough	4.01.11	Corporal	HP/Tuscaloosa County
Eric Dowdell	4.01.11	Corporal	DL/Montgomery Examining
John Driggers	4.01.11	Corporal	HP/Motor Carrier Training Officer
Rachel Fields	3.16.11	ASA II	HP/Montgomery Post
Orlander Marbury	3.16.11	Corporal	ABI/Investigative Operation
Mark Neilson	4.01.11	Corporal	HP/Motor Carrier Weight Detail
John Pert	3.16.11	Trooper	HP/Geneva County
Michael Simmons	4.01.11	Corporal	HP/Motor Carrier Inspector
Gary Stratton	4.01.11	Corporal	HP/Motor Carrier Compliance

## *Return from Military Leave*

Gregory Estes	4.13.11	Trooper	ADM/ACJTC
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## *Resignations*

Earl Champion	3.09.11	Building Custodian I	HP/Tuscaloosa
Jonathan Dees	3.15.11	Corporal	DL/Mobile
Kenneth Grissett	3.16.11	Trooper	ABI/Tuscaloosa
Terry Stallworth	3.14.11	Trooper	HP/Mobile

## *Retirements*

Jerry Conner	4.01.11	Major	SER/Division Chief
Elvesta White	4.01.11	HP/ASA II	HP/Montgomery
Norman Willingham	4.01.11	Sergeant	ABI/Tuscaloosa

Alabama Department of



Public Safety

**CONTRIBUTING:**

- Capt. Marty Griffin, ABI
- Chief Pilot Lee Hamilton, SER
- Capt. Jack Clark, HP
- Tpr. Greg Eubanks, ADM
- Tommy Giles, Photography
- Reserve Tpr. Tony Dickey
- Robyn Bradley Litchfield

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Ryan Godfrey

# RSA Criminal Justice Center Montgomery, Ala.



WE'RE ON THE WEB!

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Questions? Comments? Concerns?

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

[RYAN.GODFREY@DPS.ALABAMA.GOV](mailto:RYAN.GODFREY@DPS.ALABAMA.GOV)

## On Your Calendar

Monday, May 30

*Memorial Day*

Monday, June 6

*Jefferson Davis's Birthday*

Monday, July 4

*Independence Day*

Monday, September 5

*Labor Day*

# MAY Academy Class Schedule

DPS In-service	May 9-13	Glock Armorer School	20
Basic THI School	9-20	PCO In-service	23-26
DPS Select Fire School	16-18	DPS In-service	23-27
Basic Police Session 141	16-31	DPS In-service	30-June 3
Adjunct Firearms In-service	19-20		

Col. Hugh B. McCall,

The fine men in your command, particularly those working in the Arab/Union Grove area, would make each and every one of you very proud, as they are us. Our troopers simply go above and beyond the call of duty.

The professionalism and caring they show should make everyone who wears a uniform proud. I fully intend to also inform Gov. Robert Bentley of these thoughts in hope that he too will pass this along to these men.

Sincerely,  
John M. Kelsey