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THE BLUE LIGHT

April 2012

*To Serve
and Protect*

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/Protective Services Divisions

MAJOR TERRY CHAPMAN
Driver License/Service Divisions

MAJOR HERMAN WRIGHT
Highway Patrol Division



Each year, State of the State draws Alabama's top elected officials, Gov. Bentley's Cabinet and others to the Capitol's Old House Chamber.

State of the State is a Top Priority for DPS

Alabama's State of the State address is a tightly choreographed production that is more than a month in the making.

Marking the beginning of the Legislative session, the event draws a crowd that includes the Governor, Constitutional Officers and Supreme Court justices, as well as members of the House of Representatives and Senate.

It's a high priority for the Department of Public Safety -- particularly the Capitol Police -- as it is the one time of year that all of the state's top elected officials gather in a single location, said Lt. Mark Whitaker, Capitol Police commander.

"A lot goes into State of the State, and it takes a lot of coordination. We can't pull



Capitol Police Officers work closely with other DPS personnel each year to provide security for this annual event.

it off without help," he said, adding that DPS members from Dignitary Protection and Highway Patrol's tactical team, along with the Alabama Fusion Center and security personnel from the House and Senate join forces that evening to ensure everything runs smoothly.

This year, with such hot topics as gambling and the state's new immigration law in the news,

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Lt. Mark Whitaker, right, discusses evening's strategy with Capitol Police Officer Michael Lingo.

Capitol Police and their law enforcement partners had to be even more vigilant, preparing for individuals who might attempt to interrupt proceedings or conduct sit-ins and other types of orchestrated distractions.

“All of this heightens our awareness of potential problems,” Whitaker said.

And while the actual strategy may change yearly, depending on current events, needs and specific threats, there is one element that remains constant: Capitol Police Officers are instructed to never lose focus on the task at hand.

Following the 2012 State of the State, Whitaker said he was very pleased with the way things turned out. A few days later, Whitaker said everybody involved met to discuss how everything went and to plan for the coming year.

“We’re always looking for ways to improve,” he said.



Cpl. Frank Sazera, third from left, and other members of Highway Patrol’s tactical team review this year’s strategy with Whitaker, third from right.



Capitol Police Officers survey crowd mingling in the Capitol lobby prior to Gov. Bentley’s address.

Notes of Praise for Troopers Across State

Following are comments about Alabama state troopers from a few of the people this department serves:

I want to say a big THANK YOU to the Alabama State Trooper working Highway 69 South in Cullman County. I came home today (March 8) around 12:30 p.m. to find the driveway to my house blocked by a state trooper that had pulled someone over for speeding (I figure).

I wasn’t put out or bothered by the fact I couldn’t immediately get to my house because there are so many people that fly up and down 69 South, it’s pathetic.

I was glad (even if my driveway was temporarily blocked) to see someone finally getting stopped on this road. Besides, once the trooper noticed I was waiting, he immediately had the individual move up and over as he did the same, so I could get past them

and to my home. So to the trooper patrolling Highway 69 South, THANK YOU for your efforts. This stretch of road is becoming more and more dangerous due to speeders. -- ***Kenneth W. Davis Jr., Cullman County***

My name is Mark Youngblood. My wife, Kimberly Youngblood, was involved in an accident Feb. 17 on

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Valleydale Road at the intersection near Publix and the Kangaroo Gas Station around 2:45 p.m.

Trooper Adam Ezekiel worked the accident. It was a traumatic experience for my wife, and the man she hit did not speak any English and only had a Mexican driver's license. It was a difficult situation, and I am writing to thank you and the trooper. He was very kind, courteous, helpful and comforting to my wife.

I am certainly pleased you have such men on your staff. I am proud to live in Alabama, and one of the reasons is because we have such wonderful troopers who work so hard and are empathetic and professional, even in small circumstances such as a fender-bender.

Please give the trooper my sincerest gratitude. And let your other troopers know how much they are truly appreciated by the citizens of Alabama. They deserve to know that there are citizens who appreciate the calling to serve they have undertaken. – **Mark Youngblood**

State Trooper Michael Edwards helped me on March 13, 2012. I truly think he went above and beyond his call of duty.

I was heading to Clearview Cancer Institute in Huntsville, at Crestwood Hospital, on March 13, 2012. I was traveling on 565 towards Huntsville when my car



heated up and the engine started smoking. My husband and I pulled off at the Greinbrier Exit and were able to reach the top of the exit before the car stopped. My husband pushed the car off the road. It was approximately 2:30 p.m. and my appointment was at 3 p.m.

Tpr. Edwards pulled up behind us and asked if he could help. I explained where we were going and that I needed to make this appointment. He said he could not help us with that because it was out of his jurisdiction but he could push us down to a gas station.

The bumper he was able to use on his car was a wonderful asset that you all have the ability to use. Tpr. Edwards pushed us to the Chevron as I was calling roadside assistance from my insurance policy.

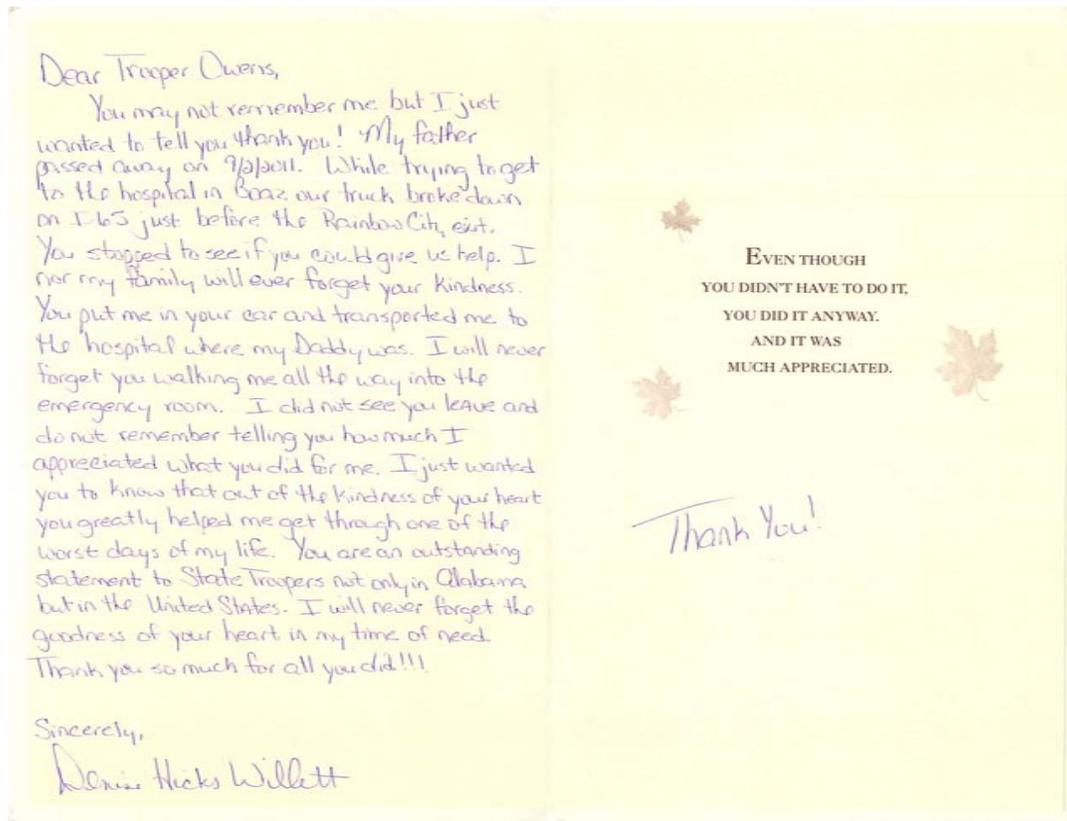
When we arrived at the service station I was told that Tpr. Edwards was going to drive me to my appointment, and my husband was going to stay with the car and wait for the tow truck to tow my car back to Cullman where we

reside. He was kind enough to obtain permission to take me, called in on his radio where he was going with a passenger, was professional and courteous through the entire trip. He drove me to the entrance of the building where my appointment was, and I was on time.

To say that he went above and beyond his duties for me is an understatement. His kindness and professionalism was impeccable and made what seemed like a disastrous day bearable.

I called Sgt. Tim White to let him know what his employee had done for me and I asked him how to contact you. I wanted to commend you, Colonel McCall, Lieutenant Colonel Wright, Sgt. White, and all the way down the chain for having at least one officer on your staff who represents your entire department in the most professional and kind way.

Tpr. Edwards is one officer who is not just out to write a traffic citation, but is there to help the public.



This card was sent to Tpr. Mike Owens, Gadsden Post, following an incident that actually took place on Interstate 59.

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A job well done and very much appreciated to Tpr. Michael Edwards. I hope that someone on your staff will recognize him and let him know that his actions speak highly of your department. -- **Mary M. Alldredge-Nix, Hanceville**

I want to take this opportunity to thank a set of people who don't get the credit they deserve – our law enforcement community. Friday morning, I was driving down Page Road when I had a flat tire. I didn't have a cell phone, so I decided to walk to a nearby house to call my son, Jeff, for some help. But before I could even get to the door, an Alabama state trooper pulled up and asked if I was OK.

I told him I'd had a flat and that I was going to call someone to come change it for me. He said, "Let

me." I said, "Oh, no. You'll get all dirty," but he wouldn't take "no" for an answer.

Well, we hadn't made it all the way back to the car when a second trooper pulled up, and they both set to work on my tire.

Within 10 minutes, here comes my son, and I had not even made a single phone call. He took over for the troopers, and I am extremely thankful for all three of them.

You know we don't give Alabama state troopers and our law enforcement enough credit. They're not on the roads just to give out speeding tickets. They work to protect our safety and are there to help when we need it.

So, I would like to extend a special thank you to Tpr. Chase Amis, Tpr. Charles "Chuck" Bitel and, of course, my son, Jeff Page. -- **Mignon Page, Andalusia**

From a phone call:

Dealing with the recent death of her husband, Martha Tucker left a Montgomery hospital on March 15 and headed to her home in Prattville. She said she became overwhelmed with emotion and felt she could not drive.

Ms. Tucker noticed a trooper patrol car in the construction zone on U.S. 31 at the Montgomery/Autauga county line. She made contact with the trooper and explained her situation. Tpr. Kevin Cole made her feel at ease and offered to assist.

Not only did he drive her vehicle to her home, but he made sure she was OK before leaving.

She called him an "angel" and wanted to personally thank him and all state troopers for their professionalism and for being – in her words – "heroes."

ABI Honors Agent of the Year and Stellar Work

“Good is the enemy of great,” said Major Neil Tew, division chief of the Alabama Bureau of Investigation, during ABI’s annual awards luncheon.

He went on to challenge everyone in the banquet room to always seek opportunities to go beyond “just good enough.” “Each of us has the potential to be wonderful – why not strive for that?” Tew asked before recognizing this year’s award winners and runners-up.

The division received 19 nominations this year, and Capt. Karl Youngblood, ABI’s assistant division chief, said 15 were extremely good and four were excellent:

ABI Agent of the Year 2011:

Cpl. Robert Heesch

Runner-up: Sgt. Ralph Drinkard, retired (unable to attend)

Service Employee of the Year:

Faye Hester, Analyst, retired

Runner-up: Nadria Sanders, Fingerprint Classifier I

In addition to the awards, Major Tew recognized three individuals who recently completed their **Special Agent Field Training (SAFT)**: Special Agent Thomas Scott Lolley, Special Agent Jeffrey Rotenberry and Special Agent Scott Smith.

The event was sponsored by 3M, with company representative Julie Burke in attendance, along with Col. Hugh B. McCall, Lt. Col. Kevin L. Wright, Major Herman Wright and Major Marc McHenry.



Cpl. Robert Heesch, center, received the ABI Agent of the Year award for 2011 during a luncheon in Montgomery. With him are, from left, Col. Hugh McCall, Lt. Clay Barnes, Major Neil Tew and Lt. Col. Kevin Wright.



Three individuals were honored after completing their Special Agent Field Training. Pictured here are, from left, Col. McCall, Capt. Karl Youngblood, Special Agent Scott Smith, Special Agent Jeffrey Rotenberry, Special Agent Thomas Scott Lolley, Major Tew and Lt. Col. Wright.



Faye Hester, ABI’s Service Employee of the Year, retired at the end of February.



Nadria Sanders was Service Employee of the Year runner-up.



Sgt. Ralph Drinkard, retired



To the left: Major Tew also recognized Craig Moore, senior customer engineer with NEC, for his dedicated service to the division and to the Department of Public Safety.

Tuscaloosa Troopers' Post-Tornado Actions Praised

Traditionally each year, the Tuscaloosa Exchange Club honors one Alabama state trooper along with officers from other area law enforcement agencies.

This year, however, things were a bit different as the organization recognized Highway Patrol's entire Tuscaloosa Post for going above and beyond following the deadly tornadoes of April 2011.

Between April 15 and 27, the Tuscaloosa area was struck by multiple tornadoes -- including the EF-4 that carved a mile-wide path through Tuscaloosa and Brookwood before moving on to damage portions of Jefferson County.

Capt. Agatha Windsor, commander of Troop D, said that every available trooper responded immediately, caring for and transporting individuals with injuries, assisting with search and rescue, directing traffic and



Major Herman Wright, chief of the Highway Patrol Division, far left, and Capt. Agatha Windsor, commander of Troop D, far right, gathered with members of the Tuscaloosa Post following the Tuscaloosa Exchange Club's awards program.

attempting to control chaos.

Troopers and other Post personnel worked through the night without relief. They continued to work 12-hour shifts during the following two weeks, putting the recovery effort ahead of themselves and their families.

"It is because of this never-ending dedication to serving the residents of the Tuscaloosa Post that we nominate all of the troopers assigned to the Tuscaloosa Post for the 2011 Tuscaloosa Exchange Club Trooper of the Year," Windsor wrote in her letter to the club's selection committee.

On March 2, less than a year after April 2011's deadly tornadoes, the state was hit with another round of storms. Alabama State Troopers and other DPS personnel were called to offer assistance in several counties across the state: Limestone, Madison, Jackson, Lowndes, Perry, Dallas, Autauga, Chilton, Coosa, Tallapoosa and Chambers. There was one fatality near Jackson's Gap. Pictured below are scenes from the storms.



Motor Carrier Safety Team Judges Area Contest



Above: Tpr. Tavares Mallard inspects one of the tractor-trailers in the competition.

Right: Judges from Motor Carrier Safety Unit included Tpr. Johnny Landingham, Tpr. Dexter Emmanuel, Tpr. Mallard, Cpl. Donald Shepard, Tpr. Danny Burks and Tpr. Jacob Zimmerman.



Eight members of Highway Patrol's Motor Carrier Safety Unit recently had an opportunity to associate with commercial vehicle operators on a more personal level during a Montgomery area competition.

Cpl. Donald Shepard, Cpl. Terry King, Tpr. Greg Scott, Tpr. Tavares Mallard, Tpr. Dexter Emmanuel, Tpr. Danny Burks, Tpr. Johnny Landingham and Tpr. Jacob Zimmerman served as judges March 9 and 10 at the Winn-Dixie Truck Driving Competition in Hope Hull, with 13 drivers vying for top honors.

The program included six driving obstacles that were constructed on an outdoor course. Troopers were assigned a duty station on each obstacle and asked to grade each driver's performance.

Winners of this event will go on to regionals, and the top three drivers will participate in the state finals later this year.



When Col. Hugh B. McCall, right, and Driver License supervisor Vida Childrey visited with third- and fourth-graders at Bethany Christian Academy in Montgomery, they discussed their careers and the importance of a good education.



Trooper J. Wayne, created by Dothan area artist John Wayne Ryals, joined the Dothan Post several months ago and is just 'nuts' about his DPS family. He continues to get plenty of looks as he stands at attention near the Post's main entrance. The piece is one of the dozens of "Peanuts Around Town" sculptures on display at various businesses in the city.



Alabama State Troopers from Highway Patrol, Protective Services, Alabama Bureau of Investigation and other DPS divisions teamed up to provide security during the weeklong event.

Selma to Montgomery March, Rally a Success



In early March, thousands of people from across the nation participated in the 47th anniversary re-enactment of the Selma to Montgomery March, an event that is patterned after the 1965 march that led five months later to the passage of the Voting Rights Act.

As in the past, the Department of Public Safety was there, first to assist the U.S. Capitol Police with dignitary protection of the Congressional delegation and such international figures as the Rev. Jesse Jackson and the Rev. Al Sharpton, said Lt. Joe McClellan, commander of the Department of Public Safety's Dignitary Protection Unit. DPS provided motorcade escorts and assisted with site security throughout the march.

Following the trek across Selma's Edmund Pettus Bridge on Sunday, March 4, Highway Patrol took the lead in patrolling the multi-day

march along U.S. 80 East toward the state's Capitol.

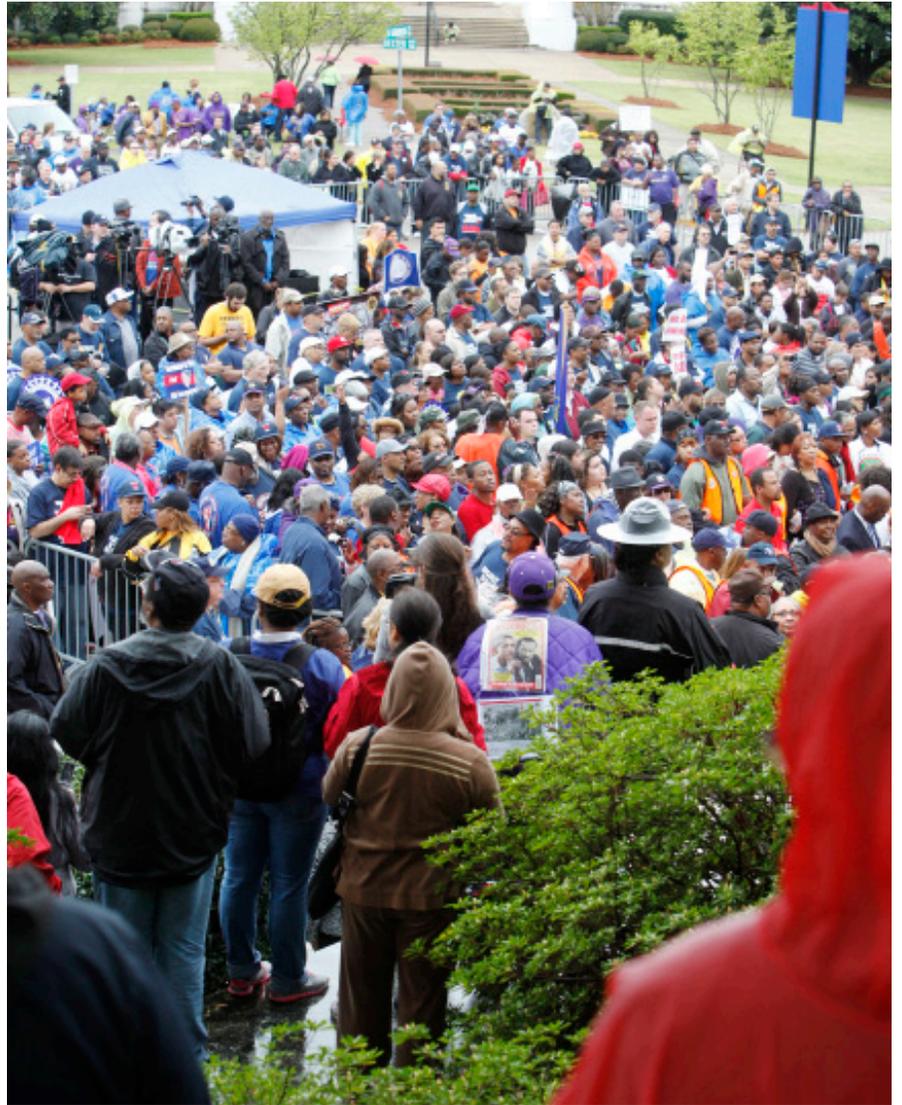
Capitol Police, then, took the lead at the end of the week, and provided security for the rally on the Capitol steps, which also drew thousands to famed Dexter Avenue. According to news reports, the program began a few minutes ahead of schedule to accommodate a lengthy list of speakers there to address voting rights and other matters of concern.

And from escorts and visits to area civil rights venues to the march along U.S. 80 East and a special dinner at the Capitol, the anniversary re-enactment went without incident, McClellan said, adding how pleased he was to see how the divisions of DPS worked well together to accomplish much.

"We got a lot of positive feedback from the U.S. Capitol Police on the assets we provided," he said.



More Scenes from Rally Portion of 2012 Event





Collins



Williams



Crenshaw



Andrews



Milliner



Mooney

Mooney, left, was named Montgomery Post's PCO of the Year for 2011.

Supervisor Recognizes PCOs During Special Week

Editor's note: The Blue Light is eager to spotlight PCOs from other Posts in upcoming issues. Supervisors should provide details with complete names and photos as people are recognized.

As the nation celebrated Public Safety Telecommunicators during the week of April 8, a Department of Public Safety member wanted to spotlight the department's dedicated Police Communications Officers across the state.

PCO III Demetree Collins of the Montgomery Post said she wanted to recognize the PCOs, "who serve our citizens and troopers daily."

"While the primary duty of a PCO is to answer calls for service and assistance, the PCOs also answer the National Warning System radio

for storm warnings and operate the National Crime Information Center/National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System, a computer network that connects law enforcement agencies across North America as well as the world," Collins said. "Using the computer network, PCOs can check on driver license records in any state or check for warrants on any individual stopped by the Alabama State Troopers."

In addition to emergency calls, PCOs also are contacted regarding such incidents as debris in roadways and loose livestock. They also receive inquiries concerning Driver License examining offices and contact information for various DPS services. Multi-tasking is a key component as one to two PCOs are assigned to each shift, she said.

"Troopers often refer to PCOs as their lifeline. The calm, reassuring voice of the PCO over the radio during a stressful situation lends support to the troopers in the field, and it also can calm a panicked citizen over the phone after a vehicle crash," she said. "The Police Communications Officer is the person who is never seen and seldom recognized or thanked for their efforts, but that individual is without a doubt the most vital link in the public safety communications chain."

She said Montgomery Post's PCOs do an outstanding job, "and I would like to recognize PCOs Wanda Andrews, Artina Crenshaw, Dewania Milliner, Vonamechi Mooney and Mary Williams for their dedication to duty and professionalism."

Dothan PCO Wins Post's 2011 Award

Being named PCO of the Year is nothing new for PCO II James Walker of the Dothan Post.

Not only did he recently receive the honor for 2011, but he also earned the 2009 award. That's quite impressive for someone who joined the Department of Public Safety less than four years ago. In October 2008, Walker came to DPS with much emergency dispatch experience and



PCO James Walker has received PCO of the Year twice since joining DPS in 2008. There is nothing like the feeling of helping others, he says.

has continued to grow as a PCO.

A former athlete, he learned to form a strong bond with everyone, becoming like family, sharing the same goal and giving 100 percent to ensure victory.

The Blue Light Contributors include:

Lt. Joe McClellan, Lt. Mark Whitaker, Lt. Mike Junkin, Sgt. Frank Hennigan, Tpr. Kevin Cook, Tpr. Charles Dysart, PCO III Demetree Collins, PCO III Miriam Abbott, Tommy Giles, Capt. Roy Smith, Retired Ron Wright, Grant Williams

Send story ideas and/or photos to Robyn Bradley Litchfield at robyn.litchfield@dps.alabama.gov.