



The official monthly publication of the Alabama Department of Public Safety

THE BLUE LIGHT



THE HONORABLE BOB RILEY
Governor

COLONEL J. CHRISTOPHER MURPHY
Director

LT. COLONEL F.A. BINGHAM
Assistant Director

MAJOR JERRY CONNER
ABI Division

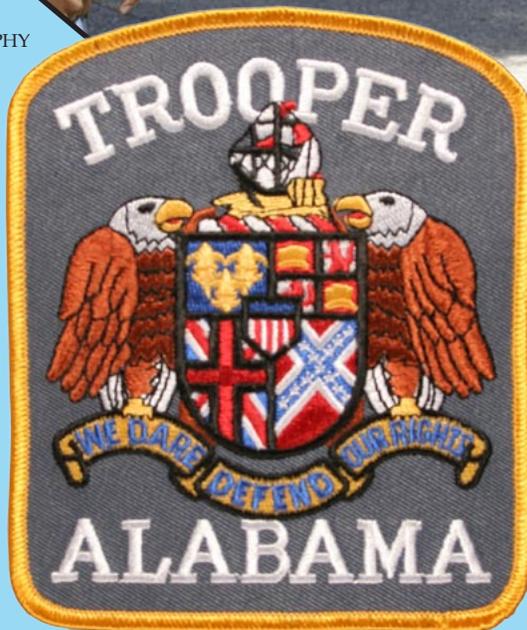
MAJOR JAMES LYONS
Administrative Division

MAJOR HUGH McCALL
Driver License Division

MAJOR ROSCOE HOWELL
Highway Patrol Division

MAJOR HERMAN WRIGHT
Protective Services Division

MAJOR CHARLES ANDREWS
Service Division



MAY 2009

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

Public Safety Supports 'Farmer At Work'	3
DL Helping the Homeless	4
Recognizing Valor	5
DL Improvements Decrease Wait Times	7
Awarding the Best of the Year	8
Capitol Police Secures Tea Party	9
Tuscaloosa Taking to Skies	10
Spotlight on HQ Front Desk	11

The Colonel's Corner

Col. J. Christopher Murphy, Director



As I write this article, the Alabama legislative session is drawing to a close. This year we introduced several bills, and, of course, our budget is always of significant concern. The piece of legislation with the most impact is an amendment to §32-6-6, concerning fees for Driver License. Commonly called the three-dollar bill, this legislation changes the wording to include the technology costs associated with issuing a driver license. It does not raise the fees, but simply amends the law to account for evolving technology and associated costs. My June column will include a comprehensive legislative wrap-up following conclusion of the session.

Our budget has done well in light of the economic times facing our entire nation. We basically have a status quo budget, which includes the 10 percent reductions mandated by the Governor. We believe that this will sustain us, not only through 2009, but also through 2010, with no layoffs and without

parking cars. A bright spot that is reflective of the positive relationship we have developed with the Legislature is the addition of funds to our budget for two specific needs. The first is for much-needed repair to the Alexander City Post, and the other is for our communications project. As many of you know, we have been partnering with other Cabinet agencies, Alabama Public Television, and the Alabama Department of Homeland Security to bring about a comprehensive communications upgrade. These funds will help with the required state matching funds to move forward with this project. Major Charles Andrews, Capt. Gerone Grant and their staff have worked very hard to accomplish our goals. Alabama DHS is coordinating this effort, and with the support of Gov. Bob Riley, we are very close to accomplishing this desperately needed goal. I am very appreciative of Chairman John Knight and other legislators in supporting this effort and adding these funds to our budget. If this effort continues, by the end of Gov. Riley's and my term we will have more than 93 percent coverage from our radio system statewide.

I would not expect to see other changes in DPS expenditures, at least through this year and likely into 2010. We will not compromise on safety, but we are looking very carefully at any expenditure of money or resources. We have been able to replace very few employees who separate from us. We have to petition for each one separately and establish the critical need. While these restrictions are sometimes challenging, they are important to avoid layoffs and other dramatic measures. As I speak with my counterparts in surrounding states, it is clear to me that other state agencies are not faring as well. One neighboring state has had to require each trooper to reduce his or her hours by 11 per month. That is on average a \$5,000 annual pay cut. Another state had to move nearly 50 troopers to other departments to keep them employed. Still another state has had to reduce the trooper ranks by 105. Those are sobering cuts; and through the leadership of Gov. Riley, the Legislature, our own Fran Copeland and each division chief, we are avoiding those type cuts.

Excellence is the standard I see here at the Alabama Department of Public Safety: From the honor guard at Gov. Hunt's and Sen. Lindsey's funerals, to the ABI response in Geneva and Samson. From the Fusion Center's nationally recognized work, to the continued reduction of driver licensing wait times and the high degree of courteous service. From the excellence of the Aviation Unit to the work of our Legal Unit, ASA, PCO, and support staff, I see excellence. In Highway Patrol, we are still seeing fewer fatalities; more than 500 fewer crashes, and almost 400 fewer injuries. Money and drug seizures are up, and the state is safer because of the work of Alabama State Troopers. All troopers from every division will be participating in the May enforcement campaign concentrating on *Click It or Ticket* and *Task Force Zero*. I expect that this campaign will have a significant impact on safety and will be reflected in fatality, injury, and crash statistics. Other violations that contribute to fatalities and serious crashes also will be emphasized, but the bottom line is that DPS will save lives. That is an awesome reality. All DPS employees — and particularly each trooper — should never forget what you do every day is different than other professions. Your job does not affect a company's financial sheet ... it saves lives. You make a difference every day. I appreciate that you make that difference with excellence.



Troopers Team with ALDOT, Farmers Federation to Support Safety Initiative

*Newby speaks at a
press conference
announcing “Farmer At
Work” in Montgomery,
April 6.*

The Alabama Department of Public Safety, the Alabama Farmers Federation and the Alabama Department of Transportation recently partnered to launch “Farmer At Work,” a statewide safety campaign to promote awareness and reduce crashes involving slow-moving farm vehicles on the road.

Dan Rhyne, president of the Lowndes County Farmers Federation, was the impetus for the “Farmer At Work” campaign promoting traffic safety and slow-moving vehicles, after seeing or hearing of numerous crashes on a 20-mile stretch of U.S. Highway 80.

The campaign kicked off April 6 with a press conference held at the Alabama Farmers Federation office in Montgomery, and features radio and television public service announcements, print advertising, brochures and Web coverage.

“As cities and suburban areas expand farther into the country, there’s increased traffic on the public roads farmers use to travel from field to field or from barn to pasture,” said Alabama Farmers Federation President Jerry Newby. “This campaign is aimed at educating motorists about the meaning of that sign and encouraging all drivers to be cautious when traveling around farm equipment.”

One of the public service announcements features Rhyne telling the story of how one of his own workers was struck and killed by an 18-wheeler while moving equipment with a tractor nearly a decade ago.

Continued on next page.

WHAT IS MY RESPONSIBILITY?

- Begin reducing your speed immediately after seeing an SMV emblem. At 55 mph, a driver has about three seconds before colliding with a tractor a whole football field away.
- The likelihood of meeting farm machinery on the public highway increases during planting, haying and harvest seasons (late February through late October).
- Be patient. Farm machinery can’t travel at high speeds. While most farmers will move to the side of the road and let traffic pass when they are able to safely do so, Alabama law does not require it.
- Pass with caution slowly and deliberately, watching for other traffic and sudden turns.

DL Helps Homeless Get ID Cards

The Birmingham Driver License office assisted individuals in need of proper identification at the second annual Project Homeless Connect, held at Boutwell Auditorium April 4.

The community outreach program connects homeless individuals to various resources such as meals; medical, dental, vision, and mental health care; haircuts; Social Security services and tax preparation; and veterans support services, in addition to identification cards.

A total of 188 cards were issued by DPS staff at the event, including three commercial driver licenses and 19 class D licenses. Although helping the homeless obtain proper identification was the primary concern of the event, Birmingham DL was able to make two felony arrests when screening revealed outstanding warrants on two applicants.



“Our people were busy all day long,” said Lt. Tommy Laird. “We worked diligently and with compassion to assist the many people who sought our services. It is unfortunate because we wanted to help the 30 to 40 people we had to turn away also obtain proper ID cards, but there is little we can do without proper documentation.”

The Birmingham office had five issuing computers and six examiners to process the many applicants that day. Assisting were Brittney Brown, Kimberly Morgan, Patricia Nelson, Wanda Tramble, Nikki Cox, and Lakreda Thomas. Examiner II’s assisting were Joyce Brown, Terri McCall, and Carol Chandler. Supervising were Rhonda Simmons, Sgts. Stanley Lemon and Chris Robertson, and Laird. Nona Short, Rick Hayslip, and Justin Hoffman provided IT support.

Farmers at Work

Continued

A major focus of the campaign is to educate the public on the true meaning of the triangular fluorescent yellow-orange sign indicating a slow-moving vehicle. In use since the early 1970s, the sign is required by state law on all vehicles with a maximum potential speed of 25 miles per hour. Often, the actual speed of vehicles displaying the SMV sign is much slower. At 55

miles per hour, a driver has about three seconds before colliding with a tractor 100 yards away.

“There are many motorists who are unfamiliar with this law and who do not recognize and understand the slow-moving vehicle sign,” said Col. J. Christopher Murphy. “Through the ‘Farmer At Work’ program, we hope to educate all motorists about the special safety considerations when sharing the road with slow-moving vehicles.”

In 2007, six people were killed and another 17 people were injured in 120 crashes involving farm equipment.

“While we’re not looking at a lot of collisions involving farm equipment,” said DPS spokeswoman Martha Earnhardt, “whenever we see a way to bring those numbers down even further, whether it’s through education, enforcement, engineering or partnerships, that’s what we try to do.”

RECOGNIZING VALOR



From left, Hendron, Helms, Morgan, Lindsey, and Gillis each received Distinguished Service awards from Murphy for their valor in pursuing McLendon.

Col. J. Christopher Murphy held a special ceremony in his office April 14, personally thanking troopers, local law enforcement, first responders, and a civilian who selflessly gave his life in an effort to halt the murderous rampage of a gunman who shot and killed 10 victims in south Alabama March 10.

The posthumous commendation for Bruce Wilson Maloy was awarded to his still-grieving family. After having witnessed Michael McLendon gun down three victims, Maloy, without any means of communication or weapon to protect himself, was in quick pursuit of the assailant. Maloy's pursuit of McLendon disrupted the killer's intended actions until McLendon finally turned the gun on Maloy, but his stand against the killer certainly prevented the loss of more lives that day.

Further adding to the import of the ceremony were Distinguished Service Awards given, for the first time, to members of law enforcement not affiliated with the department. Lt. Ricky Morgan, Chief Frankie Lindsey, Conservation Officer Joel Hendron, and Chief Deputy Tony Helms all were presented Distinguished Service Awards by Murphy. DPS's own Tpr. Mike Gillis also was honored with the Distinguish Service Award for his actions to safeguard the public that fateful day.



Murphy presents Maloy's family a Posthumous Commendation.

Continued on next page.

VALOR

Continued

“If not for the courageous actions by all these law enforcement officers, the situation could have become much worse over a short period of time,” said Capt. Ricky Peak, Dothan Troop commander. “These officers responded to the call with a professional demeanor that was beyond the call of duty. By their undaunted courage, fighting spirit, and unwavering devotion to duty in the face of an uncertain situation, I feel they are all truly deserving of this recognition,” Peak said.

Nine ABI special agents also were commended by Murphy for bringing order to the chaotic scenes in Geneva and Coffee counties and for working tirelessly to gather evidence spread throughout multiple crime scenes that covered an area of many square miles. Lt. Barry Tucker, Sgts. Doug Darby and William Merritt, Cpls. Jackie Hornsby, Joe Lee, Tim Rodgers, and Kevin Souders, and Agents David McGowan and Johnny Senn each received commendation coins for their inspiring work.



Canary presents Gillis his award for valor at the awards luncheon April 29.

In a separate ceremony held April 29, U.S. Attorney Leura Canary and the Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee for the Middle District of Alabama presented Awards for Valor to individuals taking heroic action and risking their own lives in the pursuit of McClendon during his murderous rampage on March 10.

At the ceremony, Canary personally thanked Gillis, Lindsey, Morgan, Hendron, Helms, Assistant Chief Tracy Kersey, and Lt. Danny Staley for their acts of bravery.

The awards were presented at a luncheon sponsored by the LECC and attended by the officers, their supervisors and their families and Mr. Maloy’s family.



Following the awards presentation, Helms joined ABI’s briefing at RSA headquarters April 14. The briefing fleshed out details from involved parties in establishing a complete and accurate timeline of the events in Geneva and Coffee Counties March 10.

Many Improvements in DL Leave Customers Happy

In continued efforts to make improvements and better serve the public, Driver License began offering appointments for road skills testing at the Opelika office in April, and greatly expanded operations at the Clanton office.

The scheduling of road skills tests was piloted in 2007 as an alternative to applicants being handled solely on a first-come, first-served basis in busy driver license offices. Road skills testing appointments have proved a convenient and time-saving option for many driver license customers; and in addition to Opelika, the option is available at examining offices in Birmingham, Huntsville, Mobile, Montgomery, and Tuscaloosa.

DPS is also better serving driver license customers by expanding days of operation at the Clanton office from two to four days per week. The office is now open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., closing for lunch from noon to 1 p.m.

Both of these latest changes reflect Public Safety's ongoing commitment to customer service in all areas of driver licensing, said Col. J. Christopher Murphy.

Reductions in average wait-times at DL offices statewide also reflect these changes. In many instances, times have been cut in half or more, compared to times

from just two years ago. The average wait in Birmingham dropped from one and a half to two hours in December 2006, to 30-45 minutes. Montgomery's wait was cut from one hour to 20 minutes. Dothan's and Opelika's both dropped from two hours in December 2006 to one.

"We strive to assist the public in a professional and efficient manner," said Driver License Chief Maj. Hugh McCall. "Our work environment reflects on the public, and we certainly want to leave a positive impression and be helpful and courteous, even when we must deny a request."

The many improvements to Driver License are hardly going unnoticed. Many letters from the public praising the division's vastly improved performance have replaced numerous complaints of yesteryear. Laura Whitten of Florence said she was pleasantly surprised by the changes that have taken place. She said she immediately noticed a change in attitude, was greeted kindly, and said the improvements helped her nervous son feel at ease when taking his driver's test. "The whole atmosphere has changed," said Whitten.

In a separate e-mail, Bart Rushing of Opelika said, "Your crew was not only highly efficient, professional, and informative, but fun as well. It was by far the best experience I've ever had getting my new license."



New Academy Forging Ahead

While groundbreakings are great for ceremonial events, real progress is made only when you trade in the gold shovels for heavy machinery.

Stay tuned next month for a special inside glimpse into the new academy, and why this revolutionary venture is so worthwhile.

In the meantime, enjoy these photos of earth movers at the build site doing what they do best: moving earth.



ASTA, ABI Award Best of Year

The Alabama State Troopers Association honored Tpr. Drew Brooks with its 2008 Member of the Year award in a ceremony April 7. Brooks previously was named the Dothan Trooper of the Year, has completed service in Iraq, is among the top two in the state in DUI arrests, and is known for having a strong work ethic and willingness to work, even on his off-days.

Brooks narrowly edged out this year's runner-up, Tpr. Michael T. Harris, for the award. Harris was previously honored with the Tuscaloosa Trooper of the Year award, and is likewise noted for his K-9 handling skills and his dedication to the department.



Harris and Brooks proudly display the awards given to them at the ASTA.

In a separate ceremony, ABI Chief Maj. Jerry Conner awarded three members of his staff for exemplary performance April 15. Cpl. John Wall was awarded ABI's Special Agent of the Year award for 2008, while Sandra Johnson picked up the 2008 Support Employee of the Year award. Conner also congratulated Sue Chandler, as she belatedly received the Support Employee of the Year award for 2007.

Col. J. Christopher Murphy and Lt. Col. F.A. "Bubba" Bingham were both impressed with all of the recipients' attention to detail and their level of professionalism in serving the state. Murphy cited the importance of dedication and work ethic to DPS, while Bingham acknowledged these five employees are all setting a prime example for the department to follow.



From left, Chandler, Wall, and Johnson are personally congratulated by Conner for exemplary performance as they each receive ABI Employee of the Year awards.



CAPITOL POLICE ENSURES PUBLIC'S SAFETY AT TAX DAY TEA PARTY

Capitol Police were on hand ensuring the safety of the estimated 2,000 people that turned out to witness the spectacle of the Tax Day Tea Party April 15. The peaceful demonstration went smoothly, and the Capitol Police officers received many compliments for their presence at the protest, according to Lt. Mark Whitaker.

“Because the protestors failed to get a permit, we did not have a lot of time to prepare for the protest,” said Whitaker. “Still, it was a good event for Protective Services. We anticipated many potential problems the event could bring and were able to prevent those problems from occurring.”

Capt. Charles Ward acknowledged Capitol Police’s vital role in ensuring such protests do not get out of hand. “When you have a lot of people show up, it only takes one to cause a disturbance,” said Ward. “At the tea party, a protestor showed up on a horse, which doesn’t sound like a big deal, but the horse started bucking and jumping every time the crowd cheered or made noise. Someone could have easily gotten trampled, but our Capitol Police told the man on the horse he had to leave the perimeter.”

“I really appreciate our Capitol Police and what they do,” Whitaker remarked. “In my 18 months with Capitol Police, they have received a lot of exposure and have transformed many people’s perceptions. We are a professional law enforcement agency, and by getting our guys out and working the beat around the Capitol complex, people now realize how serious and professional we are. The numerous requests we have to provide assistance is a testament to that fact, and I couldn’t be prouder.”



Right: Cpl. Eddie Wilder (left) and Tpr. Randal DuBose observe from a distance as a member of the flight crew of Blue Angel #1 performs a walk-around inspection of the aircraft.



Below: Cpl. Doug Rhinehart (left) and Tpr. Jason Vice inspect the 30mm seven-barrel Gatling gun on an A-10 Thunderbolt.

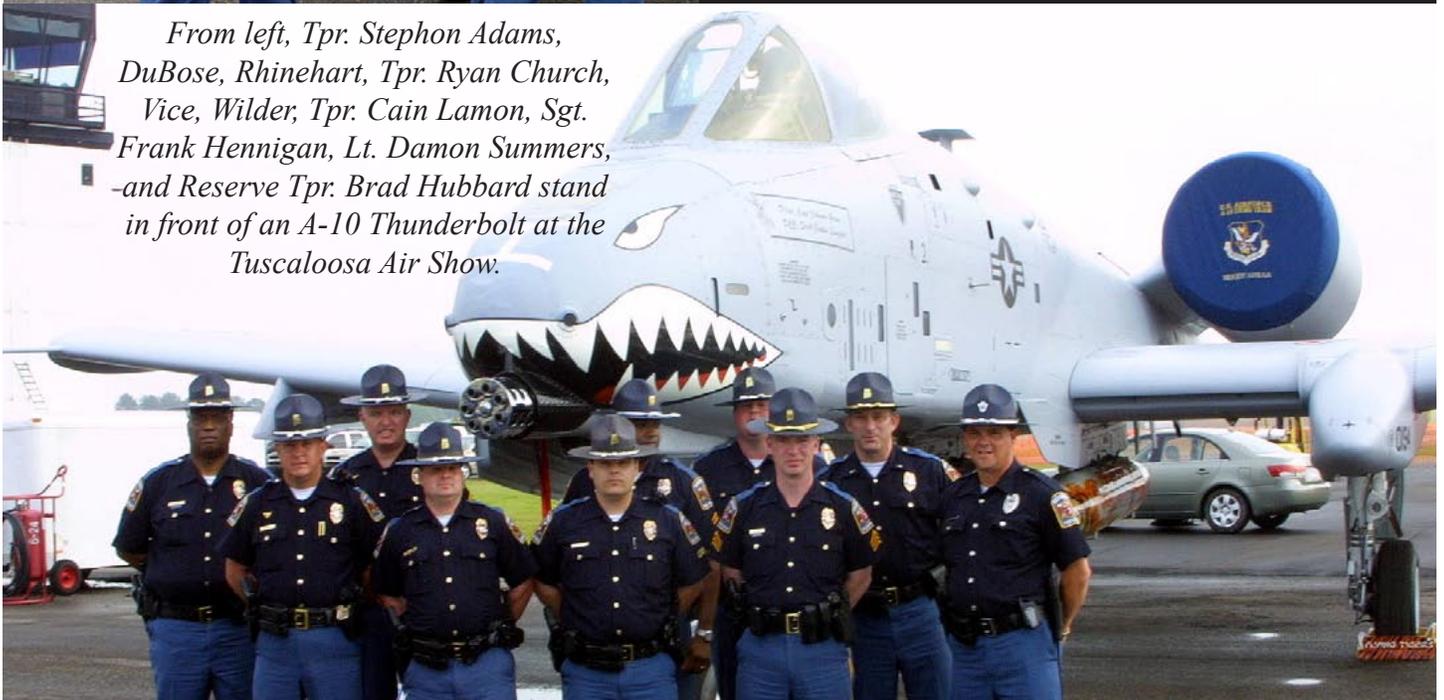


Tuscaloosa Post Takes to Skies

The city of Tuscaloosa called on 10 troopers from Highway Patrol to assist in traffic direction, crowd control, and general law enforcement support for the estimated 100,000 in attendance for the Tuscaloosa Air Show April 4-5.

The first day of the show, featuring the U.S. Navy's Blue Angels and the U.S. Army's Golden Knights parachute team, brought large crowds to the Tuscaloosa Regional Airport. By the second day, the crowds were considerably smaller due to inclement weather.

From left, Tpr. Stephon Adams, DuBose, Rhinehart, Tpr. Ryan Church, Vice, Wilder, Tpr. Cain Lamon, Sgt. Frank Hennigan, Lt. Damon Summers, and Reserve Tpr. Brad Hubbard stand in front of an A-10 Thunderbolt at the Tuscaloosa Air Show.



Up Front at Headquarters



Arriving at Public Safety in July 1981, Dale Coger is just as much a part of the department as any of the department's troopers, Driver License examiners, Capitol Police officers, or police communication officers. In fact, being the first point of contact for anyone arriving at or calling Headquarters, Coger knows the important task of staffing the front desk with a courteous smile.

"You absolutely have to have a good attitude," said Coger. "Sure there are going to be mornings where you don't feel well, but I always try to look past how I feel to be polite and helpful to others."

With her 28th anniversary fast approaching, Coger admits that not a lot has changed about the front desk in her tenure.

"I now have a computer to assist in tracking the visitor log, and the computer has considerably reduced the paperwork," Coger said, "but you really would be surprised how similar the job is today to how it was when I first started."

In addition to the familiar faces of Coger and Jane Weldon gracing the front desk, several other staff members recently have trained for front desk duty, thanks to the assistance of the Service, Protective Services, Highway Patrol and Driver License divisions. Allison Lance, Adrian Leary, Shannon Sears, Gail Squire, Shanedda Staples, and Barbara Toney have all been cross-trained to supplement Coger and Weldon in their absence.

"It's quite a responsibility," said Coger. "There are a lot of little things to keep track of, from the daily deliveries, which can often be overwhelming all on their own, to redirecting phone calls, to updating logs, to scanning newspapers for articles about DPS to clip."

Of course, the duties of the front desk can be slow at times, swamped at others, but throughout the years, Coger has noticed some distinct patterns.

"The vast majority of my dealings involve driver license inquiries, which is no surprise," said Coger. "However, I've also noticed that the front desk is distinctly busier on Mondays and Fridays, and I am also usually extremely busy around state holidays. With that said, however, this last holiday was an exception, but I am prepared for it, nonetheless."



E-Crash Training Readies Recruits

Trooper Class 2009-A is the first recruit class to incorporate E-Crash training into the academy. Divided into two sessions, the 40 recruits received the eight-hour training April 21-22. E-Crash is an innovative, paperless system for filing crash reports that is currently on track for a June 1 statewide launch.

Sgt. John Fields and Cpl. Chad Blankinchip led the E-Crash training at the academy.



When launched, the electronic system will save thousands of dollars in paper and printing costs, versus traditional crash-reporting techniques, and will alleviate workload and save many supervisory hours statewide.

“When we flip the switch on E-Crash, Alabama will be the first state to be completely electronic in handling crash reports,” said E-Crash project manager Sgt. Chris Brown.



Troopers Rallying Safety

Members of the Harley Owners Group were treated to motorcycle troopers showcasing their riding skills on an obstacle course, while others witnessed the rollover simulator in action at the 2009 Alabama State H.O.G. Rally held in Montgomery April 16-18.

The three-day event provided troopers with a unique opportunity to connect with fellow bike lovers and talk about motorcycle safety in a fun and lively environment. In addition to the motorcycle troopers and the rollover simulator, the rally brought live bands, parades, shows, good food, fun and games to the river region.



People You Know!

Promotions

Bill Eller	3.16.09	Captain	ABI/Investigative Support
Lakesha Kemp	4.01.09	ASA I	DL/Safety Responsibility
Rodney Knight	4.01.09	Corporal	ABI/Investigative Operations
Morgan Porter	3.16.09	ASA II	DL/Planning and Operations
Robert Woodruff	3.16.09	Corporal	HP/Montgomery Post

Transfers

Charles Duke	4.01.09	Corporal	DL/Medical Unit
Justin Jones	3.16.09	Trooper	HP/MCSU
Clifford Nall	4.01.09	Lieutenant	HP/Decatur Post
William Pruitt	4.01.09	Trooper	ABI/Investigative Operations
David Ratliff	4.01.09	Corporal	DL/Montgomery Examining
James Roberts	3.16.09	Captain	ADM/Inspections
John Smith	4.01.09	Sergeant	HP/Headquarters
Terry Ware	4.01.09	Lieutenant	HP/Huntsville Post
Justin Williams	4.01.09	Trooper	ABI/Investigative Operations

Resignations

Gina Hogan	3.18.09	ASA II	HP/Jacksonville
Kyle Moore	3.30.09	ASA I	DL/Reinstatement

Retirement

Harriet Godwin	3.31.09	Criminal Intelligence Analyst	ABI/Fusion Center
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Above: An unidentified Alabama Highway Patrolman at a wreck scene in the early 1940's.

Below: Col. Floyd Mann (fifth from the left, in second row) attends a Sergeant's Meeting at the Riviera Restaurant in 1961. To the right of Mann is former Gov. John Patterson, and to his right is Chief N.W. Kimbrough of Identification and Investigation. To the right of Kimbrough stands Chief Joe Smelley.

Department of Public Safety

75

Heading Towards

1935 - 2010



Alabama Department of



Public Safety

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- Lt. Jack Clark, HP
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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

DPS.ALABAMA.GOV

Questions? Comments? Concerns?

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

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On Your Calendar

Monday, May 25

National Memorial Day

Monday, June 1

Jefferson Davis' Birthday

Friday, July 3

Independence Day (offices closed)

Monday, September 7

Labor Day

ACJTC TRAINING SCHEDULE MAY '09

Date	Event
May 1-2	Trooper Reserve Training
1-31	Trooper Class 2009-A
5	Word 2007 Introduction
5-6	Dignitary Protection Training
6	Computer Basics
7	Word 2003 Intermediate
11-15	Basic Protection Course
11-15	PCO Basic Training
11-31	Basic Police Session 135
12	Excel 2003 Introduction
12	Red Cross
13	Excel 2007 Introduction
14	PowerPoint 2003 Introduction
18-22	Commercial Driver License Training
19	PowerPoint 2007 Introduction
20	Excel 2003 Intermediate
21	Excel 2007 Intermediate
26-28	Firearms Makeup
27	Excel 2003 Advanced
28	Excel 2007 Advanced