Dear Fellow Employee,

Once again, the Training Academy is full. Another class of trooper-trainees joined DPS on Jan. 24. We welcome them to the DPS family as they go through the training that will make them DPS troopers. We’ll be looking for additional recruits soon; be sure to spread the word about DPS to those who may be interested in pursuing a career here.

I also welcome Ernest Angelo Jr. to the Public Safety Commission. I know he will bring a wealth of experience to DPS.

Texas Gov. Rick Perry has appointed Ernest Angelo Jr. of Midland to the Public Safety Commission, the three-member commission that oversees the Texas Department of Public Safety. His term will expire Dec. 31, 2007.

Angelo, a petroleum engineer, is owner of an oil and gas exploration and production company. Angelo also served as a Texas Parks and Wildlife Commissioner from 1997 to 2003, after his appointment by former Gov. George W. Bush.

Commissioner Angelo replaces Robert B. Holt, also from Midland. Holt’s 15-year tenure on the Public Safety Commission is the longest in DPS history.

The other Commission members are Carlos H. Cascos of Brownsville and Chair Colleen McHugh of Corpus Christi.

Crashes are no accident

The Accident Records Bureau will implement the Crash Records Information System (CRIS) in 2005. As part of the transition to a new system, the Accident Records Bureau will now be called the Crash Records Bureau. This name change not only represents the new records management system, but a system that more accurately reflects the seriousness of traffic incidents.

The name change is just one aspect of a larger overall enhancement effort engineered by the bureau as part of the CRIS project. The area has been refurbished with new computers and workstations and is being restructured into appropriate work groups/sections.

By spring of this year, law enforcement entities will be able to submit crash reports electronically. The traffic collision reporting form, ST-3, has been renamed CRB-3, reflecting the name change to Crash Records Bureau.

With these changes, the bureau and DL Division can provide better service and improved accuracy in the collection and processing of crash data.

New commissioner appointed

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Mr. Angelo replaces Public Safety Commissioner Bobby Holt, who served our agency longer than any other commissioner in our history. I certainly appreciate all the support that Mr. Holt has given to the DPS over the years; I thank him and I know that he will continue to assist us in any way he can.

Last month, I said that the Legislature meets for 180 days; it’s actually 140. Please be ready to assist when asked.

_askthecolonel@txdps.state.tx.us_
Awards

Maria Guadalupe Meier of Panhandle, TX received a Director’s Award for helping save an elderly man’s life. The man suffered a heart attack and stopped breathing while in a grocery store where Meier worked. She immediately began CPR (without a disease-barrier resuscitator mask) and was able to get the man breathing by the time help arrived. Tr. Chris Ray, HP Panhandle, who nominated Meier, believes her quick, unselfish actions saved the man’s life.

In December, the International Association of Chief’s of Police (IACP) held its second annual “Excellence in Police Aviation” award luncheon in Los Angeles. DPS Aviation Chief Pilot Jack L. Reichert and Capt. Steve C. Powell were both recognized for their accomplishments.

Since assuming command of the section, they have worked on adding additional aircraft, standardizing the fleet of aircraft, developing a replacement program, painting the helicopters black and white and placing a strong emphasis on safety. The Aircraft Section currently has 27 pilots and nine air stations across Texas.

Short Shots

Dive Team tryouts

The DPS Dive Recovery Team is seeking applicants for try-outs. Any commissioned THP trooper who is stationed within 100 miles of Austin is eligible to apply. Dive certification is not a prerequisite, as successful candidates will receive the appropriate training and certification.

Those wishing to apply for consideration should submit a memorandum through their chain of command, forwarding the original directly to Maj. David G. Baker in the THP Chief’s office. They must also notify Maj. Baker of their intent to apply either in person or by calling 512-424-2115.

Governor Protective Detail

The THP Division is now accepting applications for sergeant positions on the Governor Protective Detail. All commissioned Department personnel not currently on disciplinary probation and with at least 48 calendar months service as a commissioned Texas peace officer are eligible to apply. Applicants must contact Capt. Dale L. Avant at 512-475-4820 for instructions on the application process.

Police graduate

Lt. Raul Vargas, HP Beaumont, graduated in November from the 112th Administrative Officer’s Course of the Southern Police Institute at the University of Louisville. The course is designed to assist in the development of police administrative and command personnel.

Car seat safety

DPS has entered into a partnership with the Governor’s office and 21st Century Insurance to host six child safety seat events this year to educate parents about car seat misuse.

DPS troopers and employees
THP personnel pose with stuffed animals from the annual Christmas teddy bear drive. Almost 2,000 animals were donated for troopers to comfort young children involved in traffic incidents. Cactus Ranch Elementary in Round Rock accounted for nearly half the total. Extras were donated to the Salvation Army and Austin area facilities that serve abused women and children. Thanks to everyone who gave!!

Handgun reciprocity
Texans can now carry concealed handguns in Colorado, and vice versa thanks to a proclamation by Gov. Rick Perry.

Texas also has 14 other reciprocity agreements with Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah and Wyoming.

In addition, Gov. Perry signed a unilateral proclamation allowing citizens with concealed handgun licenses issued by New Mexico to legally carry concealed handguns in Texas. However, Texas citizens cannot carry concealed handguns in New Mexico because of differences in the laws of the two states.

Recruits in Christmas spirit
Recruits from the B-04 class played Santa Claus this Christmas. Pooling their money, they bought about 150 gifts for 20 underprivileged children as part of a Salvation Army Angel Tree in Austin.

Trooper safety campaign kicks off
This month, DPS will kick off a new campaign to get drivers to slow down near emergency vehicles on Texas roadways.

THP Division troopers will begin handing out 3-by-5 inch cards during traffic stops reminding motorists about the “slow down/move over” law that went into effect Sept. 1, 2003.

According to the law, drivers approaching stopped law enforcement, fire or EMS vehicles that have emergency lights activated must either:

- Slow down 20 miles per hour below the speed limit or
- Vacate the lane closest to the stopped emergency vehicle, if the road has multiple lanes traveling in the same direction.

The cards were developed by the Public Information Office to increase trooper safety and public awareness. They are a response to continuing public confusion about the law and concern by DPS troopers over the lack of compliance.

The cards are worded to counter media coverage that often refers to the statute as the “move over law.” DPS is emphasizing that motorists should slow down first and move over only if it is safe and legal to do so.

In 2004, DPS troopers wrote 2,057 citations and 10,964 warnings for violations of the law.

Other law enforcement and emergency responder agencies are welcome to utilize the cards, which are designed to allow the use of other logos.

who are certified as child passenger safety technicians will staff the clinics, working one-on-one with parents. The first clinic took place Jan. 29 in Corpus Christi. Five others remain:
- Feb 26- San Antonio
- Apr 16- Austin
- Apr 30- Dallas
- Nov 19- Houston
- Dec 10- Fort Hood/Killeen

For more information, contact Beth Warren, Occupant Safety Programs Coordinator, via Outlook e-mail or at 512-424-5639.

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Mile Markers

Promotions

CLE

Joseph Carl Longway, Lt., Narcotics Lubbock to Capt., Narcotics Lubbock; Henry Briscoe Davis, Sgt., Narcotics Longview to Lt., Narcotics Austin HQ; Martin Donald Soward, Tr. II, Jourdanton to Sgt., MVTS El Paso; Ernesto Velasquez, Tr. II, Narcotics Fort Stockton to Sgt., Narcotics Alpine; Bradley Dee Taylor, Tr. II, HP San Angelo to Sgt., Narcotics San Angelo; Daniel Martinez, Tr. III, Narcotics McAllen to Sgt., Narcotics McAllen; Sergio Ramirez Jr., Tr. IV, Narcotics Harlingen to Sgt., Narcotics Brownsville; Juan Briano, Tr. II, Narcotics El Paso to Sgt., Narcotics El Paso;


Texas Rangers


THP

Brian Christopher Burney, Cpl. III, HP Odessa to Sgt., Decatur-North; Jay Alexander, Tr. II HP, Marshall to Sgt., HP Greenville; Tony Dale Thompson, Tr. III, Bastrop to Sgt., HP Austin-Capitol; Patrick Lewis, Tr. II, HP Terrell to Sgt., HP Dallas North Tollway;


DL

Phillip Muller, Tr. III, DL El Paso to Sgt., DL Midland.

Retirements

Miguel Angel Campos, Sr. Tr., HP Austin, 25 yrs., 6 mos., 18 days; Mary M. Lauderdale, Chief, IMS Austin, 22 yrs., 3 mos., 4 days; Lawrence Curtis Marshall Jr., Commander, Special Crimes Austin, 29 yrs., 2 mos., 2 days;

David Franklin Bradshaw, Capt., Narcotics Lubbock, 28 yrs., 3 mos., 16 days; Arturo Viales, Lt., DL McAllen, 27 yrs., 24 days; Patricia Jean Holt, Comms. Ctr. Spec. II Midland, 24 yrs., 5 mos., 18 days;

Guillermo Vera, Sr. Cpl., HP Corpus Christi, 24 yrs., 1 mo., 16 days; Sergio Gomez, Sr. Tr., DL Del Rio, 23 yrs., 6 mos., 21 days; Stephanie Smith-Benziger, Crime Records Supv. Austin, 30 yrs., 2 mos., 29 days.

Deaths


On the mend...

Best wishes for a speedy recovery from line-of-duty injuries go to:

Tr. James R. DeFrance, HP Conroe, injured during struggle with suspect;

Tr. Billy Horton, HP Lubbock, injured during foot pursuit;

Tr. David O’Neal, HP Marshall, injured when his vehicle was broadsided; and

Tr. Wilton White, HP Hempstead, struck by a drunk driver while directing traffic.

Congratulations to Tr. Jesus Barron, HP Weslaco, and Tr. Jason Price, HP Victoria, who have returned to work on light duty after being injured.

Congratulations also to these troopers who have returned to full duty after recovering from their on-duty injuries: Tr. Jake Burson, HP Waco, and Tr. Kenneth Sanders, HP Beaumont.