

# The Badge



Georgia Department of Public Safety Quarterly Newsletter



## 86th Trooper School



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# A Message from the Commissioner



Colonel Bill Hitchens

As we travel down life's highways and byways, we never really know where our journey will end and what experiences we will encounter. Certainly no one foresaw the dramatic financial crisis in which we now find our state and our country. In fact the entire financial structure of the world as we know it is struggling with the economy on a day-to-day basis. While many "experts" say that we are in a depression that will end in a year or two, there are just as many pundits with economic expertise who say otherwise. I, for one, have no insight as to when it will conclude and when we will enjoy prosperous times again.

What I do know is that the faltering economy has mandated that we in the Department of Public Safety must re-evaluate what we do, how we do it, what costs are involved, and can we do anything more efficiently and/or effectively?

I won't bore you with a lot of numbers, but our budget, along with every other agency in state government, has borne the brunt of the budget ax. The analogy I typically use is that we all have a family budget. We put money that we earn into the bank and then we pay our bills when they come due. The art is to always have a sufficient amount in the bank to cover your expenses. The Georgia Constitution mandates that state government must balance the budget. The state is prohibited from writing a check or encumbering a debt that it doesn't have the money in the bank to cover. My guess is that few of us have ever had a \$20 billion annual family budget to contend with, but the principles are the same. When there are insufficient tax revenues to meet the state's budget, expenditures must be reduced. Therein lies the cause of our current dilemma.

The truth of the matter is that I believe we will make it through this crisis relatively unaffected. The command staff and our financial personnel have worked diligently to identify innovative ways to save money and prevent furloughs and/or Reductions in Force (RIF). We are driving older cars, curtailing travel and expenses that are not mandated, and we have been able to move some personnel around into positions that are not funded with state appropriated funds. We are currently moving to a new Regional Computer Aided Dispatch/Records Management System that will save significant monies, and we have many authorized positions that have been left vacant in order to make our budget balance.

Again, I certainly hope the current crisis is of short duration and we can soon return to the operational tempo that we are accustomed. I have heard very little griping about budget issues from our personnel and that tells me two things: (1) They understand the problem we are facing; (2) When they look around they realize how fortunate we are. Thanks to all of you for your understanding and support!

## Chaplain's Corner - Words of Strength, Wisdom, and Courage

Rev. Charles Houston

As author of the book of Psalms, when David prepared to rest for the night on his journey he must have looked up to see the guard protecting him and his traveling companions. Seeing this guard reminded him of the One who stands sentinel over all of life. With that image in mind, he wrote these words in Psalm 121:1-5; "I lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved: He who keeps you will not slumber. He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper..."

This same God who stood guard over those travelers also watches over every member of the Department of Public Safety. No trooper, no MCCD officer, no Capitol Police officer, those we love, or any one of us is ever truly alone when we think we are alone. What an affirmation this is for us! When we are feeling alone, lost, confused, and helpless, or experiencing any other negative emotion or circumstance, our Lord is there with us. We are not alone; we are not out on a limb by ourselves.

In his book, *"Beyond the Badge"*, Lieutenant Charles "Chuck" Ferrara, NYPD (ret.) and now ordained minister and police chaplain tells of chasing a junkie through an abandoned building. He could hear his "prey's footsteps" laboring up the steps ahead of him. A door slammed in the distance and as he ran up to it, he almost burst through. However, he "stopped dead on the inside of the roof door". He carefully opened it to find a piece of cardboard on the floor which he poked only to see it plunge "two stories below into a pile of plaster, metal, and glass." He asked, "What was it that stopped me from going through that door?" He says, "I have gone through more roof doors than I would like to remember and have never paused, never stopped." What stopped him? Hear him, "I am convinced to this very day, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that is was the hand of God..." It is the same God who kept sentinel over the author of Psalms, the same One who will keep you safe in "your going out and your coming in, from this time and forevermore" (Psalm 121:8).

The Badge is published quarterly by the Public Information Office of the Georgia Department of Public Safety as an information service for Department members and retirees.

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# 86th Trooper School Graduates



Forty-seven new troopers patrol Georgia roads after completing the 86th Georgia State Patrol Trooper School. Governor Sonny Perdue was the keynote speaker for graduation exercises at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in Forsyth on February.

The new troopers completed a 33-week, rigorous training school that included specialized training in impaired driving enforcement, pursuit driving,

firearms, drug interdiction techniques, as well as extensive training in traffic crash investigations and self-defense. Colonel Bill Hitchens, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Public Safety, said the 47 new troopers have earned the right to wear the traditional “big hat” of the Georgia State Patrol.



“These troopers have received the best training available in the country,” Colonel Hitchens said. “They have undergone grueling physical, textbook, and field training to prepare them well for a career in the dangerous profession of law enforcement.”

The new troopers have also completed 12 weeks of field training supervised under the guidance of seasoned troopers. The graduates of the 86th Trooper School were assigned to vacancies at the State Patrol’s 48 patrol posts across the state.

## Troopers Participate in 2009 Inauguration

Fifty members of the Georgia State Patrol served as part of the largest security detail for a presidential inauguration in our nation’s history. The troopers were in Washington, DC January 18-21.

During their duty assignments, the troopers worked in partnership with the uniformed division of the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department to provide security along the Inaugural Parade route and also with crowd control. The Metropolitan Police Department is the primary law enforcement agency responsible for ensuring the safe and uneventful progression of the Inaugural Parade and with assisting the U.S. Secret Service with security at the hotels hosting the Inaugural Balls. GSP personnel supplemented the uniformed presence during the Inauguration.

“It was a distinct honor for the Georgia State Patrol to be invited to take part in the historic 56th Inauguration and the troopers who attended did a great job,” said Colonel Bill Hitchens. He also noted, “We are all proud of those who participated, and in particular their diligence and perseverance under difficult circumstances. The troopers are to be commended for a job well done.”

Planning for the security assignment began in November when the Georgia State Patrol was invited to again assist with Inaugural security by Metro Police. The Georgia State Patrol also provided a security assignment for the 55th Inaugural in January 2005. All expenses for the Inaugural detail, including the troopers’ salaries, travel, meals, and lodging were reimbursed to the Department by Metropolitan Police.



### REPORT SUSPECTED IMPAIRED DRIVERS

The Georgia State Patrol and cell phone providers in Georgia are pleased to offer Star G-S-P service for motorists to report suspected impaired drivers. The call is free and you will be connected with the nearest GSP post to your location. Call Star G-S-P (\*477) from your cell when you see a suspected impaired driver.



# Headlines Across Georgia

**Deputy Commissioner Serves as Grand Marshal at Troup County's MLK Jr. Parade**



**Commissioner Receives the Customer Service Leadership Award for being "A True Leader."**



**DPS Customer Service Champion Lisa Maier Receives Governor's Commendation for Motivating Employees**



**CIU Receives Customer Service of Excellence in the Team Category**



**Troopers from Troop C Recognized by Atlanta Police Department for Assistance to their Auto Theft Unit**



**Brunswick Breaks Ground for New Georgia State Patrol Post**





# Headlines Across Georgia

## Troopers from Troop E Participate in Annual Toys for Tots Program



## SFC Scott Short Receives Resolutions in the House and Senate



## Bronze Lion Given to Cpl. Michael Young's Family



## DPS Participates in Annual Breast Cancer Walk for Fourth Year



## GSP Vehicles Receive Best Active and Best Retired Emergency Vehicles During APD's Cops & Rodders Competition



## GSP Honor Guard Presents the Colors Prior to Falcons Football Game





# G-Tact Safety Campaign Underway

Law enforcement officers have completed five enforcement waves of the Georgia TACT program since its launch in November 2007. The G-TACT program, or Georgia Targeting Aggressive Cars and Trucks, is a traffic safety campaign designed to increase driver awareness of the dangers they face with

risky driving behaviors around commercial motor vehicles. The program combines educational outreach with traffic enforcement to reduce the number of crashes between commercial vehicles and much-smaller passenger vehicles.

The program is funded with a grant from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to the Georgia Department of Public Safety. The enforcement areas have included the following corridors: I-75 in Bartow and Cobb counties, I-95 in Chatham county, I-85 in Gwinnett, Barrow, and Jackson counties, I-20 and I-520 in Columbia and Richmond counties, and I-75 in Lowndes and Cook counties. The next wave

is planned for I-20 in Carroll and Douglas counties this summer. These areas were

selected based on traffic crash data. Commercial motor vehicle crashes with passenger vehicles in Georgia account for an average of 15 percent of Georgia highway fatalities each year and almost 90 percent of the people killed are occupants of the smaller vehicle. The majority of commercial vehicle crashes are caused by a driving mistake made by the driver of the smaller passenger vehicle.

In addition to cautioning drivers to “leave more space,” law enforcement officers watch for drivers of both cars and trucks that are tailgating, changing lanes too quickly, crossing the gore or median, driving recklessly, speeding, driving in the emergency lane, failing to signal when changing lanes, operating a vehicle without an appropriate valid license, and trucks over six wheels traveling in the left lane.

Billboards, public service announcements, commercial radio spots, specially-wrapped tractor trailers, and safety messages on the Department of Transportation’s Overhead Variable Message signs are part of the public outreach for the G-TACT campaign. Additionally, Motor Carrier Compliance Officers will be conducting

public information and education activities at the Georgia Welcome Center periodically providing “Leave More Space” safety brochures to motorists. The G-TACT program is also a sponsor of Atlanta Falcons football games through the 2009 season.



Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administrator John Hill, speaks during the kick-off press conference for G-TACT in Bartow Co.



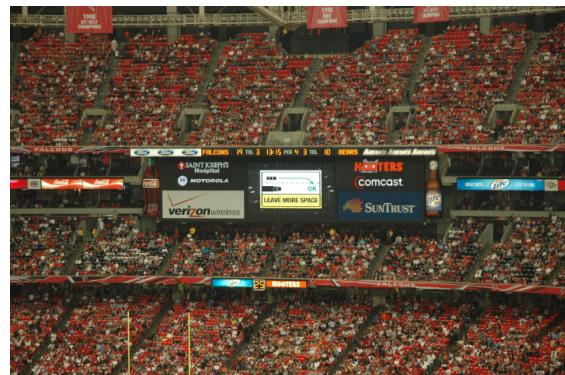
DPS Commissioner, Colonel Bill Hitchens speaks during a press conference launching the fifth enforcement wave.



One of the specially-wrapped tractor-trailers takes a trip around the track prior to the race at the Atlanta Motor Speedway.



Billboards are placed in the areas where the enforcement waves take place to remind motorists to leave more space.



G-TACT program is a sponsor of the Atlanta Falcons football games through the 2009 season.

# Congratulations on Your Retirement!

*MCC2 Raymond Adams (Motor Carrier Compliance - Region 8)*  
*SCEC Bobby Bacon (Georgia State Patrol - Post 16, Helena)*  
*Master Trooper Charlie Banks (Georgia State Patrol - Troop J)*  
*S/Tr. Robert Daniel (Georgia State Patrol - Post 27, Blue Ridge)*  
*S/Tr. Mark Garner (Georgia State Patrol - Post 3, Cartersville)*  
*Master Trooper Marc Glover (Georgia State Patrol - Post 33, Milledgeville)*  
*Master Trooper Lorenzo Harris (Georgia State Patrol - CIU)*  
*SFC Joe Harrison (Georgia State Patrol - Post 5, Dalton)*  
*SFC Doug Kiser (Georgia State Patrol - Troop J)*  
*MCC III Lawrence L. Roberts (Motor Carrier Compliance - Region 8)*  
*Major Chris Long (Motor Carrier Compliance - North Division)*  
*Captain Jon Long (Georgia State Patrol - Regional K-9 Commander)*  
*SFC Greg Wiley (Georgia State Patrol - Post 33, Milledgeville)*  
*S/Tr. Jeff Williams (Georgia State Patrol - Post 18, Reidsville)*



## Deaths

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*Retired Sgt. D.J. "Jug" Brown (Georgia State Patrol)*  
*Retired Sergeant First Class Mike Davis (Georgia State Patrol)*  
*Retired Driver Examiner Charles Thomas Dorminy*  
*Corporal Johnny Hartmeyer (Motor Carrier Compliance)*  
*Retired GBI Agent Jerry Longino, Sr. (Former State Trooper)*  
*Retired GBI Inspector Johnny McGlamery (Former State Trooper)*

*Retired Chief License Examiner Charles Sikes*

*Retired Officer Allen Swint (Motor Carrier Compliance)*

*Retired GBI SAC Marwin J. Vandiver (Former State Trooper)*

# Faithful Service Awards

## 30 Years

Edna D. Freeman  
Christopher A. Long

## 25 Years

Glenda W. Blanton  
Gwendolyn M. Fulton  
Ray L. Howard  
Dwight L. Redwine  
George W. Rogers  
Jackie V. Thurman

## 20 Years

Luanne S. Bailey  
John W. Cannady  
Roxanne D. Carwell  
J. Paul Cospers, Jr.  
Melanie M. Edmiston  
Gary L. Greene  
Steven J. Harrison  
Debby M. Hitson  
Lisa G. Johnson  
Joe B. Lacey  
Bettina G. Layfield  
Gary W. Mills  
James L. Rowell  
Robert R. Smith  
Lloyd Ernest Strickland  
Mark H. Willis

## 15 Years

Terry L. Abbott  
William F. Amos  
Timothy D. Brock  
Michael J. Brown  
Robert W. Chaffin  
Charles G. Evans, III  
George R. Harper  
David J. Herring  
William W. Hitchens, III  
Roger D. Hobby  
John C. Homer, IV  
Larry B. Hornsby, Jr.  
David L. James

Jack S. Joiner  
Jonathan M. Parker  
Mark S. Perry  
Jason C. Riner  
Jeffrey B. Scott  
Donald D. Smith, Jr.  
Christopher C. Wright

## 10 Years

Brian G. Abney  
Kathryn M. Adams  
Cheryl A. Bonham  
Jonathon W. Bracewell  
Brandy M. Cochran  
Thomas C. Drinnen  
Daniel L. Freeman  
Jody Q. Garrison  
Paula D. Gibbs  
Vicki J. Gilmer  
Michael W. Goins  
Dante F. Hackney  
Jeremy K. Hall  
Darryl B. Jackson  
Wesley M. Kerce  
Ronnie H. Lee  
Michael W. Marsh  
Adam W. Pledger  
Mary A. Rogers  
Lance G. Scott  
Russell D. Taunton  
John W. Vanlandingham, Jr.

## 5 Years

Roland R. Copeland  
Saleana Langford  
Matthew R. Montgomery  
Stephen B. Moore  
Rodney Pickle  
Amanda L. Stepp  
Leslie Tomme  
Peggy E. Willis