

# Recruiting & Community Outreach Division

Colonel Eric T. Olson established the Recruiting and Community Outreach Division effective April 1, 2019. This division merged the Career Recruitment Division and Office of Community Engagement & Outreach functions. Captain Benjamin C. Jones was designated director of the division, which remained under the Administrative Services Bureau, General Headquarters, Jefferson City, MO. Capt. Jones was also designated as the Patrol's community outreach officer. The division welcomed Lieutenant Jason Pace as assistant director and added two new recruiting officers in 2019: Trooper Gary Daniels, Troop A, and Trooper Kordel Gibson, Troop C. The Recruiting and Community Outreach office is found in the south wing of General Headquarters. The new space allows for greater collaboration and efficiency of the division and its personnel.

The new division's mission is twofold: to develop closer relationships with individuals, groups, and businesses in communities that may not frequently interact with the Patrol and to recruit qualified and diverse candidates for positions as troopers as well as for the more than 60 civilian career classifications within the Patrol.

The Recruiting and Community Outreach Division provided administration and operations of the following programs in 2019: Missouri State Highway Patrol Trooper Recruiting, Ride-Along program, Outreach programs, Mentor program, Youth Camps, and Youth Career Days. RCOD also assisted the Public Information & Education Division in facilitating programs such as Skills USA, Missouri Police Association IRC assessment, and the Constitution Project.

The Recruiting and Community Outreach Division also assisted the Human Resources Division in administering the Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action programs as directed by the superintendent. Division employees facilitate exit interviews for recruit classes, mentor programs, and internships.

During June and July 2019, the Recruiting and Community Outreach Division hosted two Youth Academy programs. The first was June 3-7, at Eagle Sky of the Ozarks, in Patterson, MO, which is in Troop E's area. The second academy took place July 8-12, at Sunnyhill Adventures, in Dittmer, MO, which falls in Troop C's area. Between the two locations, 66 youth ages 16-18 from all over the state participated in the academies. In addition to the youth, 29 Patrol employees assisted with the programs. During each week, the youth were exposed to the various duties and careers available within the Patrol, both member and civilian.

The Youth Academy was originally created in 2017 and facilitated by members of the Career Recruitment Division. It has since been the responsibility of the Recruiting and Community Outreach Division. This program provides a unique hands-on

experience for the students to learn the role of law enforcement officers in their communities. As mentioned previously, the Youth Academy focuses on discipline, teamwork, character, and leadership. One of the goals of the program was aimed at creating a better bond between youth, law enforcement, and the entire community. Representatives from the marine operations, Gaming Division, Aircraft Division, commercial vehicle enforcement, the Major Crash Investigative Unit, and various civilian careers provided presentations on their duties and responsibilities to show the varied career opportunities within the agency. Cadets participated in physical fitness training, and drill and marching exercises. They learned about the Patrol's history, ethics, integrity, firearms safety, and use of force. The cadets also earned their CPR certification. The Youth Academy program is made possible through generous donations from individuals and businesses.

In addition to the week-long camps, division members hosted two-day Youth Academy programs in Troop A and Troop D areas.

The RCOD members regularly connect with communities through Backpack For Kids (Troop D), Kicks For Kids (Troop E), Salvation Army Adopt A Family Toy Shop, serving meals to those in need (Troop F), and the Kansas City Shop With A Cop program (Troop A). The division also facilitated a College Student Alliance Program for 60 Lincoln University students. In 2019 alone, recruiters logged approximately 5,646 hours performing their duties.

In addition to the recruiting events in Missouri, recruiters attended events in Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Oklahoma, Illinois, Mississippi, Texas, and Kansas in 2019.

The Recruiting and Community Outreach Division is very active on social media through Facebook, Twitter, and Pandora. Division members used their creativity to produce recruiting videos of the youth academies, motorcycle operations, Aircraft Division, and the Water Patrol Division for future social media advertisements.

Recruiters administered the trooper selection process written and fitness testing 313 times at locations throughout the state of Missouri.

## **2020 — present**

The Missouri State Highway Patrol faced many challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Recruiting and Community Outreach Division is people-oriented which added unique challenges to its mission during a pandemic. However, division members remained vigilant in their assigned responsibilities. RCOD took measures to practice social distancing and established the most thoughtful and beneficial means of recruiting. Although several meetings, career/community events, youth camps, and training events, etc. were canceled, division employees continued to move forward with its recruitment and community outreach efforts. Additionally, with the new challenges

came new opportunities to develop creative strategies to attract and recruit qualified applicants. Some of RCOD's accomplishments during this time included the following:

- Enhanced advertising and social media presence.
- Increased exposure within various media outlets throughout the state.
- Improved partnerships with universities/colleges and military installations.
- Increased participation of virtual recruiting career fairs and events.
- Enhanced communication/connection with applicants.

The Recruiting and Community Outreach Division worked hard to retain its connections to various communities with care for individual needs and respect for their health and safety. For instance, during clothing and food distribution, face masks and hand sanitizer were integrated into the event plan.

Division members completed a data integrity project, reviewing and updating all presentations, brochures, forms, and other marketing material. Working with Criminal Justice Information Systems personnel, the SHP-62 (Applicant Contact) and the SHP-63 (Recruiting Activity) forms were updated to accurately capture and consolidate information regarding community outreach events in a more efficient way. RCOD personnel developed a new database for applicant information which is then forwarded to the full-time recruiters via email. In the past, an applicant could apply for a trooper position and the recruiter would be unaware until weeks or even months later. With the new database, once an applicant applies and the Human Resources Division runs the initial criminal records check, the applicant's contact information is forwarded to the full-time recruiter in that troop area. Within 24 hours of applying, the applicant is contacted personally by a recruiter to welcome them to the Patrol's Trooper Selection Process. This provides the opportunity to build the relationship of the applicant/recruiter sooner, allows the recruiter to better prepare the applicant for upcoming testing, and improves the percentage rate of applicants appearing for testing.

Division members continued to enhance and develop recruiting videos for all divisions within the agency throughout the year. These videos were uploaded to RCOD's internal video library and became instrumental in answering questions and educating students/potential applicants of the diverse career opportunities within the Patrol. Specifically, a recruiting video was created targeting college students through their social media channels. The purpose was to inform the students and soon-to-be graduates of the career opportunities within the agency. RCOD members also produced videos highlighting the Patrol's Training Academy. These allowed followers to have a better understanding of the Patrol's exceptional training and provided them with an opportunity to see first-hand the transformation from recruit to trooper.

RCOD worked with the Public Information and Education Division (PIED) to explore the opportunities in developing the Patrol's first YouTube channel. Other law

enforcement agencies throughout the country have used this platform for recruiting/educational purposes with a tremendous amount of success. This allows videos or playlists on the Patrol's YouTube account to be shared as a link on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.

In August 2020, the division hosted its first-ever Patrol University at Missouri State University in Springfield, MO. The program took place over a six-week period. The 21 criminology students earned college credit upon completing the program. The participants became familiar with Patrol policies and procedures, various division responsibilities, and specialist positions. One goal of the program was to foster a better understanding of the Patrol and the services it provides. Students learned from hands-on experiences showcasing the tools of law enforcement. The curriculum highlighted the diverse career opportunities within the Patrol and provided an opportunity for students and Patrol employees to connect. The Patrol University experience is expected to become a valuable recruiting tool in the agency's continuous search for highly qualified employees.

Throughout the fall, RCOD personnel were actively involved in assisting with community outreach events including the distribution of donated food and clothing items in response to the pandemic.

In April 2021, RCOD began an advertising campaign for the 114th Trooper Selection Process. The 114th Trooper Selection Process was an "accelerated academy" option for POST-certified police officers and qualifying military personnel. This option was a first for the Patrol and proved to be a benefit in recruiting qualified applicants to the agency.

In the spring semester, RCOD partnered with Lincoln University in Jefferson City to host our Patrol University Program. A total of 39 students participated in the 10-week program and received college credit.

Many colleges, hiring organizations, and community groups rebounded in 2021 from the effects of the COVID pandemic. RCOD members participated in a total of 745 recruiting and community outreach events during the year. These included in-person and virtual career events, community outreach opportunities, and several youth events. RCOD personnel partnered with various minority groups in Saint Louis, MO, Kansas City, MO, Jefferson City, Springfield, Mountain View, MO, and numerous locations in Southeast Missouri for community service projects plus food and clothing distributions.

During 2022, RCOD provided educational opportunities to communities across the state and continued to foster working relationships with the Vintendo for Africa (V4A) organization in St. Louis, the NAACP chapter in Charleston, MO, the Purple Church Outreach Ministries in Sikeston, MO, Meet the Need Outreach in Charleston, MO, and the Lighthouse United Ministries in Cape Girardeau, MO. RCOD worked diligently with the Army PaYS Program, I-Heart Radio, AcompañARTE Cultural Center in Springfield, NAACP Chapter in Caruthersville, MO, Iglesia Cristiana Casa de Oracion Church in Springfield, the University of Missouri ParentLink in Caruthersville, Boys &

Girls Clubs of Springfield and Ferguson, MO, the LUCE Outreach Program in Charleston, the ERASE Outreach Program in Caruthersville, the Mount Calvary Powerhouse Outreach Program in Poplar Bluff, MO, and the Hispanic Leaders Group of St. Louis and Springfield.

In the spring, RCOD continued to grow the Patrol University program partnering with Lindenwood University in St. Charles, MO, and the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg, MO. These multi-week programs not only enhanced the Patrol's recruiting efforts, but helped to build relationships with college-aged students and allowed them an opportunity to learn more about the Patrol's role within the communities we serve.

During the annual Patrol Awards Ceremony and The MASTERS Banquet in April, Sergeant D. Brad Haggett accepted a Lifesaving Award recognizing his actions in performing an abdominal thrust to save a man who was choking. The incident occurred at a recruiting event in December 2021.

During the week of May 30, the division hosted the first Youth Academy Program since 2019. Thirty-two youth participated in the program which was held at Eagle Sky of the Ozarks near Piedmont, MO. A second youth camp was conducted the last week of July at Camp Mihaska in Bourbon, MO, involving 18 youth from various parts of the state.

Summer 2022 brought several changes to RCOD. Captain Ben Jones was promoted to the rank of major on July 1 and designated the commander of the Support Services Bureau. RCOD was transferred from the Administrative Services Bureau to the Support Services Bureau. Trooper Robert "Mike" Malone joined the division as a full-time recruiter responsible for Troops B & F. Finally, Lieutenant Jason M. Pace was promoted to the rank of captain and designated division director on August 1.

In October 2022, the Recruiting and Community Outreach Division hosted an agencywide Missouri State Highway Patrol Career Expo. This event took place at the General Headquarters Law Enforcement Academy and involved over 20 different Patrol components. Approximately 200 attendees from the public, including students from local colleges, high schools, and technical schools, were provided the opportunity to learn about the different career opportunities, uniformed and civilian, within the agency.

In 2022, RCOD continued to maintain a strong presence through various media/advertising outlets to include internet, television streaming services, print and digital advertising, billboards, radio, and state/national newspapers and magazines, while staying active on social media through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube. RCOD recorded radio recruiting interviews and recruiting career announcements, in both English and Spanish, to be broadcasted throughout the state.

RCOD personnel were actively involved in assisting with community outreach events during the holiday season in 2022, which included the distribution of donated food, toys, and clothing items.

The Recruiting and Community Outreach Division personnel began 2023 by administering Patrol University programs at Lindenwood University and the University of

Central Missouri. This was the third year for both schools to incorporate this program into their curriculum, which continued to provide an excellent opportunity for college students to gain a better understanding of a career in law enforcement and, specifically, the Missouri State Highway Patrol.

In May 2023, RCOD participated with the Public Information and Education Division, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and the Missouri Department of Transportation to host the inaugural Missouri Equity and Engagement Traffic Safety Summit in Jefferson City, MO. The event proved to be a tremendous success and approximately 35 community leaders throughout the state met to discuss ideas to make our state and its roadways safer.

During the last week of July, RCOD again hosted the annual Youth Academy Program. There were 26 youth from various parts of the state in attendance.

Division personnel took part in the St. Louis Cardinals First Responders Event September 17-18, 2024. Recruiters set up several tents throughout the stadium where they could interact with many of the approximately 50,000 people in attendance throughout the event.

In September 2023, the Recruiting and Community Outreach Division hosted the second Missouri State Highway Patrol Career Expo. This event took place at the General Headquarters Law Enforcement Academy. Over 20 different Patrol components were represented. Approximately 400 attendees from the public, including retired individuals, students from local colleges, high schools, and technical schools, were provided the opportunity to learn about the different career opportunities, uniformed and civilian, within the agency. Visitors also enjoyed seeing a K-9 demonstration, helicopter, SWAT vehicle, the Mobile Command Center and several other displays in the parking lot.

## **Division Directors**

### Recruiting and Community Outreach Division

Capt. D.E. Heil	May 1, 2024, to present
Capt. J.M. Pace	August 1, 2022, to May 1, 2024
Capt. B.C. Jones	April 1, 2019, to July 1, 2022

Career Recruitment Division

(Merged with Office of Community Engagement & Outreach - 2019)

Capt. R.D. Whittler                      June 1, 2015, to July 1, 2018

Capt. B.C. Jones                         July 1, 2018, to April 1, 2019

Office of Community Engagement & Outreach

(Merged with Career Recruitment Division - 2019)

Capt. R.S. Johnson                      June 1, 2017, to November 1, 2018