

# 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 also 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 Program provides a unique hands-on experience for the students to learn the role of law enforcement officers in their communities. During both weeks, instructors created an environment that instilled MSHP Youth Academy: A

teamwork, discipline, and character building, and included activities that fostered leadership, the Patrol core values, and team building. 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.

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**

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. RCOB 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 RCOB'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. RCOB 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.

RCOB 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.