

Ohio State Highway Patrol Announces 2025 Leadership Award Recipients

Ohio State Highway Patrol

Media Release



For Immediate Release: February 6, 2026

Contact: Captain Tiffiany L. Meeks (614) 752-2792

oshp@dps.ohio.gov

Ohio State Highway Patrol Announces 2025 Leadership Award Recipients

COLUMBUS – Today, the Ohio State Highway Patrol announced the recipients of the 2025 Leadership Awards. The Patrol held a ceremony recognizing dozens of state and district award winners for their valuable contributions to Ohio and its communities.

Ohio State Highway Patrol Trooper of the Year – Trooper Haley K. L. Shreck

Trooper Haley K. L. Shreck, Chillicothe Post, earned top honors as the 2025 State Trooper of the Year after being selected from nine District Troopers of the Year.

Trooper Shreck is known to have a polite and professional demeanor when interacting with the public and her peers. Her leadership abilities and decision-making skills are continuously on display. She is very passionate about her law enforcement career and is aware of the significance each encounter, whether on or off duty, can have with the public.

Trooper Shreck consistently follows up with offenders struggling with addiction, even after enforcement stops and court proceedings to provide addiction-recovery resources. While at work and off duty, she shows compassion to those in need of her assistance. She exemplifies the mantra “Service Above Self.” In addition to her involvement in the Patrol’s Season of Sharing, she is active in the Ross County community, participating in multiple school activities and a charity softball event. Her community involvement and commitment to giving to others exemplifies the Patrol’s Core Values.

Trooper Shreck joined the Patrol in April 2017 as a member of the 162nd Academy Class. She earned her commission in September of the same year and was assigned to the Springfield Post. As a trooper, she was also assigned to the Xenia, Wilmington and Batavia posts. She earned the Criminal Patrol award twice and the Ace Award for excellence in auto larceny enforcement once. In 2025, she earned the master trooper designation.

Ohio State Highway Patrol Dispatcher of the Year – Dispatcher Carrie M. Breech

Dispatcher Carrie M. Breech, Portsmouth Dispatch Center, earned statewide honors as the 2025 Dispatcher of the Year after being selected from 10 District Dispatcher of the Year recipients. She exemplifies the Patrol's Core Values and displays the principles that are expected of dispatchers. Dispatcher Breech possesses strong leadership qualities and applies them to improve the dispatch center. She exemplifies this through her eagerness to learn and willingness to take on an informal leadership role.

She is trusted by her supervisors, peers and coworkers and earned their respect through her strong work ethic and confidence. She ensures that her troopers, her community and the other agencies she works with receive the best possible service. Her efforts are recognized as an integral part of the dispatch center's success and set an example of excellence that is admired and respected.

Dispatcher Breech joined the Patrol in June 2016 as a dispatcher assigned to the Columbus Communications Center. She also served at the Ohio Statehouse, Jackson District Headquarters, Jackson Dispatch Center and the Portsmouth Post. She was named District Dispatcher of the Year twice and Post Dispatcher of the Year once. She earned the dispatcher Criminal Patrol Award and the Gold Star Award.

Ohio Trooper Recognition Award – Trooper Christopher M. Krantz

Trooper Christopher M. Krantz, Wilmington District Headquarters, earned the Ohio Trooper Recognition Award after being selected from 12 recipients. The award recognizes excellence among troopers who are assigned to specialty positions.

Trooper Krantz provides technical and expert guidance in crash investigations. He consistently demonstrates excellence far beyond routine expectations. His commitment to producing high-quality and thoroughly documented reports reflects an unwavering dedication to accuracy and professionalism. Trooper Krantz exhibits strong leadership qualities, including ensuring those around him stay current with the knowledge and skills pertaining to crash reconstruction. In addition, he provides assistance to local court systems. He goes above and beyond providing guidance and expertise as a driver training instructor, and showcases his talents as a member of the Drum and Bugle Corps.

Trooper Krantz began his Patrol career in September 2000 as a member of the 136th Academy Class. He earned his commission in March of the following year and was assigned to the Lebanon Post. He has also been assigned to the Batavia Post. He was named Post Trooper of the Year twice and earned the District Trooper Recognition Award in 2021 and 2023.

Employee Recognition Award – Administrative Officer 2 Caroline A. Jarka

Administrative Officer 2 Caroline A. Jarka, Office of Planning, Research and Development, received the Employee Recognition Award, which is presented annually to recognize excellence by a professional staff member.

AO2 Jarka played a key role in establishing significant policy changes pertaining to public records, appearance standards, the master trooper designation and Division memorials. In addition to policies, AO2 Jarka oversees the Patrol's accreditation program through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). She continues to stay current with changes to CALEA standards and works to ensure the Patrol remains an accredited agency. She is resourceful and shows excellence above and beyond what is expected of her daily work performance.

AO2 Jarka began her Patrol career in 2016 as a program administrator 2 and was assigned to Accreditation and Records. She was promoted to administrative officer 2 and remained in Accreditation and Records.

Electronic Technician of the Year – Electronic Technician 3 Kraig A. Kent

Electronic Technician 3 Kraig A. Kent, Findlay District, was selected as the Electronic Technician of the Year.

He has earned the respect of others in the Findlay District through his dedication, attitude and overall job performance. He goes above and beyond each day, having a quick response and high-quality of work, all while offering vital support to troopers in the field.

ET3 Kent is always willing to take on additional tasks, including providing crucial technical advice during the planning stages of the upcoming Defiance Post remodel project. His advice will help cut costs when it comes to the communications and network routing portion of the remodel.

ET3 Kent joined the Patrol in 1999 as an electronic technician 2, assigned to the Findlay District.

Throughout his career he has been named District Electronic Technician of the Year nine times and earned the Gold Star Award in 2019.

Distinguished Retiree Award – Retired Staff Lieutenant John C. Shore

Retired Staff Lieutenant John C. Shore, Bucyrus District, was selected as the Distinguished Retiree of the Year.

Retired Staff Lieutenant Shore has dedicated his life to service. He volunteers at the Marion Historical Society and at the Palace Theater as an usher. In addition, he volunteered countless hours as president of Honor Flight Columbus. He reached out to veterans, specifically World War II servicemembers, who were often reluctant to share their stories. Through his compassion, many opened up about the experiences they carried in silence for decades. By the Spring 2025 flight, Honor Flight Columbus had completed 143 missions and served more than 10,500 veterans. He also volunteered at the Warren G. Harding House and Museum, and the Junior Service Guild's Christmas Clearing House in Marion.

He began his Patrol career in January 1979 as a member of the 104th Academy Class. After earning his commission, he was assigned to the Hiram Post. He earned Post Trooper of the Year from 1984 through 1988, District Trooper of the Year twice and State Trooper of the Year in 1988. He was promoted to sergeant in 1989 and served at the Marion Post. In 1993, he was promoted to lieutenant at the Mt. Gilead Post. He was then promoted to staff lieutenant in 1997 and assigned to the Columbus District Post. He remained at the Columbus District Post until 2004, when he retired. Upon retirement, he served as an investigator for 15 years with the Ohio Department of Transportation.

Family Recognition Award – Mendy Saunders, Jackson District

Mendy Saunders, Jackson District, was selected as the recipient of the Family Recognition Award.

The wife of Dispatch Manager Mitchell Saunders, Jackson District, Mrs. Saunders has had a profound impact on the lives of children and families. She has opened her home and heart for more than 20 foster children navigating the most challenging times of their lives. The job of a foster parent requires more than providing shelter, it demands emotional resilience, patience and a constant outpouring of

selfless love. Mrs. Saunders does just that, she provides stability and the secure foundation necessary for these children to thrive.

In addition, Mrs. Saunders consistently dedicates her time and support to ensure local children in need experience the magic of the holiday season. She is an invaluable contributor to the Jackson District's Christmas Charity, volunteering by distributing gifts.

Colonel Paul A. Pride State Criminal Patrol Award – Sergeant Brian K. Garloch

For the second year in a row, Sergeant Brian K. Garloch, Delaware Post, earned the Colonel Paul A. Pride State Criminal Patrol Award for conducting the most felony case investigations, 61, which led to 87 felony arrests in 2025.

Sergeant Garloch joined the Patrol in March 2015 as a member of the 158th Academy Class. He earned his commission in September of the same year and was assigned to the Wapakoneta Post. As a trooper, he has also served at the Marion and Delaware posts. He was named District Trooper of the Year once and Post Trooper of the Year four times. He has won the Criminal Patrol Award six times and is a three-time Ace Award winner for excellence in auto larceny. In 2024, he earned the master trooper designation. In 2025, he was promoted to sergeant and assigned to the Bucyrus Post to serve as post commander. As a sergeant, he has earned the Criminal Patrol Award once.

Sergeant Garloch earned an Associate of Applied Science degree in criminal justice from Marion Technical College in 2014.

Colonel Thomas W. Rice Leadership Award – Sergeant Garrett R. Lawson

Sergeant Garrett R. Lawson, Findlay District, was honored with the Colonel Thomas W. Rice Leadership Award, which is presented to one sworn supervisory officer for outstanding leadership. He is known as a “trooper’s sergeant,” leading by example and making himself available, assisting troopers by sharing his knowledge and expertise. In addition to his leadership, he made numerous drug seizures and OVI arrests in 2025. He is also active in the community, participating in Trunk-or-Treat and Touch-a-Cruiser events. He is often requested to speak to students because of his positive personality.

Sergeant Lawson began his Patrol career in November 2012 as a member of the 154th Academy Class. He earned his commission in April of the following year and was assigned to the Fremont Post. As a trooper, he also served at Findlay District Criminal Patrol. He earned the Criminal Patrol Award five times. He received the State Trooper Recognition Award in 2021 and earned the District Trooper of the Year Award once and the Post Trooper of the Year Award three times. He was promoted to sergeant in 2022, and was assigned to the Bowling Green Post to serve as assistant post commander. As a sergeant he earned the Criminal Patrol Award twice.

Sergeant Lawson earned a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from Bowling Green State University in 2012.

The Colonel Thomas W. Rice Leadership Award is sponsored by the Ohio State Highway Patrol Retirees’ Association and is in honor of former Patrol Superintendent Thomas W. Rice.

Robert M. Chiaramonte Humanitarian Award – Trooper William Watson

The Robert M. Chiaramonte Humanitarian Award recognizes officers dedicated to humanitarian causes on the highway and in their communities.

Trooper William Watson, Findlay District, exemplifies the spirit of humanitarian service, both within and beyond the Patrol. In addition to his duties as a trooper, he also serves as an associate pastor and devotes his time to serving others through ministry, mentorship and community outreach. He leads the church youth group, guiding young people and helping them build character, confidence and a strong moral foundation. He also organizes and leads the church's Vacation Bible School, preaches at a homeless shelter and area nursing homes and serves as an Upward basketball coach.

He is an active participant in the Paulding Area Support Basketball Marathon. He delivers food and household items to the West Ohio Food Bank, the Van Wert Council on Aging and the YMCA of Van Wert, approaching every interaction with empathy and respect. He is committed to acts of service that uplift both individuals and the community. He serves as a member of the board for Love INC of Van Wert County and LifeWise Academy. He also participates in the Patrol's Season of Sharing events by supporting children and families in need during the holiday season.

Trooper Watson joined the Patrol in 2009 as a member of the 149th Academy Class. He earned his commission in December of the same year and was assigned to the Van Wert Post. As a trooper, he has also served in the Office of Recruitment. In 2024, he earned the master trooper designation.

Blue Max Award (Patrol's top auto larceny enforcer) – Trooper David J. Pangburn

Trooper David J. Pangburn, Cleveland Post, earned the Blue Max Award by recovering the most stolen vehicles, 28, which resulted in 32 arrests.

Trooper Pangburn joined the Patrol in October 2018 as a member of the 165th Academy Class. He earned his commission in April of the following year and was assigned to the Medina Post. He was named Post Trooper of the Year in 2023. He earned the Criminal Patrol Award five times and the and the Ace Award for excellence in auto larceny enforcement four times.

Trooper Pangburn earned a Bachelor of Science degree in criminal justice from the State University of New York Brockport in 2014.

Police Officer of the Year – Police Officer 2 Thomas R. Auxter

Police Officer 2 Thomas R. Auxter, Office of Criminal Investigations, was selected as Police Officer of the Year for embodying the Patrol's Core Values.

PO2 Auxter consistently demonstrates an exceptional attitude in every aspect of his work. He inspires his peers to maintain morale and uphold the highest standards of service. His positive outlook not only enhances the work environment, but also strengthens the relationship between law enforcement and stakeholders.

PO2 Auxter joined the Patrol in February 2018 as a police officer 2 and assigned to Capitol Operations. He previously earned Police Officer of the Year in 2021. He also served with the Ohio Investigative Unit as an enforcement agent.

He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in criminal justice from Bowling Green State University.

Motor Vehicle Inspector of the Year – Motor Vehicle Inspector Wayne M. Shaw

Motor Vehicle Inspector Wayne M. Shaw, Columbus District Commercial Enforcement, was selected as Motor Vehicle Inspector of the Year.

He received high praise for completing 1,284 salvage and 914 school bus inspections in the Columbus District in 2025. He is known for being consistent, proficient and level-headed. He has quickly become a peer leader with others looking to him for guidance and assistance.

MVI Shaw began his state service in 2011 with the Ohio Adjutant General's Office of the National Guard. He joined the Patrol in 2023 as a motor vehicle inspector, assigned to Columbus District Commercial Enforcement.

MVI Shaw served in the United States Navy from 1985-1988. From 1988-1991, he served in the United States Navy Reserve. From 1996-2006, he served in the United States Army National Guard and completed a tour during the Global War on Terrorism. He served in the United States Air National Guard from 2006-2011.

Motor Carrier Enforcement Inspector of the Year – Motor Carrier Enforcement Inspector Richard J. Bittner

Motor Carrier Enforcement Inspector Richard J. Bittner, Bucyrus District Commercial Enforcement, was selected as Motor Carrier Enforcement Inspector of the Year for 2025.

MCEI Bittner is an integral and highly valued member of Bucyrus District Commercial Enforcement. He sets a high standard of professionalism and adaptability. He has a vast amount of knowledge, patience and discipline, all qualities that significantly contribute to the overall success of the unit. He maintains a calm and clear demeanor, even during the most stressful situations. MCEI Bittner has earned recognition from the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio for his thorough inspection reports.

He began his Patrol career in 2008 as a dispatcher assigned to the Mansfield Dispatch Center. He became a driver license examiner 1 in 2010 and was assigned to the Bucyrus District Driver Exam Station. He was promoted to motor carrier enforcement inspector in 2018 and was assigned to Bucyrus District Commercial Enforcement.

MCEI Bittner served in the United States Marine Corps from 1992 to 1996.

Auxiliary Awards

The following awards are for the Patrol's Auxiliary members, an all-volunteer force that provides assistance to troopers.

William J. Duffy Award of Excellence – Auxiliary Sergeant Randall Davis

Auxiliary Sergeant Randall Davis, Lancaster Post, earned the William J. Duffy Award of Excellence for his dedication to the Patrol. Qualifying for the award requires a minimum of 300 volunteer hours per year over three consecutive years.

Auxiliary Sergeant Davis joined the Ohio State Highway Patrol Auxiliary in March 2023. He has worked more than 1,330 hours in the last three years. During that time, he has worked with troopers on regular and holiday road patrols, at the Ohio State Fair and participated in community service events.

State Auxiliary Officer of the Year – Auxiliary Officer Calib D. Cunningham

Auxiliary Officer Calib D. Cunningham, Van Wert Post, was selected as the State Auxiliary Officer of the Year.

He began with the Ohio State Highway Patrol Auxiliary in January 2024. He volunteered more hours in 2025 than any other auxiliary member, with a total of 830 hours. He worked with troopers on regular and holiday road patrols, worked the Ohio State Fair, conducted OVI checkpoints and assisted at other special details.

Partners for Safety Award – Security Manager Deontà Whigham and Park Manager and Vice President of Operations Tony Carovillano of Kings Island

The Partners for Safety initiative successfully blends statewide corporate partnerships with innovative initiatives at the local level. Partners for Safety involves a commitment of operational, public outreach and relations, and educational activities involving the Patrol and community residents. A lasting goal of the Partners for Safety effort is to promote a safer highway environment, reduce traffic crashes, achieve voluntary compliance with motor vehicle traffic laws, positively impact highway crime at the local level and support other Patrol initiatives.

Security Manager Deontà Whigham and Park Manager and Vice President of Operations Tony Carovillano of Kings Island were selected for their partnership and dedication to advancing traffic safety through their support of the Ohio State Highway Patrol's "Saved by the Belt" program. Since the partnership began in May 2024, more than 40 individuals have been honored for wearing their safety belts during incidents that could have otherwise resulted in far more serious outcomes. Each recognition serves as a powerful reminder of the life saving impact of proper safety belt use and reinforces the Patrol's mission to reduce injuries and fatalities on Ohio's roadways.

A key element of the program's success is the generosity of Kings Island, which hosts each event in its private restaurant overlooking the park's main gate. In addition to providing a memorable venue, the park offers complimentary admission tickets to each award recipient and their families, giving them the opportunity to enjoy the park as special guests following their recognition.

Planning is already underway for two additional Saved by the Belt events in May and October of 2026, further strengthening this meaningful collaboration. Kings Island's continued support has made a measurable difference in elevating public awareness and advancing the Patrol's mission of traffic safety across the state.

Note to Editors: Below are District honors for: District Trooper of the Year, District Dispatcher of the Year, District Trooper Recognition and District Employee Recognition. For photographs of award winners, email oshp@dps.ohio.gov.

Findlay District: Trooper Brandon P. Schreiber, (recently promoted to Sergeant) Lima Post; Dispatcher Lisa M. Burns, Findlay and Lima posts; Trooper Matthew M. Manly, Findlay District Criminal Patrol; Derek M. Martin (Infrastructure Specialist 2), Findlay District Headquarters.

Bucyrus District: Trooper Bryce M. Imars, Mansfield Post; Dispatcher Stephanie J. Evans, Bucyrus Dispatch Center; Trooper Kyle J. Mayle, Bucyrus District Criminal Patrol; Melissa S. Hofmann (Administrative Professional 1), Bucyrus Post.

Cleveland District: Trooper Jace D. Miller, Canton Post; Dispatcher Jean M. Paris, Cleveland Dispatch Center Post; Trooper Patrick J. Reagan, Cleveland District Investigations; Clint A. Ferrell (Maintenance Repair Worker 2), Canton Post.

Warren District: Trooper Michael S. Smith, Lisbon Post; Dispatcher Kayla A. DeWitt, Ravenna Dispatch Center, Trooper Jeremy J. Bryner, Warren District Investigations; Lizabeth K. Beight (Administrative Professional 1), Lisbon Post.

Piqua District: Trooper Abdullah S. Ahmed, Marysville Post; Dispatcher Aimee M. Young, Dayton and Xenia posts; Trooper Daniel T. York, Piqua District Commercial Enforcement; Zachary D. O'Dell (Maintenance Repair Worker 2), Dayton Post.

Columbus District: Trooper Jonathan M. Drake, Lancaster Post; Dispatcher Taylor J. Meek, Lancaster Dispatch Center; Amanda L. Stoffer (Administrative Professional 1), Delaware Post.

Cambridge District: Trooper Dustin E. Bowersock, New Philadelphia Post; Dispatcher John C. Ceculski, Cambridge Dispatch Center; Trooper Keith A. Roe, Cambridge District Investigations; Jennifer M. Kimball (Administrative Professional 1), New Philadelphia Post.

Wilmington District: Trooper Quintin A. Sandlin, Batavia Post; Dispatcher Jessi C. Lovejoy, Lebanon Post; Trooper Christopher M. Krantz, Wilmington District Headquarters; Traci L. Glispie (Administrative Professional 1), Wilmington District Headquarters

Jackson District: Trooper Haley K. L. Shreck, Chillicothe Post; Dispatcher Carrie M. Breech, Portsmouth Dispatch Center; Trooper Kelsey M. Draper, Jackson District Investigations; Connie E. Myers (Administrative Professional 1), Jackson Post.

GHQ: Dispatcher Katherine E. Shaw, Columbus Communications Center; Trooper Bradley A. Baker, Field Operations; Trooper Steven J. Drew, Office of Training, Recruitment and Professional Operations; Trooper Tedd M. Bergeron, Office of Criminal Investigations; Trooper Paul E. Appleman, Office of Personnel; Caroline J. Jarka (Administrative Officer 2), Planning, Research and Development; Chase A. Hedrick (Public Safety Intelligence Analyst), Office of Finance and Logistics; Karen M. Rojas-Weiler (Human Capital Management Senior Analyst) Office of Personnel; Lisa A. La (Administrative Professional 1) Office of Field Operations; Daniel L. Karcher (Maintenance Repair Worker 2) Office of Criminal Investigations; Tracey M. Gum (Administrative Officer 1) Office of Training, Recruitment and Professional Operations.

Robert Chiaramonte Humanitarian Award recipients: Trooper William Watson, Findlay District; Sergeant John R. Banta, Bucyrus District; Sergeant Jeffrey S. Carpenter, Cleveland District; Trooper Jacob A. Lambdin, Columbus District; Sergeant Rocky J. Hise, Cambridge District; Trooper David L. Ellis, Wilmington District and Trooper Timothy R. Martin, Jackson District.

District and GHQ Rice Leadership recipients: Sergeant Garrett R. Lawson, Findlay District; Sergeant Ryan D. Randall, Bucyrus District; Sergeant Andrew T. Topp, Cleveland District; Sergeant Stephen A. Murphy, Warren District; Sergeant Eric J. Devers, Piqua District; Sergeant David R. Chamberlin, Columbus District; Sergeant Warren N. Rawlings, Cambridge District; Sergeant Nathan J. Pabin, Wilmington District; Sergeant Bobby D. Brown, Jackson District and Sergeant Robert W. Stevenson, Criminal Investigations.

District and GHQ Electronic Technician of the Year recipients: ET3 Kraig A. Kent, Findlay District; ET3 James D. Jones, Bucyrus District; ET3 Christopher J. Coffman, Cleveland District; ET3 William J. Hummel, Warren District; ET3 Matthew D. Metzger, Piqua District; ET2 Rondal Mullins, Columbus District; ET3 Christopher L. Stroop, Cambridge District; ET2 Joshua J. Goins, Wilmington District; ET3 Steven D. Miller, Jackson District; ET1 Jeffrey R. Dezur, Central Install Office of Finance and Logistics.

District Motor Carrier Enforcement Inspector of the Year recipients: MCEI Lawrence E. Hampton, Findlay District; MCEI Richard J. Bittner, Bucyrus District; MCEI Richard D. Bell, Cleveland District; MCEI Luis A. Garcia, Warren District; MCEI Jalal Ben Messaoud, Columbus

District; MCEI William L. Mason, Cambridge District; Trooper Nelson C. Janney Wilmington District; Trooper Rebecca S. Sexton, Jackson District.

District Motor Vehicle Inspector of the Year recipients: MVI Lincoln A. Crow, (recently promoted to Motor Carrier Enforcement Inspector) Findlay District; MVI Michael J. Fleming, Bucyrus District; MVI David L. Guzowski, Cleveland District; MVI Gerald S. McQuown, Warren District; MVI James T. Call, Piqua District; MVI Wayne M. Shaw, Columbus District; MVI Tecarrie L. O'Brien, Cambridge District; MVI Jackie E. Bowling, Wilmington District; MVI Patrick A. Weaver, Jackson District.

District Patrol Family Recognition recipients: Kristina S. Menke, Findlay District; Jennifer Banta, Bucyrus District; Mallory Santiago, Cleveland District; Brittany Harrington, Warren District; David Hinderer, Piqua District; Sara Grim, Columbus District; Stephanie Hawkins, Cambridge District; Heather Utter, Wilmington District and Mendy Saunders, Jackson District.

District Distinguished Retiree recipients: Retired Sergeant Elias Jimenez Jr., Findlay District; Retired Staff Lieutenant John C. Shore, Bucyrus District; Retired Staff Lieutenant William D. Healy, Cleveland District; Retired Trooper Donald L. Kerr, Warren District; Retired Lieutenant Joseph A. Gebhart, Piqua District; Retired Lieutenant John D. Miller, Columbus District; Retired Lieutenant Richard C. Chesar, Cambridge District; Retired Lieutenant Clint G. Arnold, Wilmington District and Retired Staff Lieutenant Richard Scott Borden, Jackson District.

#