



Overview of the Kansas Highway Patrol Senate Transportation Committee

**Presented by
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Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I am Colonel Ernie Garcia, Superintendent of the Kansas Highway Patrol, and I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today.

Before I provide you with a brief overview of the KHP, I would like to welcome the many new members of this committee as well as those of you returning to serve in an arena of critical importance to the Patrol. As the Chairman knows, the Patrol has enjoyed a wonderful working relationship with this committee in years past. We look forward to working with you all, during the 2013 session.

- 1937, KHP created to arrest bank robbers and bootleggers and to reduce motor vehicle crashes through the enforcement of traffic laws.
- Principal function and mission continues to be focused on traffic safety.
- As the complexities of policing and technology have evolved, the Patrol has likewise enhanced its capabilities to meet the challenges of law enforcement in the 21st Century.
 - Patrol has evolved into a full service law enforcement agency providing specialized services to its troopers, the Kansas law enforcement community and public:
 - **Aircraft:** Topeka: 1 fixed wing Cessna 206, 1 fixed wing 182 and one Bell 407 helicopter, equipped with forward looking infrared (FLIR); Salina, 1 fixed wing Cessna 206 with FLIR; Hays, 1 fixed wing Cessna 206 with FLIR. The aircraft are used for traffic enforcement, manhunts, surveillance, pursuits and emergency blood relays.
 - **Breath Alcohol Unit:** trains KHP and other law enforcement officers in the detection and apprehension of impaired drivers. This unit also assists KHP troopers and other officers during DUI checklanes and saturation patrols by providing on-scene breath testing equipment.
 - **Capitol Police:** provides law enforcement services and security in and around the Capitol Complex. The Capitol Police has personnel stationed in the Capitol, as well as the Eisenhower, Landon, Memorial, Curtis, Docking, Labor, and Insurance buildings and the Judicial Center.

- **Critical Highway Accident Response Team:** responds to accidents involving commercial motor vehicles and other accidents involving multiple fatalities. The team is highly trained and provided with equipment that allows them to reconstruct accident scenes and determine contributing factors.
- **Domestic Highway Enforcement Team:** specially trained to apprehend drug, contraband and weapons traffickers. Personnel are assigned along known trafficking routes and assisted by drug-sniffing canines. This group also provides KHP Troopers as Task Force Officers with the FBI in Topeka and Wichita and the DEA in Kansas City, Salina and Garden City.
- **Emergency Operations:** represents the KHP at the State Emergency Operations Center during severe weather, other disasters and incidents of civil unrest. The KHP is responsible for coordinating the response of all law enforcement officers to large scale incidents.
- **Hazardous Devices Unit:** renders explosive devices safe. This unit's members are bomb technicians equipped to travel anywhere in the state to respond to bomb threats and diffuse devices if necessary. They routinely, with the assistance of bomb sniffing canines, provide security sweeps at large sporting events and other high profile gatherings.
- **Homeland Security:** administers the Homeland Security Grant Program. This group tracks the expenditure of grant funds to ensure that eligible expenses are made that enhance the overall security of the state. They serve as a central conduit for the state's seven, homeland security regions.
- **Kansas Highway Patrol Training Academy (Salina):** trains new troopers and provides mandatory in-service training to all KHP law enforcement officers annually. The academy also provides and/or hosts training for other law enforcement agencies. Because of its central location, many of its classrooms and cafeteria are utilized by other governmental entities to conduct training and meetings.
- **Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program/Motor Carrier Inspection:** ensures licensure and equipment compliance of commercial motor vehicles. This program focuses on ensuring drivers of vehicles and the vehicles they drive are in compliance with both federal and state law. This promotes safety amongst vehicles that could weigh up to 80,000 pounds and may be transporting hazardous materials across the state's highways.
- **Motor Vehicle Enforcement:** detects and recovers stolen vehicles. This program also includes the state's Vehicle Identification Number inspection process. Prior to registering/titling a vehicle in Kansas, an inspection of the VIN is conducted to ensure that neither the vehicle nor its components are stolen. This protects the consumer, the insurance industry and lending institutions.
- **Police Service Dog Unit:** tracks suspects, detects drugs and explosives. All of the Patrol's dogs are dual trained. They provide protection to the officer and dependent upon assignment, are able to detect the presence of drugs or bomb making components. They are capable of being transported by air, along with their handler anywhere in the state to enhance response times if necessary.

- **Protective Services:** provides security for the Governor and other dignitaries. These troopers are responsible for the safety of the Governor at the Capitol and Cedar Crest. They routinely make arrangements for the transportation of the Governor and other dignitaries as required.
 - **Public Resource Officers:** These officers are assigned to each of the Patrol's seven field troops and provide safety and education programs at to schools, various clubs and organizations and at special events. They also serve as the Public Information Officer for the troop in which they are assigned, working with both the print and video media.
 - **Special Response Team:** serves high-risk warrants, responds to barricaded subject calls and performs hostage negotiations/rescue. The members of this highly trained team are stationed throughout the state and are able to respond to any KHP or other law enforcement agency request for assistance, generally within a two hour window.
- Patrol remains dedicated to its principal function of promoting traffic safety while playing a critical role in the provision of many capabilities that are lacked by most agencies in the Kansas law enforcement community.
 - This spirit of cooperation amongst the law enforcement community in our state is unparalleled nationally and results in the greatest possible service to the citizens of Kansas.
- I want to briefly address a situation that doesn't fall under the purview of this committee, but, will certainly involve you in action on the Senate Floor.
- In the past few years, the KHP has struggled to acquire a significant number of applicants for trooper vacancies occurring through normal retirements. I believe the following factors have played a role in the challenges we have faced:
 - The state's ongoing fiscal crisis and overall reductions to the KHP's budget
 - Sporadic enhancement funding appropriated to hire troopers
 - The unpredictability of funding hampers recruiting efforts and frustrates potential employees who along with the KHP are left wondering when or if we will have funding for a class. I believe many seek employment elsewhere for this reason.
 - Unfortunately, many in the applicant pool want more money and a better work schedule than we offer
- KHP efforts to attract applicants:
 - Placing employment ads in medium and large newspapers
 - Television advertisement
 - Word of mouth advertisement by troopers
 - Attendance at career fairs

- Continued support and hosting of the American Legion's Cadet Law academy to "plant the seed" of interest in the KHP amongst high school students
- Creation of a Collegiate Law Program. This program is a partnership with all Kansas colleges and universities that provide a criminal justice program. We host a week long training for these students in an attempt to interest them in a career with the KHP. We currently have three individuals from this program in the final stages of our hiring process
- Improvement of the situation
 - Dedicated funding every fiscal year that allows us to hire a class or classes at the same time year in and year out
 - This maximizes the effectiveness of our recruiting efforts
 - Prospective applicants will know when we will be hiring and will not seek employment with any law enforcement agency as a result of inconsistent hiring timeframes
 - The KHP has requested and the Governor has recommended in our SYF 2014 budget that we be allowed to retain the annual transfer of \$500,000 from our academy fee fund to the SGF as a dedicated funding source to hire new troopers. The combination of these funds with money freed up through retirements should allow for us to establish a consistent hiring timeline.
 - When the time comes, I would appreciate your support of the measure

In addition to this brief overview, I think it is important that you receive more specific information on the Motor Carrier Inspection program that I mentioned earlier. It has been a subject of great interest in the Capitol the past few years. Captain Chris Turner, commander of the program, is with me today to provide you details on it.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today and would be happy to answer any questions you have now or following Captain Turner's presentation.

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