

Montana Trooper

President's Message



Sgt. Art Collins
President
AMT

Fellow members,

I am happy to report that there is not much to report since I last wrote to you. Truly, sometimes no news is good news.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for passing the dues increase. This is something the board, and I personally, agonized over for the past couple of years. I believe we held off on this decision for as long as we could. I promise that your money will not be spent frivolously. Every dime that the Board approves to be spent is debated and voted upon. Not every vote is unanimous, but every donation or fee we pay is with the best interest of the AMT and Highway Patrol in mind.

I would also like to thank everyone

that contributed to the Hope Project Winter Reunion Toy Drive. I know it was very short notice, but you all contributed about half of the gifts we needed. A big salute goes out to Trooper Joe Wyant. Joe is the new District 3 Coordinator. When he found out about the toy drive idea, he went to several different organizations in the area and raised around \$3,000 in contributions. I don't have a complete list of contributors, but I do know that the police and firemen in Butte and Anaconda, as well as the hospitals, blessed us greatly. We also had several of the local troopers attend the dinner with our wish families. We have several new Hope Project Coordinators across the state. I hope that if and when they come to you asking for your participation, you will make the time. I'm sure you will be happy you did.

During the last AMT Board meeting, we were approached by Erin Inman asking us to sponsor a training event this coming February, 2012. The training is called "Lethal Weapon - Vehicular Homicide" and is targeted at both law enforcement and prosecutors. We felt that this was important training for

all involved, and we would be wrong to not be involved. In the past, Erin has been able to insure that her training sessions have been a no cost opportunity for the sponsor to get their organization some recognition. Since this training is directly related to what we do for a living, it was a no brainer that we should be the primary sponsor. I hope those of you that have the opportunity to attend the training get a lot out of it.

Last, but not least, don't forget the Law Enforcement Torch Run coming up real soon. I hope all of us can make time to participate in some way. Whether you are a Leg Leader, a runner, a safety vehicle driver, a volunteer on some other level, or contribute to one of your friends that are running, you are appreciated. At the very least, please purchase a t-shirt to show your support. I believe the Torch Run is one of the best things the law enforcement community is involved in. I hope each of you takes an opportunity to become involved. As with the Hope Project, I'm sure you will be happy you did.

Until next time, stay sharp, work smart, and be safe. □

Montana Trooper

From the Attorney General



Montana
Attorney General
Steve Bullock

As 2011 draws to a close, alcohol-related crashes are down about 9% compared to 2010, and alcohol-related fatalities are down 13.5%. The 45 deaths on our state's highways where alcohol was a factor are still 45 deaths too many; yet, as we look to 2012, there are reasons for optimism.

I reported in my column for the fall 2010 issue of this magazine that the 24/7 pilot program was off to a great start in Lewis and Clark County. Since then, the positive results have only improved as the program has grown.

As a refresher, under 24/7 people arrested for a second or subsequent DUI charge can be ordered to undergo twice daily alcohol breath tests, or they can choose to wear a blood alcohol monitoring bracelet. Both are paid for by the driver, not the government. The

program is designed to not only make our communities safer, but to permanently change the behavior of the chronic offender.

Nearly 99 percent of tests administered by Lewis and Clark County during the pilot phase came back negative for signs of alcohol. Based on that success, I asked the 2011 Legislature to expand the program statewide. The result was House Bill 106, sponsored by Rep. Steve Lavin, R-Kalispell, a Montana Highway Patrol Sergeant in the Flathead who has seen fellow troopers injured, even killed, by impaired drivers.

HB106 passed with broad, bipartisan support, and the opportunity for statewide implementation began on October 1. Since then, eight counties have already launched the program: Yellowstone, Flathead, Butte-Silver Bow, Anaconda-Deer Lodge, Powell, Lincoln, Big Horn and Custer. A total of nine counties, including Lewis and Clark, are now running 24/7.

The positive results we witnessed during the pilot program are now being replicated throughout the state. In those nine counties, 10,962 tests have been administered, and some 99.41 percent have tested negative for alcohol.

These results speak for themselves.

Setting up this program has taken considerable effort from our local partners, but these statistics prove that it's possible to change the culture of drinking and driving in Montana – one person at a time. The law has been praised as a simple, low-cost and effective way to deal with repeat DUI offenders.

This is a program that not only changes behavior and save lives, but also saves taxpayer money. Every offender that we can keep in the program is one less offender sitting in our jails or unable to continue employment. It's also one less repeat drunk driver that our Patrol has to deal with.

In addition to the nine counties who launched the program initially, another 12 are working toward launching their own programs in February. We will be working hard throughout 2012 to support this program's growth to all of our state's counties

Anything we can do to keep Montana drivers – and our Montana Highway Patrol troopers – safe is a step in the right direction. As we look to 2012, let's all commit to further reducing the dangers on Montana's roadways. □

Montana Trooper

Colonel's Message



Colonel
Mike Tooley

This past year has been a very busy one for the Patrol, its troopers, and its Association. Association President Art Collins predicted as much in his message to the readership of the *Montana Trooper* in the spring edition.

The beginning of 2011 was very difficult with the then recent passing of Trooper David DeLaitre. Since that time, his father and his community have come together to name a portion of highway in his honor and to construct a memorial park in his memory. Not a day goes by that we don't think about David or his brethren that have fallen during our history, particularly the past four years. Thank you all once again for being pillars of strength for our organization during these times.

January saw the beginning of the 2011 legislative session. The Patrol and the DOJ made incredible progress in improving public safety by address-

ing Montana's historical DUI problem through low cost, simple, and effective means. If someone wonders about the effectiveness of this effort, it isn't hard to gauge. The clearest example is a side by side comparison of DUI fatalities due to alcohol between January and June of 2009 and January and June of 2011. During that timeframe in 2009, 49 persons were killed on Montana Highways including our own Michael Haynes #159. In 2011, the number was 13.

Clearly, Montanans have had enough of the old cultural acceptance of drinking and driving and have chosen a new culture of safety in that regard. In 2011, the legislature passed laws that backed up that change in culture. The constant presence of the Association was incredibly helpful in those efforts!

The fight to make roadways safer is far from over, but we at the Patrol will not give up. The new challenge is to prevent fatalities due to impairment from all causes including prescription and illicit drug abuse. In 2010 and 2011, Trooper Kurt Sager has spearheaded an effort to train all active personnel in Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement, also known as ARIDE. As of this month he and his fellow instructors have succeeded. Yes,

even the Colonel had to take and pass the class. The Montana Highway Patrol is the first state patrol in the nation to reach this level of training through all ranks.

This is important because drugged drivers are every bit as dangerous, but more difficult to detect using standard sobriety testing. They were even more difficult to prosecute successfully until now. In fact, while the alcohol involved fatality rate has held around forty percent, a recent review of fatality cases submitted for drug review has shown that more than seventy percent of drivers in fatal crashes have some level of impairing drugs in their system, and many of those individuals were in fact highly impaired.

Looking forward to the next year, we will work to continue efforts to make highways safer, while at the same time prepare for political transitions and another legislative session. In all of these efforts it seems that the AMT is the glue that holds it all together, and the one constant in the equation. As always, thank you for your support and guidance, for your dedication to the membership, and your belief that Montana is a place worth our collective efforts to serve and protect. □