

MINUTES OF ARKANSAS STATE POLICE COMMISSION MEETING
April 10, 2025

The Arkansas State Police Commission met on Thursday, April 10, 2025, at the Arkansas State Police Headquarters, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Commission Chairman Allison called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Commissioner John Allison, Chairman
Commissioner Jim Hinkle, Vice Chairman
Commissioner Neff Basore
Commissioner Steve Edwards
Commissioner Mike Akin
Commissioner Jeff Teague

MEMBER ON CONFERENCE CALL:

Commissioner Ken Reeves, Secretary

STATE POLICE PERSONNEL PRESENT:

Colonel Mike Hagar	Lt. Colonel Mike Kennedy
Lt. Colonel Jason Aaron	Major Stacie Rhoads
Major Ron Casey	Major Roby Rhoads
SA Christina Bussey	Hannah Marshall
Trooper Zachary Means	TFC Marshall Hill
Jenna Castleberry	Sergeant Nathan Williams
Lieutenant Seth Pinner	Captain Jeff Plouch
Eric Wacaster	Susan Tedford
Alexis Winters	Kalika Rogers
Dan Mack	Sherry Woods
Captain Randall Murphy	Sergeant Ray Gentry
Captain Joe Carter	Captain David Williams
Shelly Cantrell	Captain Chris Goodman
Captain Philip Hydron	Captain Craig Teague
Captain Kyle Drown	Lieutenant Jay McAllister
Lieutenant Josh Heckel	Corporal Taylor Elkins
Maegan Elkins	Captain Dustin Morgan
Trooper Blayn Lucas	Cindy Murphy
Joan Shipley	Phillip Warriner
Jonathan Nettles	Donna Humphries

OTHERS PRESENT:

Chris Bussey	Timothy Baker
Sarah DeBusk Griffith, AG Office	Sky Means

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Commission Chairman Allison led the pledge of allegiance.

NOTIFICATION OF MEDIA:

The media was notified of this meeting on April 1, 2025.

Commission Chairman Allison stated if the press is here, you are welcome.

MINUTES:

Commission Chairman Allison stated you have the minutes from the prior meeting. Commissioner Hinkle made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2025, regular monthly commission meeting. Commissioner Basore seconded the motion. Commission Chairman Allison stated we have a motion and second, any opposed, the motion carried.

Commission Chairman Allison stated we have some Official Commendations today.

Commission Chairman Allison stated on the phone we have Commissioner Reeves joining us today, welcome commissioner.

OFFICIAL COMMENDATIONS:

Colonel Hagar stated the first presentation is for Telecom Supervisor Maegan Elkins and Telecom Specialist Hannah Marshall, the overview will be presented by Captain Jeff Plouch.

On December 6, 2024, Arkansas State Police Troop L dispatch was made aware of a four-year-old that had been abducted in the city limits of Fayetteville. Dispatchers Maegan Elkins and Hannah Marshall received the BOLO and broadcasted it to Troop L, Troop H and Troop J. Dispatchers Marshall and Elkins took the coordinates provided by the Fayetteville Police Department and was tracking the phone of the suspect and mapped them out as he traveled south on I-49 then east on I-40. Corporal Taylor Elkins, who was in Troop L, traveled south on I-49 attempting to catch up with the suspect. As the ping continued east on I-40 Troop H, Trooper Dalton Lewis located the suspect vehicle and followed it until Trooper Logan Hatcher and Corporal Elkins could catch up. Trooper Britni Binam was waiting at the exit ramp. Trooper Lewis activated his blue lights, Trooper Hatcher pulled in front of the suspect as Corporal Elkins pulled to the side of the suspect and escorted the car to the right shoulder to prevent a possible pursuit. The suspect was removed from the car and placed on the ground and taken into custody. Trooper Binam took possession of the juvenile and kept him calm until he was picked up by Fayetteville Police Department.

The suspect was the biological father of the child but according to the mother had only seen him once before since he was born. She agreed to let him spend time with the child in Fayetteville at a hotel near her home. The visit was intended to be an overnight visit. The father had other intentions and attempted to take the child back to his family in Louisiana in an effort to recover the child support money he had given the mother. Fayetteville Police Department responded and took over the investigation. Without the extra effort of Telecom Supervisor Maegan Elkins and Telecom Specialist Hannah Marshall and along with the Troopers making this case a priority, this 4-year-old child would have been taken to Louisiana away from his mother.

Colonel Mike Hagar presented Telecom Supervisor Maegan Elkins and Telecom Specialist Hannah Marshall with Official Commendation Awards.

Colonel Hagar stated next up is TFC Matthew Walker and TFC Marshall Hill and the overview will be given by Lieutenant Seth Pinner.

On October 28, 2024, TFC Matthew Walker was contacted by his Sergeant Shane Alkire, and given information regarding a missing juvenile from Rankin County Mississippi that was possibly in Northwest Arkansas. TFC Walker called the Special Agent in Charge Wes from Mississippi and gathered more information on the missing juvenile. Special Agent Wes explained the missing juvenile was possibly kidnapped and the suspect was from Northwest Arkansas traveling in a Silver Dodge Charger. The Dodge Charger was being tracked by using license plate readers (LPRs). Sergeant Alkire gave TFC Walker two possible addresses where the missing juvenile could be. TFC Walker called TFC Marshall Hill, and they immediately went to work searching for the juvenile. By contacting the suspect's parents, TFC Walker and TFC Hill were able to track down the current address of the suspect and where the suspect worked. They also discovered the suspect was now driving a green Toyota pickup due to the suspect hitting a deer in the Silver Dodge Charger. TFC Walker and TFC Hill went to the suspects home address and were able to locate the silver Dodge Charger, with heavy front-end damage, in the driveway of the residence. Troopers attempted to make contact by knocking on the door several times, but no one answered. Troopers contacted neighbors and they advised that the suspect worked night shift. TFC Walker contacted Mississippi Special Agent Wes via phone to let them know about the vehicle. While on the phone, Mississippi Special Agent Wes advised they had an active warrant for the suspect for kidnapping and enticement of a child to meet for sexual purposes, and also advised the suspect met the juvenile on an app called reddit. One of the messages on the app showed the suspect was planning on picking the juvenile up and transporting him back to Arkansas to make the juvenile his "sex slave." TFC Hill contacted Highway Police Officer Tanner Drummonds via phone and requested that he drive by the suspects work to see if he could locate the green Toyota pickup. Once Officer Drummonds arrived on scene, he confirmed the vehicle was in the parking lot. TFC Hill requested Officer Drummonds remain on scene and keep the vehicle in sight. At the request of Mississippi Special Agent Wes, ASP Troopers called for a tow truck so the Charger could be secured at ASP Troop L Headquarters for proper processing. While waiting on the tow truck, TFC Walker saw the missing juvenile looking through the window. After several attempts, TFC Walker was able to successfully call the juvenile out of the residence. The juvenile confirmed his name and stated he was a runaway from Mississippi. The juvenile was placed in the back seat of TFC Walkers patrol

car and was transported to Troop L Headquarters, where Special Agent Wes was able to recover the child safely. The suspect was seen leaving his place of employment by Officer Drummonds. Sergeant Adam McInnis with the Bentonville Police Department made a traffic stop on the suspect and took him into custody. The suspect was taken to Troop L Headquarters where Sergeant Eric Lee and Special Agent Sor Lee took over the investigation. After concluding the interviews with the suspect, TFC Walker transported him to Benton County Sheriff's Office to be held on the Mississippi warrants. TFC Walker and TFC Hill showed great initiative to locate both the missing juvenile and suspect. Throughout this event, both troopers showed extreme diligence, dedication, and initiative in recovering the juvenile to ensure he was out of harm's way.

Colonel Mike Hagar presented TFC Matthew Walker and TFC Marshall Hill with Official Commendation Awards.

Colonel Hagar stated next up is Special Agent Christina Bussey and the overview will be given by Lieutenant Josh Heckel.

Lieutenant Heckel stated Sergeant Ray Gentry put Christina in for this award and to simply put it, to sum up this investigation, Sergeant Corwin Battle the commander of our ICAC Division summed it up best. Sergeant Battle said this is the worst case the taskforce has ever received as far as a predator. Lieutenant Heckel stated it all started in July 2024 when the Nevada County Sheriff's Department received a citizen complaint of an inappropriate sexual conversation between the thirty-four-year-old male suspect and the juvenile. The Nevada County Sheriff's Department reached out to ASP and Special Agent Christina Bussey was assigned this investigation. She conducted a search warrant on the suspect's account which revealed evidence that supported the allegations. What made this unique is that the suspect was a volunteer teacher and coach at a local private school in south Arkansas. So, after the conversation, SA Bussey continued her efforts to identify the individuals involved. On the first charge, the suspect was taken to the Nevada County Jail and was charged and given a \$250,000.00 bond. Most agents would have put an end to it right there, SA Bussey continued on with the investigation and it was discovered that the suspect had another victim. During the course of that investigation, around the Summer of 2024, the suspect had been communicating with a 13-year-old female. The suspect had first contacted her when she was 12. This investigation revealed the two exchanged pictures and ultimately, they had sexual intercourse. With the new information, SA Bussey prepared another arrest warrant for Rape and additional felony charges of Internet Stalking of a Child and 6 counts of Engaging Children in Sexually Explicit Conduct. When he was arrested on October 7, he was given a \$2 million bond, and he currently resides in the Nevada County Detention Center. But SA Bussey did not stop there, this investigation is still ongoing, she has identified almost 25 victims just in this state alone in south Arkansas. There have also been other victims that she has uncovered in Texas, Louisiana, Colorado, and Alabama and these range in age from 11 to 17 years.

Colonel Mike Hagar presented Special Agent Christina Bussey with an Official Commendation Award.

Colonel Hagar stated next is Trooper Zachary Means, and the overview will be presented by Sergeant Todd Harris.

Sergeant Harris stated Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, Colonel, and Command Staff good morning; I will give you a brief synopsis of the reasoning behind the nomination of Trooper Means. At approximately 2:12 p.m. on November 19, 2024, Trooper Means was on patrol on U. S. 79 between Pine Bluff and Stuttgart, there was a BOLO issue for an armed robbery that had happened on the Simmons Bank in Pine Bluff on University Avenue. At that point, knowing the area the way he does, Trooper Means knew there was only a limited means of escape for this individual. He set up in a spot where he could keep contact with what was coming out of Pine Bluff towards the Stuttgart area. At that time, he made contact through two separate troopers closer to the area who were able to get with the individuals at the bank and provide photographs and descriptions of everything we were looking for and the vehicle that had left. Trooper Means continued to patrol the area and continued to press for information, once he got what he needed he was able to locate that vehicle, which had taken an alternate route out of Pine Bluff towards Stuttgart. With the return tag he was given when he ran it through ACIC, he realized it was headed for Altheimer, it had an address in Altheimer which was between the two cities. Trooper Means was able to intercept that

vehicle and make an incident free arrest of the single suspect that was in the vehicle. The action of Trooper Means if you were there and you listened to the radio traffic, Trooper Means maintained his professionalism, maintained forethought and bearing, he was able to continue pushing the issue until he got everything he needed, which resulted in the arrest. The suspect was taken into custody without incident within thirty minutes of the robbery and during that time, a second set of evidence had been brought to light involving that same vehicle and same individual in a robbery of a convenience store the night before. With his forethought and knowledge of the area, his ability, his professionalism, Trooper Means was able to stop, detain, and incident free make an arrest. Sergeant Harris stated I am not sure, I am having to look back, I think there are others that are being possibly tied into this, I know we got two good arrests out of it. There was no chance for them to destroy any evidence and that made the case much easier to prosecute.

Colonel Mike Hagar presented Trooper Zachary Means an Official Commendation Award.

Colonel Hagar stated the final one is Trooper Blayn Lucas and the overview will be presented by Sergeant Nathan Williams.

Sergeant Nathan Williams stated good morning, Colonel, Chairman, Commissioners, during the year of 2024, Trooper Blayn Lucas arrested 105 DWI/DUI drivers, significantly more than the nearly 65 troopers assigned to Troop A. To put into perspective, during this time frame the second highest Troop A DWI arrest total was 47, so double the amount of anybody working around him. To add to this incredible statistic, Trooper Lucas was also responsible for 48 felony arrests and 120 misdemeanor arrests.

Trooper Lucas finished 2024 with 1,159 arrests and/or citations, 295 warnings, he investigated 63 collisions, 15 incident reports were taken, and had three pursuits that he was primarily responsible for. Throughout the year Trooper Lucas also spent 40 hours in court because of that situation, and another 40 hours assisting other agencies with various tasks.

In 2024 Trooper Lucas was assigned to the Troop A midnight shift which consisted of three supervisor changes. Even with the instability associated with changing supervisors, Trooper Lucas maintained a positive attitude and kept the mission of the Arkansas State Police by protecting human life and providing the highest quality of law enforcement services to the citizens of Arkansas. The actions by Trooper Lucas throughout the year undoubtedly prevented serious injury collisions by removing impaired drivers from Arkansas roadways.

Colonel Mike Hagar presented Trooper Blayn Lucas an Official Commendation Award.

Commission Chairman Allison stated congratulations to everyone.

Commission Chairman Allison stated division reports, Fiscal Report, Jenna Castleberry.

Jenna Castleberry stated good morning, Colonel, and Commissioners, we are $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through the fiscal year, everything is looking good, we are right on track. The regular session is ending next week, and our bill has made it through both the House and Senate. We did have a request for \$6.1 million for our fleet on the agenda this week and that was approved, we received final approval for that. Commission Chairman Allison asked how many cars will that buy? Ms. Castleberry stated 122. Commission Chairman Allison asked how many dollars did you say we got? Ms. Castleberry stated \$6.1 million.

Commission Chairman Allison stated Administrative Services, Major Roby Rhoads.

Major Roby Rhoads stated Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, Colonel Hagar good morning, the Administrative Services report for last month for Uniformed Noncommissioned we had two new hires, two voluntary resignations, and one retirement. The Commissioned transactions include one Sergeant promotion and five lateral transfers. We currently have six military deployments.

Major Roby Rhoads stated we are underway for the 2025A Troop School, and we have 132 applicants in the process already and we are not even a week into it, that is pretty good.

Major Roby Rhoads stated the Wellness Unit saw 29 individuals last month, had seven follow-up visits and two debriefs with 24 participants.

Major Roby Rhoads stated for the ASP Health Plan our ending fund balance is \$14,032,000.00.

Commission Chairman Allison asked Major Roby Rhoads to tell him about the Military Deployments, he asked are they all traditionally about the same or is there different forms. Major Roby Rhoads stated there could be three months and some of them are over a year, it just depends on what their assignments are and what their orders were. Commission Chairman Allison asked is this primarily National Guard. Major Roby Rhoads stated yes sir.

Commissioner Hinkle, quick comment about our last class graduation at the State Capitol, for those who could not be there, it was really a nice ceremony, it turned out well, I thought.

Commission Chairman Allison stated over 100 applicants at this point in time, that is very good. Major Roby Rhoads stated yes sir 132. Commission Chairman Allison stated you started promoting a while back, is that paying off for us. Major Roby Rhoads stated yes sir it is, our social media team does a great job and Sergeant Zach Owens if you spend five minutes with him, he is on the phone for four and a half minutes of that time. He is nonstop recruiting people, and Elizabeth Johnson does a fantastic job up there too.

Commissioner Teague asked how many do you have budgeted for? Lieutenant Colonel Mike Kennedy stated we are budgeted for 72, we will probably put 70 in our academy, 70 is kind of our cut off. Commissioner Teague stated good number to start with.

Commissioner Basore stated I understand you are getting a wide range of applicants not just from Arkansas but from other states. Major Roby Rhoads stated yes, we have heard from as far away as Michigan, I think.

Commission Chairman Allison stated Crimes Against Children, Kalika Rogers.

Kalika Rogers stated good morning, Colonel, Chair, Commissioners, the CACD Child Abuse Hotline received 5,742 calls in the month of March, with 2,680 of those being accepted for investigation. Kalika Rogers stated there were 10 child deaths reported, four of those were investigated where there were maltreatment issues, and 6 were assessed. Kalika Rogers stated the CACD investigations unit accepted 516 cases, closed 489 cases, with 122 of those cases being true, so that gave us a substantiation rate of 25% for the month of March.

Commissioner Edwards asked for the ones that are true, do they get turned over to DHS or what happens to them? Kalika stated yes sir, they automatically go to DHS and DHS determines whether they will open a case or not, they don't always open one though.

Commission Chairman Allison stated Criminal Investigations, Major Stacie Rhoads.

Major Stacie Rhoads stated good morning for the month of March, CID initiated 134 investigations, 75 of those were primary, two of those were secondary, and we assisted with 57 investigations to other agencies. We initiated 21 death investigations, six of those were homicides, we worked four officer involved shootings for the month of March, and we initiated two officer misconduct investigations.

Major Stacie Rhoads said normally I get up hear and praise some work, but man some of the commendations we heard with rescuing the kids, you know how that warms my heart. But in light of SA Bussey's commendation, you know a lot of work went into that, so one of the things that I kind of want to talk to you about is, I know I get up here and talk about our investigations but I want to kind of explain exactly what that means in terms of what that looks like. So, what does an agent do all day, what do they do all day and how do they spend their time. And some of the numbers that I want to talk to you about kind of explain some of that. So, just for the month of March, we made 65 felony arrests, we conducted 104 crime scene searches and that is like when we have the officer involved shooting, especially the one down here on Baseline, that encompassed a large area in the Walmart parking lot, across the street into a gas station and then down the road just a ways and that is a really big crime scene and we did 104 of those. We conducted 130 surveillance hours, that is if we are conducting a drug investigation, we will go and surveil the house and that takes a lot of time. We conducted 340 interviews, we executed 82 search warrants, we attended court 50 times and all through this, we also seized 4 pounds of fentanyl, we seized 20,140 grams of methamphetamine, 1093 grams of processed marijuana. There are a lot of other numbers that

go into this, the amount of evidence we collect, the undercover activity that we conduct, and right now we have seventy-seven working agents. So, I just kind of wanted to give you an overview of what our month looks like in CID. They do some outstanding work, and I just want to give you that information.

Commission Chairman Allison stated Highway Patrol, Major Ron Casey.

Major Casey stated good morning, Colonel, Chairman, Commissioners Highway Patrol activity for the month of March is as follows, troopers arrested 2,299 for criminal arrests, the total number of persons arrested was 1,553, troopers made 295 DWI arrests and four DUI arrests. Troopers issued 7,848 citations for hazardous driving; the total number of physical arrests was 8,376. Troopers issued 17,517 citations for March and assisted 3,345 motorists. Pursuits were way down this month, which is a good sign, we only had 27, I say only but they are in the right direction. They investigated 1,140 crashes, 23 of those being fatalities. Troopers recovered 18 stolen vehicles with an estimated worth of \$273,705.00, and they recovered stolen property of around \$7,900.00. Troopers drove 888,991 miles for the month of March. Major Casey stated we had 14 aircraft missions. DL/CDL tests given amounted to 20,505 and our dispatch centers took in 27,914 calls for service. Interstate Criminal Patrol seized \$89,321.00 in drug money, they confiscated 1,830 pounds of marijuana, 3.5 pounds of methamphetamine, 30.9 pounds of cocaine, they seized 298 units of pills including Xanax, Meloxicam, Hydrocodone, Xanax, Buprenorphine, 91 pills of Fentanyl, and some Oxycodone. They also seized countless amounts of other drugs including THC wax, THC gummies, mushrooms, and Kratom.

Commission Chairman Allison stated that is incredible, those numbers are just amazing.

Colonel Hagar asked Major Casey to mention the Gulf Coast HIDTA recognition of ICP. Major Casey stated we just went to the Gulf Coast HIDTA Convention in Biloxi and our ICP Team won National recognition for the Best Team in the United States and there were two individual awards. Ana Escamilla got Officer of the Year and Chris Short got the largest cash seizure for 2024. They racked up again, they did a great job.

Colonel Hagar stated just so you know that is the second year in a row they have received Team of the Year, which is a big deal. The Gulf Coast HIDTA basically covers the southeast conference, with all the agencies which there are 100s in that area. Tim Polansky is the executive director in the area, and in the day and age of DOGE, everybody is concerned about funding for projects like that and these task forces and Tim made the comment, the Arkansas State Police alone has the stats for the Gulf Coast HIDTA to continue that funding to make sure that we continue. He said if no other agency contributes, just what the Arkansas State Police alone does allows us to provide stats that we hope is going to keep the task force funded, so we are very proud of what they have done.

Commissioner Hinkle stated how many states we are talking about. Colonel Hagar stated 8 or 9, Lieutenant Colonel Aaron stated I was thinking 13. Colonel Hagar stated basically if you look from Texas east to the Mason Dixon line and down.

Major Ron Casey stated, and I will note that this is the second time Ana has got Officer of the Year.

Colonel Hagar stated they are Rock Stars in that world and rightfully so.

Commission Chairman Allison stated Regulatory and Building Operations, Captain Dustin Morgan.

Captain Dustin Morgan stated good morning, Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, and Colonel Hagar. During the month of March, the Identification Bureau and AFIS Section processed 22,480 civil background checks and 8,985 criminal fingerprint submissions. The Used Motor Vehicle Dealer Section processed 324 dealer applications. The PI Security Section processed 595 applications. The Bomb Squad handled three explosives calls and investigated one fire.

Colonel Hagar stated so you know and hats off to Captain Dustin Morgan, he has spent a lot of time at the Capitol during this legislative session, everybody at that table has. That is not a glamorous part of this job, but it is an important part of the job to make sure we get what we need. I know Dustin was at the Capitol past 10:00 p.m. the other night testifying in

committee. Thank you for all of the work that you have done, we appreciate it. Captain Morgan stated thank you, I appreciate that.

Colonel Hagar stated Mr. Chair if I could for a minute and asked Eric Wacaster to step forward for a minute. Colonel Hagar stated I want to formally introduce Eric Wacaster, he has been around DPS for a while now. When Joan thankfully accepted the Chief of Staff position, that vacated her ASP Chief Legal Counsel position, Eric took on that responsibility and we are blessed that he did. Eric has an interesting background for most attorneys. I think he will tell you first and foremost he is a cop, he spent a lot of time at Hot Springs PD, he was a police officer for years, a SWAT guy, he is a cop's minded guy. So, for us to have that mind set as legal counsel, we couldn't have asked for better. He has done a great job, former Deputy Director at Commission on Law Enforcement Standards, so we are blessed to have him, and I just wanted to thank Eric for taking this role on and introduce you guys formally. Eric stated appreciate it Colonel, I am just excited to get started and help out wherever I can.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Commissioner Hinkle stated Mr. Chairman I would like to make a motion that we retire into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. Commissioner Akin seconded, and the motion passed. Commission Chairman Allison stated we will be back shortly. The Commission went into Executive Session at 10:50 a.m.

At 11:40 a.m. Commission Chairman Allison stated we are back in session, and Colonel we have a little business here, a reinstatement of a former Trooper. Colonel Hagar stated yes sir, we have a request for reinstatement from Michael Whitman, Jr. and the recommendation is to reinstate. Commissioner Hinkle made a motion to reinstate Michael Whitman, Jr. Commissioner Basore seconded the motion. Commission Chairman Allison stated any discussion, all in favor say aye, any opposed, the motion carried.

Commission Chairman Allison stated the appeal hearing for former trooper Darren Henley will be held on July 10, 2025, upon adjournment of the ASP Commission Meeting, which will begin at 10:00 a.m.

NEXT MEETING:

Commission Chairman Allison stated the next commission meeting will be held on Thursday, May 8, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Commissioner Teague made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Hinkle seconded. With no further business, Commission Chairman Allison adjourned the meeting at 11:47 a.m.

Commission Chairman

Commission Secretary