STATEWIDE NEWS

Statewide decrease in fatalities

The Patrol continued its long tradition of diligently working to reduce fatal crashes in Kansas. The Patrol worked 250 fatal crashes in 2005, compared to 298 fatal crashes in 2004. A number of initiatives could be contributed to this reduction, including, but not limited to, educational efforts, strict enforcement by road troopers and the Patrol's participation in programs sponsored by KDOT, such as Special Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) and Roving Aggressive Violation Enforcement (RAVE). Another contributing factor is the continual increase of seat belt use. Seat belt use in Kansas has steadily increased every year since 2001, and 2005 statistics show a 69 percent usage rate, up from 68 percent in 2004.

DECREASED FATALITIES

Sheriff Matt Samuels Chemical Control Act

Col. Seck and KBI Director Welch were testifying for a proposed bill designed to reduce methamphetamine production when they learned of a great loss to the Kansas law enforcement community. On January 19, Greenwood County Sheriff Matt Samuels was fatally shot while serving a warrant at a suspected methamphetamine lab. Sheriff Samuels' tragic death emphasized the need to tighten access to cold medicines used to manufacture meth. The bill, renamed the Sheriff Matt Samuels Chemical Control Act, was passed, and it was lauded as a strong step forward in reducing meth production in Kansas.

NEW DRUG LAW

Harvey County Deputy Sheriff Kurt Ford killed

The state was devastated a second time by the death of a fellow law enforcement officer. Harvey County Deputy Sheriff Kurt Ford was killed when responding to a domestic disturbance. In the same incident, Hesston Police Detective Chris Eilert was shot multiple times.

The deaths of Sheriff Samuels and Deputy Ford are grim reminders of the dangers faced by law enforcement officers each day. Their deaths also reinforce our convictions to serve and protect the citizens of Kansas.

OFFICERS KILLED

Troopers support hurricane relief

Hurricane Katrina's damaging effects on the Louisiana and Mississippi coastlines prompted the largest relief mobilization in American history. Six Kansas troopers answered the call when asked if they would join relief efforts in Harrison and Hancock counties in Mississippi.

Lt. John Marmon spent 28 days in Hancock County, where he led the revitalization of the county's Emergency Operations Center. Lt. Marmon participated in two deployments through Kansas Emergency Management and the Emergency Management Assistance Compact.

Lt. Dek Kruger, Master Trooper Doug Shearer, Master Trooper Kirk Schureman, Trooper Robert LeVelle and Trooper David Stahl went to Harrison County with the Kansas Law Enforcement Task Force No. 4, Kansas Unified Response and Recovery Team. These troopers provided general law enforcement assistance, including:

HURRICANE RELIEF

- Responding to medical calls and alarms
- Assisting at traffic crashes
- Providing humanitarian assistance
- Working security check points
- Performing traffic stops
- Directing traffic
- Patrolling shelters

Numerous other Patrol employees spent personal time providing relief assistance to the area.