

## MINUTES OF THE SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Mike Petersen at 8:30 am on Wednesday, February 11, 2015, 546-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Senator Anthony Hensley – Excused

Senator Jeff King – Excused

Committee staff present:

Jill Shelley, Legislative Research Department

Whitney Howard, Legislative Research Department

Adam Siebers, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Carolyn Long, Kansas Legislative Committee Assistant

Scott Wells, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Major Mark A. Bruce, Interim Superintendent, Kansas Highway Patrol

Others in attendance:

[See Attached List](#)

### **Presentation by**

Chairperson Petersen opened the meeting by welcoming Major Mark A. Bruce, Interim Superintendent, Kansas Highway Patrol (KHP). Major Bruce in turn introduced Captain Randy Moon, Interim Assistant Superintendent, KHP.

Major Bruce began his presentation with a brief background of the KHP. In 1937 the KHP was created to arrest bank robbers and bootleggers, and to reduce motor vehicles crashes ([Attachment 1](#)).

Today, their principal function continues to be focused on traffic safety and their current goals are:

- Reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes through enforcement of impaired driving and occupant protection laws;
- Promote the use of child restraints and safety belts through educational programs and enforcement;
- Deter motorists from driving impaired and arrest impaired drivers;
- Vigorously pursue, apprehend, and prosecute those who utilize Kansas highways for criminal purposes;
- Improve service and enforcement activities by developing programs and incorporating technologies that enhance public safety; and
- Enhance public relations through community involvement.

The KPH has evolved into a full service law enforcement agency providing:

- Aircraft in Topeka, Salina, and Hays which are used for traffic enforcement, manhunts, searches for injured or missing persons, surveillance, pursuits, and emergency blood relays.
- Breath Alcohol Unit in Salina provides training for KHP and other law enforcement officers.

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Unless specifically noted, the individual remarks recorded herein have not been transcribed verbatim. Individual remarks as reported herein have not been submitted to the individuals appearing before the committee for editing or corrections.

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- Capitol Police provide law enforcement services and security in and around the Capitol Complex.
- Critical Highway Accident Response Team responds to commercial motor vehicle accidents and other accidents involving multiple fatalities.
- Domestic Highway Enforcement Team personnel are specially trained to apprehend drugs, contraband, and weapons traffickers.
- Emergency Operations team represents the KHP at the State Emergency Operations Center and the KHP is responsible for coordinating the response of all law enforcement officers to large-scale incidents.
- Hazardous Devices Unit renders explosive devices safe anywhere in the state.
- Homeland Security administers the Homeland Security Grant Program.
- Kansas Highway Patrol Training Academy is located in Salina and provides training for new troopers and annual mandatory in-service training to all KHP officers.
- Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program/Motor Carrier Inspection ensures licensure and equipment compliance of commercial motor vehicles.
- Motor Vehicle Enforcement detects and recovers stolen vehicles, in part through the state's Vehicle Identification Number inspection process.
- Police Service Dog Unit tracks suspects and detects drugs and explosives.
- Protective Services is responsible for the security of the Governor and other dignitaries.
- Public Resource Officers are assigned to each of the Patrol's seven field troops and provide safety and education programs at the local level.
- Special Response Team members throughout the state respond to KHP or other law enforcement agency requests for assistance.

Major Bruce said the KHP is dedicated to promoting traffic safety while playing a critical role in the provision of many capabilities that most agencies in the Kansas law enforcement community lack. Major Bruce then turned his attention to the struggle the KHP has encountered to fill trooper vacancies due to retirements. He believes that the state's ongoing fiscal crisis, sporadic enhancement funding to hire troopers, and the desire of applicants to have more money and a better work schedule have all played a role. Troop numbers have gone from 487 members in 2005 to a low of 410 in 2014 ([Attachment 2](#)). They currently have 20 openings with 53 eligible for retirement in 2015. In an effort to improve the situation, the KHP requires a specific pay plan that allows them to compete for qualified applicants. They also plan an aggressive recruiting program consisting of:

- A full-time recruiter,
- Employment ads in medium and large newspapers,
- Television advertisements,
- Attendance at career fairs,
- Working with local military officials,
- Supporting and hosting the American Legion's Cadet Law Academy, and

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- Creation of a Collegiate Law Program with all Kansas colleges and universities with a criminal justice program

In an effort to boost morale within the troop, a Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP) is being proposed in **HB 2288** to allow retirees the option of deferring their retirement for three to five years and putting those retirement funds in DROP, withdrawing those funds in a lump sum upon final retirement. In a recent survey, KHP morale was based on the pay structure, the organizational structure, and the DROP program. Major Bruce stated that until he is confirmed, he is not in a position to make any changes to the organizational structure. He provided information on higher salaries for troopers in nearby states, particularly troopers with years of experience.

Major Bruce, responding to a question from the Committee regarding candidates, stated drug use was the number one disqualifier of applicants, combined with information obtained from the questionnaire and polygraph.

Major Bruce was thanked for his presentation.

The Chairperson moved for the approval of the Minutes for February 3, 2015, February 4, 2015, and February 5, 2015. Moved by Senator Donovan, seconded by Senator Fitzgerald that the Minutes be approved as presented. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 12, 2015.