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THE POST DISPATCH

THE LATEST NEWS AND UPDATES FROM
COLORADO POST

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

What Does "To Serve" Mean?

While I was attending the memorial service for Officer Eric Talley, a staffer for one of the VIP's in attendance asked me how law enforcement in Colorado was doing. Only one word seemed appropriate: "Shellshocked." I explained that the last year had been especially difficult on our peace officers, dealing with the stressors of the pandemic, the civil unrest, negativity from nearly every quarter of society, yet they have continued to serve honorably and with distinction. And then to lose a Brother serving so bravely, literally laying down his life to save those in his community, in spite of the negativity directed at his chosen profession. The cumulative effect, I explained, has been draining. Difficult. Arduous, even.

This past year has caused me to reflect on what it means "to serve." Like I am sure many of you have done, I have looked around to see what else I might be successful at. I've considered business ventures and the private sector. Heck, I've even seriously considered selling everything I own and vagabonding around the US on my motorcycle. But I keep coming back to a simple concept: if not me, then who? If I don't serve my community, then who will? And will that person do justice to the



community I love? It's not that I am irreplaceable, because that is certainly not the case. But I know I am fighting the good fight, honorably and with distinction. Would the next person do it? I'm honestly not ready to find out.

The same is true of your communities. Your communities deserve good peace officers who are willing to stand between them and those who would do them harm. Your communities deserve peace officers who will serve them in the most noble sense. Your communities deserve peace officers who will serve with honor and distinction. If not you, then who? Who else will be willing to step up to truly serve?

Who else will have your dedication and sense of duty?

It would not be honest of me to claim that the negativity directed at law enforcement is going to diminish or end any time soon. It's not. Like many things in life, what some choose to say is out of our control. We must respect, though, that it is their constitutional right to say it, no matter how much we might disagree. It is unfortunate that this negative noise distracts from the good work our profession accomplishes daily. Ultimately, all that we have control over is ourselves, so answer these questions:

- Did I do my absolute best for my community today?
- Did I treat everyone I encountered with the dignity they deserve?
- Are there ways for me to improve, to do better tomorrow?
- And, most importantly, did I do the right thing, at the right time, for the right reasons?



By focusing on these concepts, our collective actions will drown out the negative noise. The community members who encounter us will know the truth, and that is what really matters. We will get through these turbulent times together. Support one another, and our calling. If you see someone stepping across the line, do or say something in order to maintain our collective integrity.

Lastly, I would ask that you keep in mind the results from a recent USA Today poll showing that the majority of Americans trust law enforcement, at 69%, coming in second to only trust in the clergy.



There is still a long a way to go, but we are on the right track. Keep it up and don't lose hope!



ATTORNEY GENERAL PHIL WEISER'S REMARKS

Overcoming a Mental Health Crisis Together

Over the last year, our State has faced major challenges—and our law enforcement professionals have worked to adapt to a pandemic, economic disruption, a contentious election season, and much more. Amidst these challenges, and because of them, we also confronted a mental health crisis.

Over the last year, reflecting increased trauma and mental health strains, we witnessed ever increasing challenges of substance abuse, including record overdose deaths. Most of those overdose deaths are from opioids, which is a major challenge facing our state and POST. As the Attorney General's Office's litigation against irresponsible drug companies who marketed opioids produces settlement

funds, we will be able to support a range of opioid abatement efforts. Such efforts will include, for example, more support for Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) in jails, continued support for the distribution of Narcan by police officers, and education/prevention efforts. As such opportunities arise, POST will work to support them and train law enforcement about relevant opportunities and challenges.

We also must recognize that mental health challenges touch the law enforcement profession as well. Last year, we lost more peace officers to death by suicide than on the job. As with teens and our society more broadly, a core element of this challenge

relates to the stigma around discussing mental health and wellness. To address this challenge, POST has set up a special work group on wellness, which is working to develop curriculum in this area, and looking for ways to address this critical challenge. Another outcome of the pandemic is pressure on budgets at all levels of government. That means, for our rural communities, in particular, that they are being asked to do more with less. To meet this challenge, we are seeing - and are likely to see more - cooperation and collaboration efforts. At POST, we want to encourage and support such efforts, including providing support for teams that backfill one another so they can take part in valuable hands-on and experiential training (such as a de-escalation training we are developing and that is responsive to the federal government requirement). We are also supporting critical regional capital improvement projects, such as a recently opened practice shooting range in Grand Junction that supports a range of agencies already working well together.

Finally, as we work to improve our criminal justice system and build trust in law enforcement, POST has an important role to play. POST has worked on a number of important initiatives to promote public safety, such as a public service announcement effort to get out the word about safe gun storage. On the training front, POST is working to support and train law enforcement officers who interact with individuals facing mental health challenges.



IN 2020

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Finding New Ways to Do Business

In this quarter, Compliance hired two new staff members, Megan Dimpsey and Janelle Moore, who are featured in the newsletter. We continue the hiatus from conducting skills inspections of the law enforcement training academies due to the pandemic, however, we plan to resume when it is safe to do so. Our team has been on site at a few academies to administer written exams. Otherwise, we have continued conducting business remotely.

We recently approved the Fort Collins Police Department academy and we are reviewing Western Colorado Law Enforcement Academy – Montrose for a proposed basic academy. We also have a request for a new academy from Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office. The team is currently handling compliance issues with two community college academies concerning a lack of appropriate lesson plans.

The transition to Benchmark Analytics has changed the way we are doing day-to-day business and the conversion has proven challenging. However, we continue facilitating Test Outs, administering exams, and certifying peace officers.

There are some upcoming POST Rule revisions that will impact academies, so please stay informed.

New Hires

Megan Dimpsey, Compliance

Coordinator: My father was in the Navy for 20+ years, so I've lived in a handful of places throughout my life. I did most of my "growing up" in Aurora, Colorado, though, after he retired. I graduated from Arizona State University in 2017 with a B.S. in Parks and Recreation Management from the Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions. Shortly after moving back home, I started working for the State with Colorado Parks and Wildlife in their Law Enforcement section.



I now live in Littleton with my soon-to-be two-year-old black lab, Forrest, who loves making appearances during Teams meetings. I'm sure you'll be seeing him around, too! We like to wake up early on the weekends when the weather is good for hikes around Deer Creek Canyon, and I am definitely hoping that we can soon cap off the day sunning ourselves on local brewery patios with friends. I am excited to be a part of the Compliance team and Colorado law enforcement in general!



Steven "Steve" Eckelberry, Compliance

Investigator: Prior to working for the Department of Law, I was a police officer for Colorado State University, serving as a Field Training Officer. I was born and raised in Colorado and am an avid skier and mountain biker.

Janelle Moore, Compliance Specialist: As a retired Sergeant for the Frisco Police Department, I am happy to be in an environment where I can further my career supporting the role of law enforcement in our society. I enjoy finding new ways to address situations and resolve complex

issues. After teaching multiple areas of study at Frisco and the Red Rocks Police Academy, I realized I had a passion that went beyond being a police officer. Through a series of fortunate events, I became a part of the POST team.

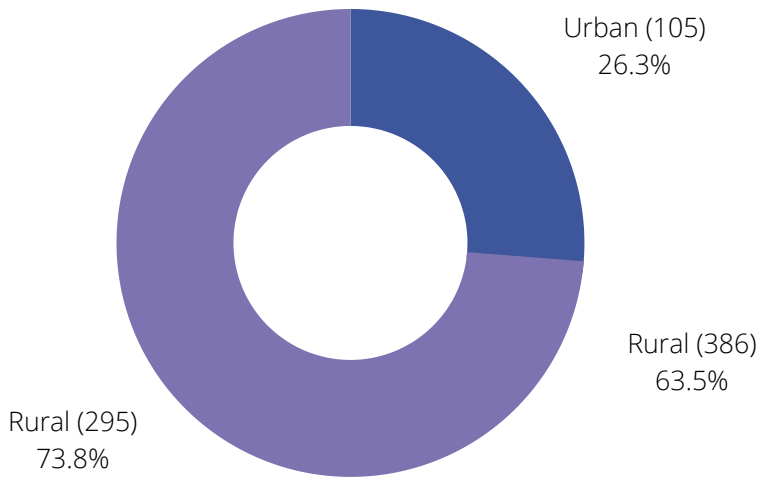
I am originally from Connecticut and I grew up in Columbus, Ohio (Go Buckeyes!). I recently relocated from being a Summit County resident for the past eight years to beautiful Morrison, where I enjoy spending time with my fiancé and two (soon to be) stepsons, snowboarding, and reading. Thank you all for welcoming me to this fantastic team!



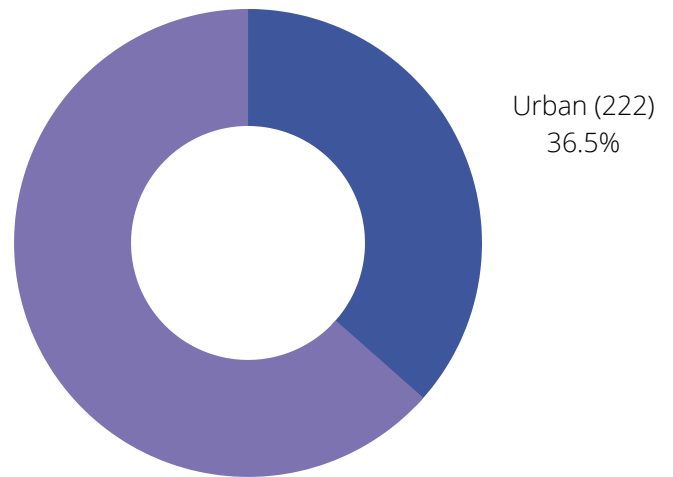
FY21 Grant Funding to Date

A total of 38 classes have been held throughout the state since July 1, 2020, paid for by the POST Training Grant, resulting in a total of 608 peace officers trained. There have also been a total of 400 scholarships provided to peace officers. The total number of training hours for both classes and scholarships is 25,155. There have been a total of 136,619 courses completed (officers trained) totaling 129,328 hours through the PoliceOne Academy paid for with POST grant funds.

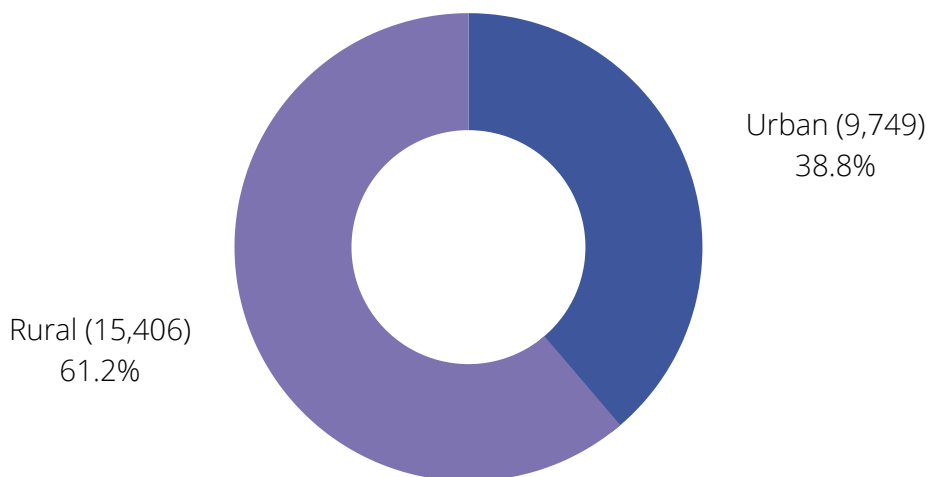
400 SCHOLARSHIPS PROVIDED



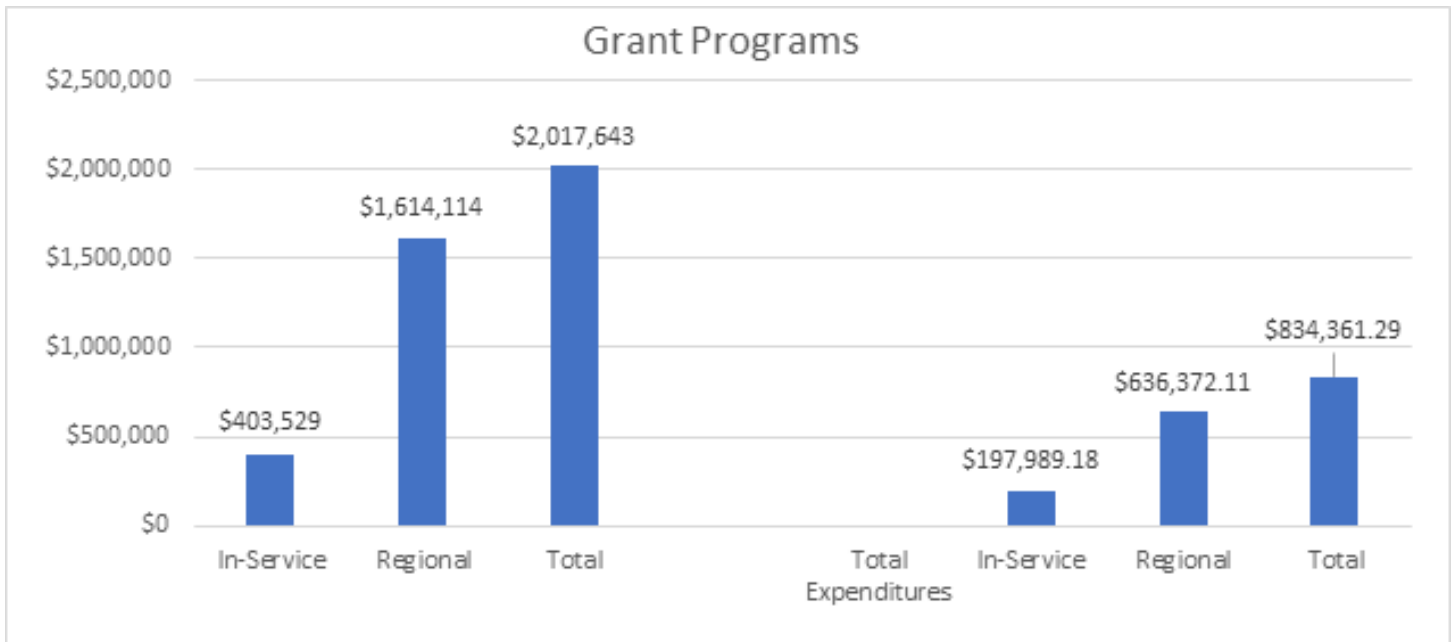
608 OFFICERS TRAINED



25,155 TRAINING HOURS PROVIDED



Between both grant programs, 41.35% has been expended to date for the FY21 grant year which began July 1, 2020.



POST grants staff have processed 16 purchase orders to date for the Rural and Small Academy Scholarship Grant Program. These represent a total of \$89,408 in grant awards pending the cadet academy completions.

POST grants staff have reimbursed a total of \$14,800 to date for law enforcement individuals to attend DU's Public Safety Leadership Development course. This represents eight officers who have completed the course. Several more scholarships are pending reimbursement for those scheduled to attend the trainings in March and May 2021.

POST grants staff have reimbursed a total of \$70,218 of the \$253,350 which was awarded for the FY21 Capital Improvement Grant Program. All reimbursements must be submitted to POST by June 15th (for processing by June 30th).

POST is the Independent Credentialing

Body to certify that law enforcement agencies have met certain criteria in order to be eligible for U.S. Justice Department discretionary grants funds. We have received and approved 99 certification applications to date.

The Grant's team is in the process for the next round of grant applications. Grant applications are being accepted from March 1 – 31st, 2021 for the Capital Improvement, In-Service, Regional, and Rural and Small Academy Scholarship programs. The POST Grant Subcommittee will meet sometime in April to review the grant applications and funding decisions will be made at the June 4th POST board meeting.



Benchmark Tips

- **Training videos.** Video training is now available for the Benchmark training module. It is a companion piece to the PowerPoint presentation that has been released earlier. To access the video training and other Benchmark resources, please [VISIT OUR WEBSITE](#).
- **Training histories.** Training coordinators still cannot access the training histories for their employees. A permanent fix for that will be in place by April 30th. Agencies will get a notification with more details via email.
- **Entering training.** When entering Training History events (In-Service training), remember that those training classes should always have the "Complete" status. Since all Training History courses have occurred in the past, they can't be listed as "In-Progress." They are set to "Complete" by default.
- **Uploading certificate copies.** All users will find a button on their "My Training" page called "Upload Proof of Certification." This appears to allow them to upload a copy of a course certificate. However, we do not support this functionality and will not accept such submissions. Instructions for properly uploading a course certificate can be found [HERE](#).

SME OF THE QUARTER



Paul Gregory, POST Firearms SME Committee Chair

Firearms SME Committee values quality training that is realistic and relevant. Many of our members are instructor trainers, who teach proper strategies anywhere from academy, to agency in-service, to firearms instructors' schools and more. Keeping up with current methods of instruction, adult learning techniques and maintaining high shooting standards is critical to us. However, sometimes these things get overlooked. Once you become an instructor, it's easy to stop your education because of other priorities. Remember though, at a minimum, instructors should be attending a vetted

firearm/instructor development school annually. Try to diversify your experience and seek out schools that stay current with industry trends. Also, consider who can follow in your footsteps as a firearms instructor. Recruiting new folks and paving a way for them to succeed will only benefit your agency.

Train hard yourself, but train them even harder!

If you are a dedicated expert and interested in joining the Firearms Subject Matter Expert Committee, see our preferred qualifications [HERE](#).

POST BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

March 26 Session

The POST Board held its quarterly meeting on March 26, where the certifications of five peace officers were revoked for untruthfulness. The Board voted on modifying seven rules (Rule 5, Rule 8, Rule 9, Rule 17, Rule 21, Rule 28 and Rule 31). If approved by the Secretary of State, these new rules will go in effect on 05/15/2021.

The most significant changes are the following:

- **Rule 21.** Will require entities that would like to create a new law enforcement training academy to undergo a review of the full POST Board prior to application. Similarly, existing academies will undergo a review by the full POST Board every five years.
- **Rule 31.** Was created to comply with changes to the law in SB20-217. It gives POST the ability to levy fines or other

administrative sanctions for violations of POST Rules.

POST continues to work on mental health curriculum, database creation per SB20-217 and job task analysis. Benchmark records management system transition is not yet complete, but with POST guidance, Benchmark team is improving the existing features and developing the new ones. To learn more about POST projects and accomplishments in 2020, see the [ANNUAL REPORT](#).

