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THE POST DISPATCH

THE LATEST NEWS AND UPDATES FROM
COLORADO POST

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

A Legacy That Continues To Go On

At the Colorado Fallen Heroes Foundation Gala at the beginning of October, I ran into a dear friend I only get to see on rare occasions. Dave gave me the news that after 31 years, a whopping 62 academy sessions and approximately 2,000 recruits, he was retiring as an academy firearms instructor. This conversation made me think about legacies...

A common misconception of legacies is that they are the exclusive domain of agency executives and command staff. While these folks traditionally may consider what their legacies will be more than the average line staff, that does not mean they are the only ones who leave a legacy.

It's a common misconception that legacies are the exclusive domain of agency leadership and command staff.

In many ways, the legacy Dave has created is immeasurable, and it had nothing to do with rank and everything with who he is as a person. Dave retired from his agency as a Corporal after 41 years of dedicated service. Yet, he had a tremendous impact on each recruit that went through his program. I originally met Dave when I attended a POST Firearms Instructor School in 1999,



where Dave was the lead instructor. The week before the instructor school, my division had a spot in the course, but no one to go. Being a lifelong martial artist, and my detention division's lead arrest control instructor, I had no desire to become a firearms instructor and was quite content going to the range only for the required training, qualifying in the low 80 percent range. My division commander had a different idea, though, and ordered me to go to the course. The catch was that all of the course students had to pass an initial certification on the first day of the class with at least a 90% score. How was I supposed to improve by 10% in the span of one week? Predictably, I couldn't. To make matters worse, I had the worst qualification of my life. Not only did I fail, but I had failed epically. I had no idea how I was going to

explain to my division commander that I had gotten kicked out of the course in the first hour!

Dave and I spoke, and he gave me until the end of the week to meet the 90% minimum passing qualification score. Since the instructor course heavily focused on diagnostics and coaching, along with some additional input from Dave, I happily passed with a 92% on the last day of the course! Dave not only helped me build the skills I needed, but through his attitude and leadership sparked a desire to become the best firearms instructor I could possibly be. Dave allowed me to come teach as an assistant instructor at the academy with him and his team. I eventually became a POST Full Skills Instructor and got on the academy's payroll. When I attended my own academy, I took second place in firearms, just 0.45% behind a retired Marine Corps Sergeant Major. What a difference for someone who had been an average shooter just a few years prior!

My story is just one of literal thousands, because Dave impacted so many. **Not only is Dave's legacy measured in his students, but also in their students, and all those whose lives were saved due to the skills he taught.** And as a former 12-year member of the POST Firearms Subject Matter Expert Committee, Dave has had a direct impact on all academy students and the communities they have served. While the ripple of this impact is already huge, it doesn't even begin to consider the impact of all of his positive interactions with the community as a peace officer over his 41 years of service.

I would encourage all of us to think about our legacies. Whether you want to or not, regardless of your rank or position, you will leave a legacy. **It is never too early in your career to consider our mark on others.** What is it going to be? Are you going to be remembered by your community as a protector? As a peace officer who cared about them? As a dedicated public servant who placed service before self? As a person who helped others succeed? Will your specialty focus on mentoring kids, or keeping our roads safe for everyone? What will people remember you for?

As I look back on my career, I am most proud of two things: seeing people I used to lead who have now entered leadership positions, and having friendly, meaningful conversations with those I previously dealt with in the criminal justice system. Seeing the success of others has truly made the challenges of the last 26 years worthwhile.

What will your legacy be?



Design-Thinking Approach to Academies

At the Department of Law, we have focused on how we can be truly innovative by using what is often called “design-centered thinking.” Design-centered thinking involves taking a hypothesis, building a prototype, testing it, deciding whether to pivot or persevere, and then iterating the initial prototype. For many of us, this is a new concept and a new way to approach problem solving. But if we are willing to embrace **this approach**, it **can provide a valuable structure for spurring innovation and testing new ideas**. In this Dispatch, I introduce the design-centered thinking method and how it is currently informing the redesign of law enforcement training curriculum project that I have discussed before in earlier Dispatch newsletters.



A core theory and first step of design-centered thinking is that it is worth starting with a “minimum viable product” or what we might consider a prototype. The critical insight from this approach is that a “good enough” prototype is often a better way to start than waiting for the perfect product early in the development phase.

The second step is to test the prototype by inviting users to try it. The theory of the minimum viable product is that the prototype need not be perfect; rather, it only needs to be good enough to generate feedback. **The third step** is to incorporate the feedback into an improved version of the prototype. In the best cases, that feedback leads to an improved prototype. In the other cases, the feedback leads to the conclusion that the prototype is not viable and a complete pivot is required. In any case, the reformulation or revision of the hypothesis starts the cycle all over again.



POST and the Department of Law are together using the practice of design thinking in our work developing a redesigned law enforcement academy training program. The current curriculum model, which has not undergone a comprehensive end-to-end revision in over 40 years, emphasizes hard skills (like driving and firearms) over emotional intelligence. The training historically relied on lectures rather than adult-learning methodologies such as experiential learning. Finally, lesson plans are different at every academy.

Standardizing curriculum modules and incorporating adult-teaching methodologies will improve the quality of law enforcement training across the state. And that’s why our POST Director, Bo Bourgerie, has pushed for us to make these impactful changes.

The process to develop a redesigned law enforcement academy curriculum will put the design-centered thinking approach into action. The underlying hypothesis that we will test is that we can improve both how we train law enforcement officers and what law enforcement training looks like. Critical to this work is the integration of core mindsets throughout the curriculum. I reviewed these mindsets in a [speech to the Colorado Mountain College Law Enforcement Training Academy](#), but some mindsets include ethical decision making, effective communication, and reducing, preventing, and managing behaviors associated with conflict.



Using a design-centered thinking approach means that we will start by developing a few prototypes of parts of the curriculum – called modules. We will test out the modules, collect feedback, improve the modules, and then develop and test new ones using the same system. As part of this process, we will be able to pilot and test

various components of the curriculum including the mindsets and different instructional methodologies. This will ultimately result in a more holistic curriculum that meets the needs of academies across the state and one that more comprehensively incorporates experiential learning into the curriculum. We also expect that **the redesigned curriculum will help facilitate better law enforcement relationships with the community given its renewed emphasis on emotional intelligence, ethical decision making under stress, and situational awareness.** At our recent POST Board meeting, we talked about this goal and a range of strategies that are already advancing that goal, including three foundational courses (ABLE, ICAT, and EDMUS) we are already using (and that were praised by the [Durango Herald](#)).

To lead this redesign effort, Gwen Burke is joining our team. Gwen has a long, accomplished background as a law enforcement officer, academy instructor, and academy director. Her wisdom and perspective will be critical to the success of this project so keep an eye out for outreach from Gwen as she seeks feedback on our efforts.

I appreciate that many of you regularly and naturally use the build-test-iterate model. Using this approach will help us operate in a more innovative and responsive manner, achieving better outcomes for us all. **As always, feel free to follow up with thoughts and suggestions.**

[POST Staff Contact List](#)

Academy Safety & Anti-Hazing

For the past couple of decades, the media has highlighted concerns regarding several potential safety issues for college students and the topic of hazing has come at many campuses. We have all heard of tragic outcomes involving various fraternities and sports teams. However, none of this translated to POST academies. Until now. POST Rule is intended to protect academy recruits. Ironically, the standards inferred, but never explicitly stated, that training was required to be conducted safely. In addition, POST did not have any prohibitions against hazing.

POST has a duty to ensure academy training is conducted with safety, purpose, and according to rule.



Effective November 15, 2023, POST Rule 21 states that “all academy training must be conducted in a safe manner.” Also, hazing is defined as “any conduct whereby an academy recruit is caused to suffer or be exposed to an activity which a reasonable person would deem cruel, abusive, humiliating, oppressive, demeanor or harmful, which lacks a legitimate training or disciplinary purpose or outcome.” **POST is currently developing an anti-hazing policy and training for academies to implement on January 1, 2024**, which will be presented to the Board for approval at the December meeting.

POST is also developing a reporting system for recruits to provide notification of hazing concerns. The preference is that recruits will work with their respective academy about concerns, but if they fear retribution, they can go straight to POST. POST will continue working collaboratively with law enforcement academies and provide technical assistance in improving policy, training, and safety.

For questions or concerns, please contact the Compliance Team at POST.



POSTCertification@coag.gov

POST Firearms SME: Red Dot Sights

Changes are coming to Firearms Full Skill Requirements! In response to the increasing number of agencies across Colorado using Red Dot Sights (RDS), POST will require all academy Firearms Full Skill Instructors to complete 16 hours of POST Approved RDS Instructor training, effective January 1, 2024, in addition to other current training requirements. This same requirement will go into effect for Assistant Skills Instructors on January 1, 2025.

As part of this effort, the Firearms SME Committee developed an RDS Instructor course curriculum. Starting January 1, 2024, RDS Instructor courses must go through the

POST Subject Matter Expert (SME) Committee approval process per POST Rule 25 to be used for academy instructor approval. Instructors who can demonstrate completion of a 16-hour RDS instructor course prior to January 1, 2024, will not need to complete additional training; they will be “grandfathered” into approval.

“As of January 1, 2024, RDS Instructor courses must go through the POST SME Committee approval process. Questions? Contact POST Firearms Liaison Mary Vekasy at Mary.Vekasy@coag.gov or any POST Firearms SME.”

TRAINING

Wellness Is Crucial to Career Success and Fulfilled Life

As a busy professional, it's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day grind and forget about taking care of yourself. However, your wellness is the base for everything you aspire to do.

Physical Health: It's no secret that exercise and a healthy diet can improve your energy levels, mental clarity, and overall well-being. When you are fit, you are better equipped to handle your job's demands, whether sitting at a desk making command decisions or working patrol. Building and maintaining good physical health will improve your fast-thinking skills, such as firearms, arrest-control and driving. It can also help prevent injuries and illness

that could keep you out of work. By caring for your body, you are investing in longevity of your career and your future.

Mental Health: Just like physical health, mental health is essential to your performance. It affects your ability to focus, problem-solve and communicate effectively with colleagues, the community you serve and your loved ones. When you feel stressed, anxious or depressed, it's challenging to make clear, rational decisions. On the other hand, taking time to unwind and reconnect with yourself helps develop positive coping strategies, stay more productive, motivated and engaged.



Bringing The Two Together: Feeling good physically and mentally makes you more likely to take on challenges and learn new skills. Because of that, you are more comfortable advocating for yourself and begin to achieve the desired results quicker. Furthermore, your “feeling good” attitude translates to others. By building solid relationships you can better navigate not only the professional hurdles, but life itself! Whether through exercise, a healthy diet, meditation, therapy or a combination of those things, finding and sticking to a self-care routine is the best thing you can do!

IN FY23...

Very Small Agency Backfill Grant Helps With Shift Coverage To Attend Training

Are you a small agency that would like to send its officers for additional law enforcement training, but you can't, because there is no one to cover their shifts? Look into our Very Small Agency Backfill grant program! **POST will reimburse the providing agency up to \$50/hr for each hour their staff works under this program, including benefit costs.**

Additional funds may be requested to cover travel time, lodging costs and mileage for officers providing the backfill. While it is designed for agencies with 10 or fewer peace officers, larger agencies will be given consideration on a case-by-case basis. An application for funding must be completed at least 30 days in advance of the training.

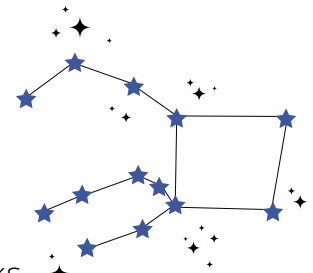
Find out more [HERE](#).



\$2.9M of grant funds was invested in rural and urban law enforcement communities. Wow, that's the size of Australia in square miles!

111,615 officers trained through the grant program.

POSTies aren't scientists and may have screwed this up, but it looks like HIP 111,615 is also a star in the constellation Pegasus.



3,320 students took in-person training.

Titanic's full capacity was 3,320 passengers as well.

FY23 Numbers You May Remember for Once

As holidays approach, along with them approach preparations for the year-end. Many like to look at what's been accomplished and set new goals. Grants team was not an exception. They wanted to have some fun along the way though and researched a few interesting facts correlating to FY23 numbers POST is most proud of. Shall we see what they are?

112,099 students took online training.

Can you believe that The Golden Gate Bridge carries almost the same number of vehicles per day (112,000 to be more precise)?

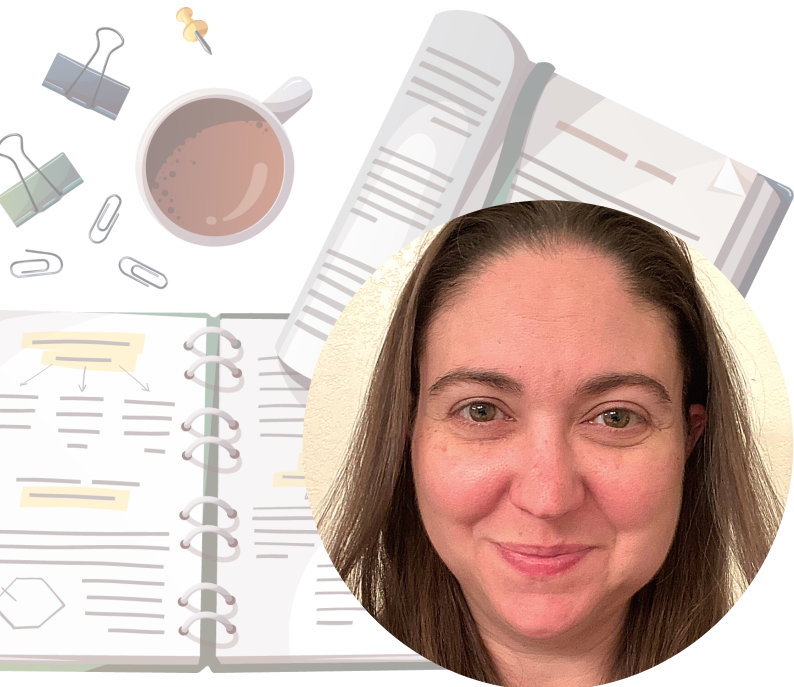


108,662 officers used PoliceOne platform, largely funded by POST. They trained for 95,620 hours!

Asteroids 108662 and 95620 were observed in the 2000s for roughly 23 years. Both have since disappeared into the vast space.



POST Hires an Academy Curriculum Developer



Gwen Burke: I started my journey in law enforcement in 2012 with Colorado State Patrol where I was assigned to Weld County. I worked primarily nights - focusing on DUI enforcement and crash reconstruction. In 2018, I transitioned to Broomfield Police Department to gain experience at the local level, where I became a Field Training Officer (FTO) and enjoyed having a more community-centered approach to policing. Unfortunately, I was injured on the job and was medically retired in 2022. I did a short stint with the 8th Judicial District as a sworn bond commissioner before becoming the Director of the Front Range Community College (FRCC) Law Enforcement Academy (LEA) in May 2022. For the time being, I am pulling double duty and working for both FRCC LEA and POST in this position, until I finish a few legacy projects at FRCC.

I hold a BA in Criminal Intelligence, an MA in International Relations and Conflict Resolution and am halfway through a second MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. My plan is to transition fully to POST in the summer to focus on this redesign project.

Holiday-Movie Favorites

Everyone has something special that gets them in the mood for holidays, and movies are a big part of that. Here's what POSTies watch!

Courtney Schwartz: My favorite holiday movie is ***A Christmas Story***. I watched it with my sister and laughed really hard when Flick got his tongue stuck to the pole at recess.



Dan Ostrander: ***Elf***. Anything Will Ferrell does is funny, especially in a holiday movie! It is my daughter's favorite too, so we have fun watching it together.

Nicola Erb: Favorite holiday movie is ***Elf*** also! Always makes me laugh, no matter how many times I have seen it!



Mary Vekasy: My favorite holiday “movie” is actually long-running commercial for a restaurant in my hometown. The ad is all about helping one another, as a little star struggles (and fails) to reach to the top of the Christmas tree, before the tree leans over, scoops it up, and lights up for the holidays. It isn’t Christmas until you see the **Eat’n Park star!**



Bob Baker: Mine is **National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation**, because it is our family go-to movie every Christmas.

Cathy Rodriguez: **Christmas Vacation** is my family's favorite too. It reminds me of various times with loved ones and it always makes me laugh.

Gwen Burke: My sisters and I would always watch **While You Were Sleeping** at some point during the season. There are certain scenes we still quote when we are all together when it fits.



Megan Serena: Growing up, my family would always watch **A Charlie Brown Christmas** before going to bed on Christmas Eve, while sipping on cider or cocoa. I love that it highlights the true meaning of the Christmas season, and it never fails to get me in the holiday spirit.

Kishawn Leuthauser: **How the Grinch Stole Christmas** was a bedtime favorite watched with our kids (especially during holidays) and I know almost every word of the movie.



Jared Torsney: As a kid, I would enjoy watching **Edward Scissorhands** during the holidays. It is still my favorite!



Mario Noriega: My little brother and I would watch **The Nightmare Before Christmas** on a loop for days around Halloween time.


Victoria Edstedt: During the holidays I like to rewatch **Harry Potter series**. In addition to already being full of magic, almost every movie includes a Christmas sequence.



Janelle Rasmussen: It's so rare to have a modern instant holiday classic, but **The Christmas Chronicles** nailed it for me!

Bo Bourgerie: **Die Hard** has a little something for everyone. Holiday festivities. Adventure. Memorable catchphrases, other than “Ho, Ho, Ho.” YippieKiYay!!





Kim Hernandez: My favorite holiday movie is ***The Wizard of Oz***. When we were little, my sisters and I would watch it every Thanksgiving morning as our mom baked pies.

Ron Ryan: How can there be a “favorite” when the **Hallmark Channel’s Countdown to Christmas** has 40 new original movies premiering into December? Check back with me in January.

POST BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

September 7 & 8 Sessions



The POST Board had a busy September, with both a Work Session and a Board meeting taking place in Glenwood Springs. During the Work Session, the Board was briefed on, and discussed, new Colorado law and federal guidance that allows DACA recipients (and those similarly situated) to serve as peace officers, updates to the POST appointment form (Form 6), funding for academy training through the Community College System (Career Advance Colorado), and proposed POST rule changes. The Board also heard from the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) on the work they are doing around peace officer training, along with the CCCS instructors who were selected to develop a new adult learning based Instructor Methodology Course for law enforcement training academy (LETA) instructors. Additionally, the Board received an update on the Academy Redesign Project. The Board indicated support for a proposal by the Colorado National Guard for a

statute change to allow military police officers to seek reciprocity toward Colorado POST certification.

During the subsequent Board meeting, the Board welcomed new member Sheriff KC Hume of Moffat County and said goodbye to retiring Board member Senior Investigator Tonya Barnes with the 18th Judicial District Attorney’s Office.

The Board heard requests for five appeal hearings, granting a hearing to the Adams County Sheriff’s Office regarding a Remediation Order to the Flatrock LETA, granted two of the appeals outright, and denied the remaining two requests.

The Board voted to revoke certifications for three peace officers for misdemeanor matters, six for felony matters, and six for untruthfulness.

The Board adopted new POST rules. Most notable amongst these changes is a prohibition on hazing at the academies. The Board also voted for a change to statute allowing an increase in academy recruit fees, which have not been increased since the POST Act first passed in 1992, in order to assist POST with staffing concerns. Fort Collins Police Chief Jeff Swoboda was appointed to the Academy Subcommittee and the Board heard about law enforcement suicide prevention by FBI Special Agent in Charge, and Board member, Mark Michalek.



**FOR NEWSLETTER
INQUIRIES**

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