

Recruiting & Community Outreach Division History

Colonel Eric T. Olson established the Recruiting and Community Outreach Division (RCOD) on April 1, 2019. The creation of RCOD led to the merger of the Career Recruitment Division and the Office of Community Engagement & Outreach. Captain Benjamin C. Jones was designated director of the division, which remained under the Administrative Services Bureau, General Headquarters, Jefferson City. Capt. Jones was also designated as the Patrol's community outreach officer. The division welcomed Lieutenant Jason M. Pace as assistant director and added two new recruiting officers in 2019, Trooper Gary Daniels (A) and Trooper Kordel Gibson (C).

The new division's mission was twofold: to develop closer relationships with individuals, groups, and businesses in communities that may not frequently interact with the Patrol, and to recruit qualified and diverse candidates for positions as troopers, as well as for the more than 60 civilian career classifications within the Patrol.

RCOD provided administrative and operational support for the following programs in 2019:

- Missouri State Highway Patrol Trooper Recruiting
- Ride-Along program
- Outreach programs
- Mentor program
- Youth Camps
- Youth Career Days

RCOD also assisted the Public Information & Education Division (PIED) in facilitating programs such as Skills USA, the Missouri Police Association IRC assessment, and the Constitution Project.

RCOD also assisted the Human Resources Division (HRD) in administering the Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action programs as directed by the superintendent. Division employees facilitated exit interviews for recruiting classes, mentor programs, and internships.

During June and July 2019, RCOD hosted two Youth Academy programs. The first was June 3-7, at Eagle Sky of the Ozarks, in Piedmont, MO, located in Troop E. The second academy took place July 8-12, at Sunnyhill Adventures, in Dittmer, MO, in Troop C. Between the two locations, 66 youth, ages 16-18, from all over the state participated in the academies. In addition to the youth, 29 Patrol employees assisted with the programs. During each week, the youth were exposed to the various duties and careers available within the Patrol, both for members and civilians.

The Youth Academy was created in 2017 and facilitated by members of the Career Recruitment Division. Since the merger, it has been the responsibility of RCOD. This program provides a unique hands-on experience for the students to learn the role of law enforcement officers in their communities.

As mentioned previously, the Youth Academy focuses on discipline, teamwork, character, and leadership. One of the program's goals was to strengthen bonds among youth, law enforcement, and the community. Representatives from the Marine Operations, Gaming Division, Aircraft Division, Commercial Vehicle Enforcement, Major Crash Investigative Unit, and various civilian careers provided presentations on their duties and responsibilities to highlight the various career opportunities within the agency. Cadets participated in physical fitness training, drill, and marching exercises. They learned the Patrol's history, ethics, integrity, firearms safety, and use-of-force policies. The cadets also earned their CPR certification.

In addition to the week-long camps, division members hosted two-day Youth Academy programs in Troop A and Troop D areas.

In 2019, RCOD members regularly connected with communities through Backpack for Kids (D), Kicks for Kids (E), Salvation Army Adopt-a-Family Toy Shop, serving meals to those in need (F), and the Kansas City Shop-with-a-Cop program (A). The division also facilitated a College Student Alliance Program for 60 Lincoln University students. In 2019 alone, recruiters logged approximately 5,646 hours of duty.

In addition to the recruiting events in Missouri, recruiters attended events in Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Oklahoma, Illinois, Mississippi, Texas, and Kansas.

RCOD was very active on social media through Facebook, Twitter, and Pandora. Division members used their creativity to produce recruiting videos of the youth academies, motorcycle operations, Aircraft Division, and the Water Patrol Division for future social media advertisements.

Recruiters administered the trooper selection process throughout the state, including written and fitness tests for 313 individuals.

2020

The Patrol faced many challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. RCOD is people-oriented, which added unique challenges to its mission during the pandemic. However, division members remained vigilant in their assigned responsibilities. RCOD took measures to practice social distancing and established the most thoughtful and beneficial means of recruiting. Although several meetings, career/community events, youth camps, and training events were canceled, division employees continued to move

forward with their recruitment and community outreach efforts. Additionally, with the new challenges came new opportunities to develop creative strategies to attract and recruit qualified applicants. Some of RCOD's accomplishments during this time included the following:

- Enhanced advertising and social media presence.
- Increased exposure within various media outlets throughout the state.
- Improved partnerships with universities/colleges and military installations.
- Increased participation in virtual recruiting career fairs and events.
- Enhanced communication/connection with applicants.

RCOD worked hard to maintain connections with various communities, with care for individual needs and respect for their health and safety. During this time, clothing and food distribution, face masks, and hand sanitizer were integrated into the event plan.

Division members completed a data integrity project—reviewing and updating presentations, brochures, forms, and other marketing material. RCOD worked alongside Criminal Justice Information Systems personnel to update the Applicant Contact (SHP-62) and Recruiting Activity (SHP-63) forms to more accurately capture and consolidate information on community outreach events. RCOD personnel developed a new database for applicant information, which is forwarded to the full-time recruiters via email. In the past, an applicant could apply for a trooper position, and the recruiter would be unaware until weeks or even months later. With the new database, once an applicant applies and HRD runs the initial criminal records check, the applicant's contact information is forwarded to the full-time recruiter in that troop area. Within 24 hours of applying, the applicant is contacted personally by a recruiter to welcome them to the Patrol's Trooper Selection Process. This provided the opportunity to build the applicant/recruiter relationship sooner, allowed the recruiter to better prepare the applicant for upcoming testing, and improved the percentage of applicants who appeared for testing.

Division members continued to enhance and develop videos for all divisions within the agency throughout the year. These videos were uploaded to RCOD's internal video library and became instrumental in answering questions and educating students/potential applicants about the diverse career opportunities within the Patrol. Specifically, a recruiting video was created targeting college students through their social media channels. The purpose was to inform students and soon-to-be graduates about career opportunities within the agency. RCOD members also produced videos highlighting the Patrol's Training Academy. These allowed followers to better understand the Patrol's exceptional training and provided them with an opportunity to see firsthand the transformation from recruit to trooper.

RCOD worked with PIED to explore opportunities to develop the Patrol's first YouTube channel. Other law enforcement agencies throughout the country used this platform for recruiting and educational purposes with tremendous success. The videos and playlists on the Patrol's YouTube account were then shared as a link on other social media platforms.

In August 2020, the division hosted its first-ever Patrol University at Missouri State University in Springfield, MO. The program lasted six weeks. 21 criminology students earned college credit upon completing the program. The participants became familiar with Patrol policies and procedures, various division responsibilities, and specialist positions. One goal of the program was to foster a better understanding of the Patrol and the services it provides. Students learned from hands-on experiences showcasing the tools of law enforcement. The curriculum highlighted the diverse career opportunities within the Patrol and provided an opportunity for students and Patrol employees to connect. The Patrol University experience became a valuable recruiting tool in the agency's continuous search for highly qualified employees.

Throughout the fall, RCOD personnel were actively involved in community outreach events, including distributing donated food and clothing in response to the pandemic.

2021

In April 2021, RCOD began an advertising campaign for the 114th Trooper Selection Process. The 114th Trooper Selection Process was the first "accelerated academy". This option was available for POST-certified police officers and qualifying military personnel. The accelerated class option proved beneficial for recruiting qualified applicants for the agency.

In the spring semester, RCOD partnered with Lincoln University in Jefferson City to host the Patrol University Program. 39 students participated in the 10-week program and received college credit.

Many colleges, hiring organizations, and community groups rebounded in 2021 from the effects of the COVID pandemic. RCOD members participated in 745 recruiting and community outreach events during the year. These included in-person and virtual career events, community outreach opportunities, and several youth events. RCOD personnel partnered with various minority groups in St. Louis, Kansas City, Jefferson City, Springfield, Mountain View, and numerous locations in southeast Missouri for community service projects and food and clothing distributions.

2022

During 2022, RCOD provided educational opportunities to communities across the state and continued to foster working relationships with the following:

- Vintendo for Africa (V4A) organization in St. Louis,
- The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) chapter in Charleston, MO,
- Meet the Need Outreach in Charleston, MO,
- Purple Church Outreach Ministries in Sikeston, MO,
- Lighthouse United Ministries in Cape Girardeau, MO.
- Army PaYS Program,
- I-Heart Radio,
- AcompanARTE Cultural Center in Springfield, MO,
- NAACP Chapter in Caruthersville, MO,
- Iglesia Cristiana Casa de Oracion Church in Springfield, MO,
- the University of Missouri ParentLink in Caruthersville, MO,
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Springfield and Ferguson, MO,
- the LUCE Outreach Program in Charleston, MO,
- the ERASE Outreach Program in Caruthersville, MO,
- the Mount Calvary Powerhouse Outreach Program in Poplar Bluff, MO,
- and the Hispanic Leaders Group of St. Louis and Springfield.

In the spring, RCOD continued to grow the Patrol University program, partnering with Lindenwood University in St. Charles, MO, and the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg, MO.

During the annual Patrol Awards Ceremony and the MASTERS Banquet in April, Sergeant David B. “Brad” Haggett accepted a Lifesaving Award recognizing his actions in performing an abdominal thrust to save a man who was choking. The incident occurred at a recruiting event in December 2021.

During the week of May 30, the division hosted the first Youth Academy Program since 2019. 32 youth participated in the program, which was held at Eagle Sky of the Ozarks near Piedmont, MO. A second youth camp was conducted in the last week of July at Camp Mihaska in Bourbon, MO, involving 18 youths from various parts of the state.

The summer of 2022 brought several changes to RCOD. Captain Jones was promoted to the rank of major on July 1 and was designated the commander of the Support Services Bureau (SSB). RCOD was transferred from the Administrative Services Bureau to SSB. Secondly, Trooper Robert M. “Mike” Malone joined the division as a full-time recruiter responsible for Troop B and Troop F. Finally, Lieutenant Jason M. Pace was promoted to the rank of captain, assuming the director position of RCOD on August 1.

In October 2022, RCOD hosted an agency-wide Missouri State Highway Patrol Career Expo. This event took place at the General Headquarters Training Academy and involved more than 20 Patrol components. Approximately 200 attendees from the public, including students from local colleges, high schools, and technical schools, were provided the opportunity to learn about the different career opportunities, uniform and civilian, within the agency.

In 2022, RCOD continued to maintain a strong presence through various media/advertising outlets, including internet, television streaming services, print and digital advertising, billboards, radio, and state/national newspapers and magazines, while staying active on social media platforms. RCOD recorded radio recruiting interviews and career announcements in both English and Spanish that were broadcasted throughout the state.

RCOD personnel were actively involved in community outreach events at the end of 2022, distributing donated food, toys, and clothing during the holiday season.

2023

RCOD personnel began 2023 by administering the Patrol University program at Lindenwood University and the University of Central Missouri. This was the second year for both schools to incorporate this program into their curricula, which continued to provide an excellent opportunity for college students to gain a better understanding of a career in law enforcement, specifically with the Patrol.

In May 2023, RCOD participated with the Public Information and Education Division of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Missouri Department of Transportation to host the inaugural Missouri Equity and Engagement Traffic Safety Summit in Jefferson City. The event proved to be a tremendous success, and approximately 35 community leaders throughout the state met to discuss ideas to make our state and its roadways safer.

2024

RCOD continued to foster and maintain working relationships with many community leaders, organizations, and educational institutions to include the V4A school in St. Louis, the Consulate of Mexico in Kansas City, the Saint Joseph NAACP chapter, Meet the Need Outreach in Charleston, and the Association of Venezuelan of MO (AVMO) in St. Louis.

RCOD also worked diligently with the Army Career Skills Program, the Fort Leonard Wood Transition Office, the Department of Health and Senior Services, AcompañARTE Cultural Center, Missouri Army National Guard, Iglesia Cristiana Casa De Oración

Church, the Mount Calvary Powerhouse Outreach Program, and the Hispanic Leaders Group of St. Louis and Springfield. RCOD continued to build trust and maintain working relationships with these groups, schools, and community leaders to further the Patrol's mission.

RCOD members participated in several youth career/safety days and community outreach events at various locations throughout the state. Some of these include the FFA State Convention in Columbia, MO, Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) state high school competitions, KidsFest in Jefferson City, Public Safety Career Day in Kansas City, and the career/safety day at the St. Cecilia School in St. Louis, as well as numerous back-to-school and Trunk-or-Treat events across the state.

RCOD continued to maintain a strong presence through various media/advertising outlets, including print/digital advertising, radio, and state/national newspapers and magazines, while staying active on social media platforms. RCOD also worked with Telemundo and iHeartMedia to record radio recruiting interviews and promote career announcements throughout the state. In 2024, RCOD partnered with All Star Talent to enhance their social media and online marketing presence, leveraging their algorithms to attract highly qualified applicants. This collaboration allowed RCOD to reach a larger audience and utilize All Star Talent's Customer Relationship Manager to improve the effectiveness of the applicant preparation program.

In 2024, RCOD personnel continued administering the Patrol University Program at the University of Central Missouri and Lincoln University.

From July 29 to August 2, RCOD hosted its annual Youth Academy program at Eagle Sky of the Ozarks in Piedmont. 40 youth, ages 16-18, participated in the academy. In addition to the youth, 20 Patrol employees assisted with the programs.

Captain Jason M. Pace retired on May 1, 2024. Lieutenant Danielle E. Heil (Q/DDCC) was promoted to Captain of RCOD on May 1, 2024, and designated Division Director. Corporal Logan M. Bolton became the Troop C full-time recruiter in September 2024.

RCOD hosted its second annual recruiting event at the St. Louis Cardinals Law Enforcement Day/Night in August 2024. Patrol personnel manned two recruiting booths throughout the stadium, sharing the agency's mission, educating the public about the many career opportunities within the Patrol, and interacting with thousands of supporters. In addition to the recruiting and outreach efforts, a Patrol color guard presented the colors. Captain Heil represented the Patrol by throwing the ceremonial first pitch.

2025

RCOD continued to actively cultivate and sustain collaborative relationships with a wide range of community leaders, organizations, and educational institutions. These include:

- V4A in St. Louis,
- the Consulate of Mexico in Kansas City,
- the NAACP chapter in Saint Joseph,
- Meet the Need Outreach in Charleston,
- AVMO in St. Louis.
- In addition, RCOD has worked closely with several key partners such as:
- the Army Career Skills Program,
- the Fort Leonard Wood Transition Office,
- the Department of Health and Senior Services,
- AcompañARTE Cultural Center,
- the Missouri Army National Guard,
- Iglesia Cristiana Casa De Oración Church in both Springfield and Carthage,
- the Mount Calvary Powerhouse Outreach Program in Mountain View and Poplar Bluff,
- and the Hispanic Leaders Group in both St. Louis and Springfield.

Members of RCOD participated in a wide range of recruiting and outreach events throughout the year. These activities included recruitment efforts for both uniformed and civilian career opportunities within the Patrol, as well as educational initiatives such as Patrol University during the spring 2025 semester.

RCOD also engaged with youth at the Eagle Sky of the Ozarks camp in Piedmont and participated in high-profile events, including the FFA National Convention, MSHSAA state high school competitions, and St. Louis Cardinals Law Enforcement Day. Additional outreach included involvement in the American Legion Cadet Academy, the Mount Calvary Church outreach program, and cultural celebrations such as the Annual Gala Dinner hosted by V4A.

RCOD also supported community-focused initiatives such as the Annual Christmas Giveaway with Meet the Need, Inc., Trunk-or-Treat events across the state, “Shop with a Hero” giveaway events, and the Sista Strut Walk for Breast Cancer Awareness with iHeart Radio.

RCOD maintained a strong and consistent presence across a variety of media and advertising platforms, including print and digital outlets, radio, and both state and national newspapers and magazines. The division also remained highly active on social media, engaging audiences through all social media platforms.

From July 28 to August 1, RCOD held its annual Youth Academy at Eagle Sky of the Ozarks in Piedmont. The program welcomed 38 youth participants, ages 16 to 18, from across the state. Supporting the event were 22 Patrol employees who helped facilitate the week's activities.

In August 2025, RCOD hosted its third annual recruiting event during the St. Louis Cardinals Law Enforcement Night. Enhancing the event's visibility and impact, a Patrol color guard proudly presented the colors as part of the day's activities.

In September 2025, RCOD organized the Missouri State Highway Patrol Career Expo at the General Headquarters Training Academy. The agency-wide event featured participation from over 20 Patrol units and welcomed approximately 250 attendees from the public.

In October 2025, RCOD launched Ride-Along Radio, a new internal podcast designed to engage employees, foster communication, and highlight the outstanding work happening across our organization every day. The podcast may eventually be expanded to external audiences. Ride-Along Radio was created to deliver timely updates, promote organizational pride, and provide an accessible way to stay informed, whether on duty, commuting, or taking a break. The debut episode featured an insightful interview with Colonel Michael A. Turner.

Also in October 2025, RCOD organized two Patrol High Schools, modeled after the Patrol University, at the Lake Career & Technical Center in Camdenton, MO, and at the Rolla Technical Center located in Rolla, MO. These programs allowed high school cadets to observe and participate in patrol activities, including SWAT, the Aircraft Division, traffic stops, the Water Division, and more.

In 2025, RCOD partnered with Be There Immersive and acquired 14 virtual reality headsets to support recruitment efforts. Using this technology, RCOD produced a series of immersive videos featuring interviews, training sessions, and real-life scenarios to give prospective applicants a firsthand look at what a career as a trooper entailed, including the training experience at the Patrol's law enforcement academy. This innovative tool is designed to strengthen recruitment by attracting high-quality candidates and supporting their retention throughout the academy process.

In 2025, Sergeant Haggett retired on February 1, 2025. Sergeant Jeffery D. Fugett was promoted to Lieutenant of RCOD on June 1, 2025, and designated Assistant Division Director. Corporal James D. "David" Patton became the Troop E and Troop G full-time recruiter in March 2025. In October 2025, RCOD added Commercial Vehicle Officer (CVO) Travis A. Morris as its first full-time CVO recruiter.

Division Directors

Career Recruitment Division

Capt. R.D. Whittler, June 1, 2015, to July 1, 2018

Capt. B.C. Jones, July 1, 2018, to April 1, 2019

Office of Community Engagement & Outreach

(Merged with Career Recruitment Division - 2019)

Capt. R.S. Johnson, June 1, 2017, to November 1, 2018

Recruiting and Community Outreach Division

Capt. B.C. Jones, April 1, 2019, to July 1, 2022

Capt. J.M. Pace, August 1, 2022, to May 1, 2024

Capt. D.E. Heil, May 1, 2024, to present