



ILLINOIS STATE POLICE

NEWS RELEASE

Brendan F. Kelly - Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 5, 2025

CONTACT: ISP Public Information Office

ISP.PIO.Personnel@illinois.gov

ILLINOIS STATE POLICE HONORS THOSE DEDICATED TO PROTECTING THE PUBLIC

*2024 ISP Officer, Special Agent, Telecommunicator, Forensic Scientist, and Public
Safety Staff Member of the Year Announced*

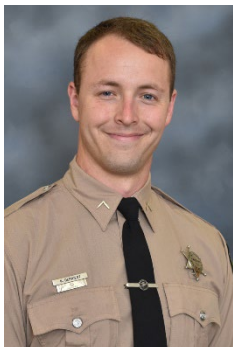
SPRINGFIELD – Illinois State Police (ISP) Director Brendan F. Kelly gathered today with ISP staff and their families, local law enforcement officers, and distinguished members of the public for the annual ISP Awards Ceremony. The ceremony was held to recognize individuals for their significant contributions and dedication to public safety in 2024.

Director Kelly presented individuals with the following awards: Director's Award of Distinction, Medal of Valor, Medal for Honor, Achievement Medal, Purple Heart Medal, Lifesaving Medal, and Meritorious Service Medal. Each award recipient was recognized for their exemplary service to ISP and the residents of Illinois.

"ISP's greatest strength is our people – Troopers, Specials Agents, Telecommunicators, Analysts, Forensic Scientists" said ISP Director Brendan F. Kelly. "The people we recognize this year embody ISP's core values of Integrity, Service, and Pride. Thank you to those who have bravely and selflessly answered the call to pursue justice, protect the public, and serve your community."

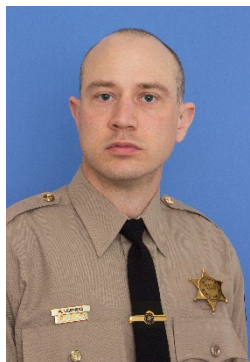
In addition to the Director's Awards, eight ISP employees received special recognition for exemplary service during 2024. Special recognition was given to the ISP Officer of the Year, Special Agent of the Year, Telecommunicator of the Year, Forensic Scientist of the Year, and Public Safety Support Staff Member of the Year.

2024 Officer of the Year, Trooper Kyle E. DePriest



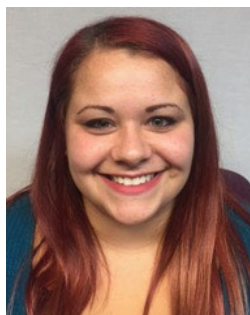
Trooper
Kyle E. DePriest

In 2024, Trooper Kyle DePriest served with distinction as a member of the Statewide Anti-Violence South Team. Trooper DePriest's strong work ethic, advanced skills, and team-focused approach led to the arrest of 70 individuals on 203 criminal charges, the seizure of 45 illegal firearms, nearly two kilograms of a controlled substance, and the recovery of four stolen vehicles. In January of 2024, Trooper DePriest showed exceptional bravery when a suspect fired a weapon at and struck his squad car during a pursuit. Trooper DePriest's outstanding performance sets a high standard for all ISP officers.

2024 Special Agent of the Year, Special Agent Michael A. Leathers

Special Agent
Michael A.
Leathers

Special Agent Michael A. Leathers, assigned to Division of Criminal Investigation Zone 1, has demonstrated exceptional dedication and leadership, particularly amid the surge in expressway violence. As a member of the Lake County Major Crimes Taskforce, Special Agent Leathers responded to multiple homicide investigations and was the primary case agent on seven significant cases involving homicide, domestic battery, threats to officials, and more. Special Agent Leathers thorough investigative work led to four suspects being charged and more than 100 investigative leads completed. His professionalism, intelligence, and unwavering work ethic exemplify the highest standards of ISP.

2024 Telecommunicator of the Year, Telecommunicator Specialist Melissa K. Dearworth

Telecommunicator
Specialist
Melissa K.
Dearworth

Telecommunicator Specialist (TCS) Melissa K. Dearworth started her career in 2017. She has since demonstrated exceptional knowledge and dedication. Drawing on her law enforcement background, TCS Dearworth has become a valued resource to sworn personnel and new trainees alike. TCS Dearworth's positive and supportive approach has strengthened the communication center's morale. Her dependability and team spirit were highlighted on multiple occasions, including Metro East Special Operation Group details. Her steadfast commitment and professionalism set an outstanding example for all ISP employees.

2024 Forensic Scientist of the Year, Forensic Scientist III Aimee C. Stevens

Forensic Scientist
III
Aimee C. Stevens

Aimee Stevens serves as a Forensic Scientist III in the Firearms/Toolmarks section at the Forensic Science Laboratory in Chicago. Throughout her career, Ms. Stevens has been a model of professionalism, knowledge, and service. Ms. Stevens is a highly skilled analyst and her commitment to providing quality forensic science services is exceptional. Ms. Stevens maintains this level of productivity while participating in leadership roles for multiple forensic science sections at both state and national levels. Ms. Stevens is an example of ISP's values of Integrity, Service, and Pride. She truly embraces the department's mission as demonstrated by her work ethic and leadership to the state and forensic science community.

2024 Public Safety Support Staff Member of the Year, Chris D. Miller

Public Service
Administrator
Chris D. Miller

Throughout Chris D. Miller's 27 years of dedicated service, he has demonstrated unwavering commitment, technical expertise, and exemplary leadership. Mr. Miller's time as Bureau Chief of the Radio Network Services Bureau was marked by exceptional service and professionalism. Even after retirement he continued to selflessly support ISP during a critical transition period, showcasing Mr. Miller's dedication to the agency and its mission. Mr. Miller played a pivotal role in coordinating radio communications for the Democratic National Convention, which was crucial to the success of the large-scale event, ensuring seamless and secure communication across multiple agencies. Mr. Miller's continuous efforts to advance ISP's communications infrastructure, mentor colleagues, and foster cooperative relationships across divisions have left a lasting impact on the department.

Below is the complete list of 2024 ISP Award recipients:

Director's Award of Distinction

Officer Alex Barnes
Officer Robert McNeely
Officer Austin Priest
Skylar Lambeth
Steve Newcomb
James R. Page

Medal For Valor

Trooper Kyle E. DePriest
Trooper Adam D. Fitts
Trooper Blake D. Thompson

Medal For Honor

Master Sergeant Ross A. Green
Sergeant Kyle T. Blakemore
Trooper Derek W. Beckman
Trooper Clay M. Carns
Trooper Corey S. Thompsen

Achievement Medal

Colonel Margaret M. McGreal
Colonel Christopher E. Owen
Lieutenant Jacqueline Cepeda
Lieutenant Jeff L. Schisler
Lieutenant Jacob A. Tresenriter
Lieutenant Colonel The V. Tran
Master Sergeant Stephen N. Jurevis
Master Sergeant Andrew W. Kazenski
Sergeant Jose L. Vallejo

Chief Jeffrey M. Hoecker
Chief of Staff Nathan J. Leitner
Vickie A. Anger
Jill D. Collum
Cheryl A. McKnelly
Chris D. Miller
John J. Neuman

Purple Heart Medal

Trooper Clay M. Carns
Trooper Dakotah J. Chapman-Green
Trooper Corey S. Thompson

Lifesaving Medal

Master Sergeant Nicholas A. Colon
Master Sergeant Kevin P. Kelliher
Sergeant Brandon M. Douglas
Sergeant Joseph C. Dunn
Sergeant Cynthia Pfau-Wilsdorf
Trooper Tarek P. Aldroubi
Trooper Tyler J. Dively
Trooper Rodger D. Goines
Trooper Christopher R. Greene
Trooper Colin Ingalls
Trooper Jacob W. Keeney
Trooper Grace M. Ketchum
Trooper Matthew N. Kostkiewicz
Trooper Amanda M. Laughlin
Trooper Matthew A. Price
Trooper Giuseppe P. Rallo
Trooper Micah Ransom
Trooper Corey D. Sims

Meritorious Service Medal

Master Sergeant Christopher C. Burke
Master Sergeant Andrew W. Kazenski
Sergeant Jose L. Vallejo
Taruna Ganne
Harish Kumar Gouni
Pooja Guddeti
Christopher Kennett
Jeremy W. Thomas
Chandrika Thumu

###