

AGENCY AT A *glance* SO FAR THIS YEAR...

- 2,491 impaired drivers arrested
- 7,029 collisions investigated
- 38 fatality collisions
- 6,123 distracted driving contacts
- 4,806 seatbelt violations
- 22,804 aggressive driver contacts
- 67,150 excessive speed contacts
- 16,308 CMV inspections

## Trooper released from Harborview



SEATTLE, Wash. - District 2 Trooper Seaburg, seriously injured after being shot in the line of duty on Feb. 16 in Kent, was able to walk out the doors of Harborview Medical Center in Seattle earlier this month. He found himself greeted at the hospital doors by coworkers and allied agency representatives, who then escorted him back home. Trooper Seaburg still has a long road of recovery ahead, but we are grateful for his progress, as well as the support he and his family have received since his incident.

### LEWIS COUNTY Sunday highway dedication honors fallen WSP Trooper Schaffer



**HONORING 646** - A highway dedication ceremony honoring fallen Washington State Patrol (WSP) Trooper Justin R. Schaffer will take place Sunday, marking the four-year anniversary of Trooper Schaffer's death.

Two Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) signs will designate a six-mile section of state Route 6 to serve as an honor and reminder of Trooper Schaffer's ultimate sacrifice - one mile for each of his six years of service to the agency and people of Washington State.

The ceremony will begin at 3 p.m. on Sunday, March 24 at Adna Middle/High School in Chehalis, Trooper Schaffer's alma mater. Members of Trooper Schaffer's district command staff, as well as WSP Chief John R. Batiste will speak prior to moving to the first sign located on SR 6 on milepost 51.

Both lanes of SR 6 will be blocked during sign unveiling, with members of WSDOT assisting with traffic control. After the first sign unveiling, those in attendance will conduct a short procession to milepost 45 to view the second sign.

## DO YOU HAVE STORIES YOU WANT TO SHARE?

**SEND THEM IN** - We strive to highlight the amazing work across the agency. If you have something happening in your division or district you would like to see highlighted in a future edition of *The Milepost*, please e-mail [pio@wsp.wa.gov](mailto:pio@wsp.wa.gov).

## Remembering Oso Slide

### Sergeant recalls arriving to scene 10 years ago

SEATTLE, Wash. - More than a decade has passed, but the sites seen during those first moments remain imprinted in Washington State Patrol (WSP) Sergeant Rocky Oliphant's mind.

"I felt an overwhelming sense of helplessness," Sgt. Oliphant recalled. "I walked a little ways out into the slide, but it was very unstable - it was essentially a lake with logs and pieces of house floating on top."

Ten years ago, Sgt. Oliphant was a trooper working on Interstate 5 near Stanwood when he overheard dispatch advise of a barn roof in the roadway on state Route 530 near Oso. He was the closest unit some 20-miles away.

At first, the call didn't seem like anything too out of the ordinary - most trooper's careers are filled with reports of all kinds of things blocking the roadway.

"The updates were getting progressively worse, but nowhere near the scope and size of what it actually was," Sgt. Oliphant said. When he arrived, Sgt. Oliphant saw the roadway completely covered by water, mud, and debris.

"A house was sitting in the road in front of me," Sgt. Oliphant said. Even at his vantage point, the sheer size of the slide was still unknown in the early stages. Powerlines were down within the slide. The smell of propane hung in the air.

The rural location rendered his radio useless; he opted to call in by cellphone to ask to get more help on the way. In the meantime, Sgt. Oliphant met with a handful of bystanders and volunteer firefighters at the scene, who said they heard a baby crying.

"We all went quiet and listened, but couldn't hear anything," Sgt. Oliphant said.

Sgt. Oliphant tried to walk into the slide, which was extremely unstable. Two men had forged ahead, and as they got closer to the house - could hear the cries once again.

"I started to follow them out," Sgt. Oliphant said. "At one point I stepped on a log that shifted, and one of my legs went completely under and didn't touch bottom."

The focus changed to trying to identify a safe way back for the two men closest to the house in the case they were able to recover the child.

"I grabbed plywood that used to be a roof for one of the houses and pulled it to work on creating a path," Sgt. Oliphant said. "I grabbed large branches, trusses - 2x4's - any other debris that would create a path."

The sergeant looked up from his work and saw one of the men holding a baby, wrapped in a jacket. A momentary miracle; a bright spot in what would become a seemingly unending tragic day.

Additional units began to arrive, including search and rescue, fire, allied law enforcement agencies, and air support. The day would continue with more rescued, and others unfortunately found lifeless. In total, 43 lives were lost and nearly 50 homes destroyed.

This was just one piece and one glimpse of a tragedy that affected countless first responders and members of the community at large. Today we honor the 10-year anniversary of the Oso Slide, remember the lives of those lost, and express our gratitude to all who helped when they were needed most.



# WSP re-accreditation hearings on now

**MONTGOMERY, Ala.** - Communications Commander Vanessa Barnes, Captain Rob Sharpe, and Management Analyst 3 Bernie Bacon represented the Washington State Patrol (WSP) today at the CALEA re-accreditation hearing in Alabama.

This is the first re-accreditation hearing since being awarded the Tri-Arc status in 2021. WSP staff are meeting with CALEA committee members to answer questions about the agency, and our assessment reports from the cycle. WSP has been CALEA accredited since 1992, and became Tri-Arc (law enforcement, communications, and academy) since 2021.



# WSP attends Women in Public Safety event



**PORTLAND, Ore.** - Washington State Patrol (WSP) troopers and Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Officers (CVEOs) attended the Women in Public Safety event in Portland, Ore., earlier this month. The event allowed for them to network with fellow female law enforcement officers from across the region.

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