



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
GOVERNOR'S TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMISSION  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

ALICIA SLEDGE  
ACTING CHAIR

May 23, 2022  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Nancy Feldbush  
feldbushn@michigan.gov

## **Trooper Bawks of the Michigan State Police Niles Post to receive award from Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Commission**

Tpr. Russell Bawks of the Michigan State Police (MSP) Niles Post is being recognized by the Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Commission (GTSAC) for his long-term contribution and commitment to traffic safety in Michigan.

The trooper will be honored during the Traffic Safety Awards Virtual Ceremony, via Microsoft Teams, at 10 a.m., Tuesday, May 24, 2022. The GTSAC recognizes organizations, programs and individuals for outstanding involvement in traffic safety.

Nominated for the Richard H. Austin Long-Term Service Award, Trooper Bawks is commended for his exceptionally high level of traffic enforcement patrol activity.

For the past 23 years, the trooper has worked the roadways of Berrien County and around the MSP Fifth District in Southwest Michigan, focusing his efforts on patrolling the expressways and trunklines. He is also known for making every contact with the motoring public a positive one.

"The effort put forth by Trooper Bawks, throughout his career, has made a significant impact on speeds, traffic crash reduction, and interdiction of drug trafficking," said F/Lt. Ryan Schoonveld in nominating the trooper. "We consistently receive feedback from the public regarding positive contact they have had with Trooper Bawks."

Since 2011, the trooper has logged more than 285,000 miles in his patrol car. For many of those years, he handled calls for service along with patrolling the freeways. While working as part of the Fifth District Hometown Security Team, Trooper Bawks responded to a 193-car pileup during inclement weather and became a large part of a quick-response team to crashes in the snowbelt of Southwest Michigan.

The Richard H. Austin Long-Term Service Award is named for the longest-serving secretary of state in Michigan history (1971-1995). Austin earned a national reputation as an outstanding and effective advocate for traffic safety.

The GTSAC was formed in 2002 to serve as the state's forum for identifying key traffic safety challenges and developing and implementing plans to address those issues. The commission includes representatives from the MSP and the departments of Transportation, Education, State, and Health & Human Services, as well as the Office of the Governor, the Aging and Adult Services Agency, and the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning. There are also three representatives from local government appointed by the governor.

- 30 -

Alicia Sledge, Office of Highway Safety Planning • Steven Kiefer, Governor's Office • Carol Reagan, Department of State • Gregg Brunner, Department of Transportation • Linda Scarpetta, Department of Health and Human Services • Maj. Ryan Pennell, Department of State Police • Ashley Ellsworth, Health and Aging Services Agency • William Miller, Local Representative • Chief Ronald Wiles, Local Representative • Sheriff Michael Poulin, Local Representative