



Top Officer, Telecommunicator, and Forensic Scientist honored for their actions and accomplishments during 2016

May 19 2017 12:00 PM

SPRINGFIELD – Illinois State Police (ISP) Director Leo P. Schmitz was joined by ISP command staff members to recognize the noble contributions made by sworn and civilian members of the Illinois State Police, government agencies, and the public.

The Awards Ceremony was held at Hope Church in Springfield, Illinois, and paid tribute to the acts of heroism and professionalism displayed by the men and women who were honored during the event. Each award recipient was recognized for their exemplary service to the ISP and the citizens of Illinois.

"The Illinois State Police is made up of men and women who are dedicated to our mission of promoting public safety and improving the quality of life for the citizens of Illinois," said ISP Director Leo P. Schmitz. "I am proud to serve alongside every one of them," he added.

Among the award recipients were three individuals who received special recognition for exemplary service: Trooper Alexander R. Pinto – Officer of the Year; Telecommunicator Specialist Karen L. Foster – Telecommunicator of the Year; and Forensic Scientist Kellen Hunter – Forensic Scientist of the Year.



Officer of the Year, Trooper Alexander R. Pinto

Trooper Pinto has continuously and successfully focused his enforcement efforts on high crime communities in the Chicagoland area. Trooper Pinto's high level of professionalism and dedication to patrol duties earned Trooper Pinto an appointment with the District Chicago Violent Crimes Initiative Unit. Trooper Pinto's hard work ethic combined with his tenacity, continues to be reflected in his unwavering dedication to the citizens of Illinois and the Illinois State Police.

Trooper Pinto has had many criminal arrests, including various arrests for Aggravated Unlawful Use of Weapon, and arrests for Possession of a Controlled Substance. In July of 2016 Trooper Pinto conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle he observed traveling over the posted speed limit. A probable cause search of the vehicle recovered a loaded semi-automatic handgun with an extended magazine which contained 17 live rounds. Inquiries revealed the handgun was stolen, and two of the vehicle occupants were convicted felons and documented gang members. Trooper Pinto's steadfast determination to reduce criminal activity and curb violence has resulted in the removal of illegal guns and dangerous felons from the roadways and has undoubtedly had a positive impact on the citizens of Illinois.



Telecommunicator of the Year, Telecommunicator Specialist Karen L. Foster

Ms. Foster received a letter of commendation from District 13 for her efforts in assisting with an officer involved shooting in January 2016. Ms. Foster is credited with keeping calm, steady, and focused while officers were trying to establish a perimeter and obtain medical attention for the suspect.

Another example of Ms. Foster's professional demeanor occurred in May 2016. Ms. Foster was part of the communications staff who handled the radio traffic during a five-day manhunt for a subject who was wanted for an officer involved shooting. Ms. Foster displayed an extremely positive demeanor while assisting other Telecommunicators and sworn officers, including the FBI, with tracking this subject.

Ms. Foster is a knowledgeable employee and is well versed in her job duties as well as Department policies and procedures. She possesses the knowledge to handle work of the most complex nature.



Forensic Scientist of the Year, Forensic Scientist Kellen Hunter

Mr. Hunter demonstrates leadership within the statewide Firearms/Toolmarks section by advancing the analytical and informational capabilities of that section. During 2016 he developed and continues to update electronic worksheets to thoroughly document the analytical results of the scientific examination of evidence within that section. Through this mechanism, all scientists within that section are able to utilize current technology

more effectively, while ensuring compliance with quality assurance protocols as well as accreditation requirements under the International Organization for Standardization. Mr. Hunter's approach was adopted throughout other sections of the laboratories and represented a significant advancement in the documentation of case information.

Mr. Hunter not only enjoys an excellent reputation with entities within the criminal justice system, but also among his coworkers and managers. His dedication to providing exceptional service to the ISP, the criminal justice system, and the community is recognized and greatly appreciated.

[Please see the attached program for a list of all nominees and award winners.](#)