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**TENNESSEE HIGHWAY PATROL GRADUATES 22 STATE TROOPERS**

**FROM LATERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT**

**NASHVILLE** --- On July 1, Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security Commissioner Jeff Long and Tennessee Highway Patrol (THP) Colonel Matt Perry welcomed the newest graduating class of 22 new Tennessee State Troopers. Governor Bill Lee served as the keynote speaker during the graduation ceremony, and Commissioner Jeff Long swore in the new troopers as they delivered their oaths of office. Trooper Cadet Class 722 completed 10 weeks of specialized training to build upon their training and experience received as prior law enforcement officers.

Class 722 is composed of all prior certified law enforcement officers. This included nine cadets with prior military service, five cadets with Associates degrees, and two cadets with Bachelors degrees. After graduation, the new troopers will continue field training in their perspective duty assignments with troopers who are classified as Field Training Officers.

“This lateral class has a combined 233 years of prior law enforcement experience which will provide an immediate and positive impact on the safety and security of our citizens and visitors,” said Colonel Matt Perry. “The THP is dedicated to hiring and retaining the best-trained troopers.”

“Law enforcement is a calling, and I commend the newest trooper class for their commitment to serve Tennesseans,” said Governor Bill Lee. “The Tennessee Highway Patrol plays a critical role in protecting communities across the state, and I remain dedicated to supporting them with strong investments in high-quality training, recruitment, and proven crime prevention to keep Tennessee safe.”

“I am proud to welcome the newest additions to the Tennessee Highway Patrol,” said Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security Commissioner Jeff Long. “After months of hard work and dedication, you have earned the title of State Trooper. You will now be authors of the Tennessee Highway Patrol’s 92-year-old rich history. I commend each of you for your commitment to public service and willingness to make Tennessee a safe place to live, work and travel through. Congratulations on joining one of the most well-respected law enforcement agencies in the United States.”

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“Since being named Colonel, I have passed along this message to each graduating class,” said Colonel Matt Perry. “We are in the business of providing a service. As you leave here today, and every day as you don your uniform, remember that service is at the heart and soul of a Tennessee State Trooper. Perform your duty with honor and treat this badge and uniform with respect. As prior members of the law enforcement community, you know that joining any law enforcement agency makes you a part of something far bigger than yourself. As of today, you represent the Tennessee Highway Patrol while in and out of uniform. You are held to a higher standard – not only by the public, but also by your peers and by your leaders. You no longer serve only yourself; you serve the citizens of the state of Tennessee and those that travel through our state. You have joined the best of the best, you are a Tennessee State Trooper.”

Trooper William Lee was named the top cadet of THP cadet class 722 and was presented with the Trooper Calvin Jenks Memorial Award for Excellence for achieving the overall highest average. The award was named in honor of the late Trooper Calvin Jenks, who was killed in the line of duty in January 2007.

The new trooper assignments are attached. Pictures are available upon request. The ceremony took place at the Hermitage Hills Baptist Church in Nashville.

*The Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security’s mission is to serve, secure, and protect the people of Tennessee.*

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