



Office of Communications

2025 accomplishments and highlights

March 2026

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Executive summary

2025 accomplishments and highlights

The Office of Communications (OOC) plays a central role in helping the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) deliver clear, timely and trustworthy information to Minnesotans. In 2025, the OOC supported DPS during a year defined by high-impact public safety incidents, complex regulatory changes, expanded digital engagement and continued modernization of DPS communication tools.

Across crisis response, life-safety messaging, public information and long-term storytelling, the OOC helped DPS meet rising public expectations in an environment shaped by rapid information flow, heightened scrutiny and increasing demand for responsiveness and accessibility.

Serving Minnesotans when it mattered most

In 2025, the OOC supported DPS during some of the most challenging and visible moments in recent history. The team played a critical role in managing communications during the June 14 targeted shootings of Minnesota lawmakers and the subsequent multiday manhunt, as well as following the Aug. 27 shooting at Annunciation Church in Minneapolis. In these moments, the OOC helped ensure accurate information moved quickly, messaging remained coordinated across agencies, and communications reflected care for victims, families and affected communities.

Beyond crisis response, the OOC supported ongoing life-safety campaigns, regulatory updates and public education efforts that helped Minnesotans make informed decisions. This included statewide traffic safety campaigns, REAL ID education, scam-prevention messaging, emergency preparedness outreach and consumer-protection communications.

Strategic media and public relations support

The OOC is DPS' central point of contact for media relations, responding to thousands of inquiries across divisions and coordinating news conferences, media advisories and news releases. The team balanced speed with accuracy, ensuring consistent messaging during investigations, enforcement actions and emergencies.

At the same time, the OOC pursued proactive public relations efforts, pitching stories that highlighted prevention, education and innovation, and elevating survivor- and community-centered narratives that helped the public understand the real-world impact of public safety work.

Modernizing digital communication

A major focus of 2025 was strengthening DPS' digital presence. The redesigned DPS website completed its first full year of operation, earning four national awards and delivering significant gains in user satisfaction, reliability and accessibility. The OOC managed daily website operations,

coordinated vendor support, launched new tools such as the Document Finder and developed a centralized intranet hub to support content managers across the agency.

Social media reach and engagement grew substantially, with 32.7 million views across platforms — a 188 percent increase year over year. Video production expanded through livestreams, training content and crisis response coverage, while upgraded media-room infrastructure improved reliability and security.

Creative and storytelling excellence

The OOC delivered hundreds of creative assets across photography, video and graphic design, supporting everything from legislative reports and driver manuals to billboards, training materials and public campaigns. Accessibility remained foundational, with extensive document remediation, website accessibility training and preparation for upcoming American with Disabilities Act Title II updates.

Through platforms like the Safety Matters blog and Safety First newsletter, the OOC translated complex public safety topics into clear, relatable stories, strengthening public understanding and trust.

Supporting DPS divisions statewide

Throughout the year, the OOC partnered closely with DPS divisions to support their unique missions — from investigative communications at the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA), to regulatory outreach for the Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement division, to emergency response communications for Homeland Security and Emergency Management. These partnerships ensured division work was communicated accurately, consistently and effectively across channels.

Awards and recognition

Awards received and honorable mentions

- **Commissioner’s Commendation Award for Aug. 27 Annunciation Response**
 - Tony Benson, Anbar Ahmed, Julie Prior-Miller, Catriona Stuart
- **DPS Service Leadership Award**
 - Dave Boxum
- **GovTech | Project State Government Experience Winner**
 - Website team
- **DotCOMM Awards | Gold Winner**
 - Website team
- **National Association of Government Web Professionals, Best in Show Sponsor’s Award**
 - Website team

- **National Association of Government Web Professionals, Member’s Choice Award for Federal/State Website Group**
 - Website team
- **National Association of Government Web Professionals, Pinnacle Award**
 - Website team
- **DPS Living by Our Values Award (honorable mention)**
 - Dave Boxum
- **DPS Keeping Us Safe Award for June 14 lawmaker shooting response (honorable mention)**
 - Laura Perkins, Mike Ernster, Kyle Everson, Oliver Schuster, Eric Lightner, Jake Seamans, Nicole Roddy, Dan Sundem, Scott Theisen, Julie Prior-Miller, Lt. Mike Lee

Award nominations

- **DPS Rookie of the Year Award**
 - Kyle Everson
- **DPS Service Leadership Award**
 - Catriona Stuart
 - Dan Sundem
- **DPS Keeping Us Safe Award for Aug. 27 Annunciation shooting response**
 - Anbar Ahmed, Tony Benson, Julie Prior-Miller, Catriona Stuart

Looking ahead

In 2026, the OOC will continue to strengthen storytelling, expand digital accessibility, support divisions through increasingly complex communications challenges and ensure Minnesotans receive clear, timely and trusted public safety information.

2025 by the numbers

Engagement

- 31.5 million DPS website pageviews
- 32.7 million social media views across platforms
- 1,721 social media posts published
- 31 YouTube videos produced, 21 livestreamed events

Crisis response and media relations

- 2 major statewide crisis responses (June 14 lawmaker shootings; Aug. 27 Annunciation Church shooting)
- 6 State Emergency Operations Center activations supported
- 137 news releases and media advisories distributed statewide
- 5,500+ media inquiries responded to with statements or interviews

Creative services

- 7 major reports designed (annual, strategic and statistical)
- 110 pages redesigned for the Driver and Vehicle Services Driver's License Manual
- 36 missing and murdered Indigenous relatives digital and print billboards
- 9 large lighted displays for the State Fair

Campaigns, education and outreach

- Increase in REAL ID compliance from 38 percent to 50 percent statewide
- 1 million+ impressions from REAL ID multilingual media campaign
- 1 million+ views for State Fire Marshal carbon monoxide safety campaign
- 100 percent increase in MMIR homicide case registrations following Reward Fund rollout

Expertise

About the Office of Communications

The Office of Communications (OOC) is the voice of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS). Using traditional and social media channels and original video, social media and web content, the OOC:

- Provides critical life safety information and education to the public.
- Supplies the media with public information.
- Highlights the important work of the department and its divisions throughout the state.

The OOC also engages in crisis communications and manages the Joint Information Center when the State Emergency Operations Center is activated.

In short, the OOC is committed to getting the right information to the right people at the right time, so the public can make the right decisions in the interest of safety.

OOC services

The OOC provides communication strategy development in cooperation with division leadership to ensure the right messages are delivered to target audiences at the right time using the right tools.

- **Video production:** Complete video production of long-form projects including topical and training videos, and incident-based videos for immediate use.
- **Photography:** On-scene or staged for publications and digital channels.
- **Writing and editing:** Content writing and editing for social and web channels, proofreading of reports, creating of talking points, writing or editing of trade publication articles. The OOC also manages, maintains and provides content for the Safety First newsletter and Safety Matters blog and writes speeches and articles for the commissioner and his senior leadership team.
- **Digital services:** Social media content and strategy, web support, assistance with presentation materials.
- **Graphics:** Design and production services for all media and collateral.
- **Media relations:** First point of contact for inquiries, writing and distribution of news releases and advisories, data requests from media, on-scene incident Public Information Officer support.
- **Public relations:** Proactive planning and execution of communication efforts that build trust, strengthen public understanding of DPS programs and initiatives, and support agency priorities through coordinated outreach, messaging and partnerships.

OOO's mission

The OOC's mission is to deliver messages to various audiences using the appropriate delivery strategy. Communication activity is divided into four core categories.

1. **Life safety:** Delivering the right information to the right people so they can make the right decisions.
2. **Public information:** Responding to requests for data and information about the agency and the services it provides.
3. **Crisis communication:** Providing strategic counsel and execution for natural and human-caused disasters and crises involving the agency.
4. **Public relations:** Telling the stories and showing the good work of the agency through traditional media channels and agency-developed content.

OOO's guiding principles

1. We treat each other and the people we serve with respect, kindness and professionalism.
2. It's not about us. We make it about the audience and give them a reason to care.
3. We do the right thing — even when it's hard. We're honest, responsive and fair.
4. We use objective-based strategies and messages. We ask ourselves and division leadership "What's the purpose?" and "What do you want to accomplish?" before we begin a communication project.
5. We provide rapid response. We take advantage of opportunities when they present themselves.
6. We look beyond what's directly in front of us. We aim to see the rest of the road and prepare for what's to come.
7. We embrace change. We don't do something just because we have always done it that way.

Staff

The OOC has 25 full-time staff members including a chief public information officer (PIO), deputy director, communications specialists and PIOs, staff editor and content coordinator, graphic designers, and social media, web and video production specialists.

OOO staff collectively have hundreds of years of experience in communications, public relations, marketing and other related fields.

OOO staff members are frequent presenters and panel members at state, regional and national conferences. Staff members have served on National Highway Traffic Safety Administration assessment panels for other states' traffic safety programming and as

trainers for Federal Emergency Management Agency's required emergency management courses and university-level instructors.

Staff have also assisted other state and local public safety and fire service partners with critical incidents and first responder funerals.

Media and public relations support

The Office of Communications (OOC) serves as the department's central hub for media relations and public-facing communications. This work has ranged from high-volume, fast-moving crisis response to proactive storytelling that elevated public safety initiatives, strengthened education and reinforced public trust in DPS and its divisions.

Through coordinated media engagement, strategic outreach and clear, consistent messaging, the OOC helped ensure Minnesotans received accurate information during critical incidents, understood complex public safety issues and saw the people and purpose behind DPS' work.

Media responses

Provided timely, accurate responses to media inquiries across all DPS divisions, coordinating closely with leadership, investigators and subject matter experts to ensure consistent messaging during routine operations and high-profile incidents, including multiday emergencies and active investigations.

- Media responses in 2025: 5,523

News releases and media advisories

Drafted, reviewed and distributed news releases and media advisories to inform the public, announce investigations and enforcement actions, support statewide safety campaigns and provide critical updates during emergencies and major public safety events.

- News releases and media advisories in 2025: 137

Creative and digital services support

Website

The DPS website serves as a hub for delivering clear, accurate and timely information to the public, our stakeholders, partners and staff.

Highlights

- 31.5 million pageviews and more than 7 million users.
- First full year of the redesigned DPS website with four national awards.
- Near-100 percent uptime despite major global technology outages.
- Launch of the Document Finder tool and new intranet website resources hub.

An in-depth look at OOC's website work and support

First year of new website

Managed the first year of operation and maintenance of the new public website, ensuring reliable performance and delivering an improved digital experience for the public and agency partners. Accolades include:

- Four awards for the site's excellence, innovation and design
- Increased average user satisfaction from 4.9 to 5.79
- Improved average user success rate from 45.18 to 55.93

Ensured platform stability

Provided a highly stable website platform with minimal disruptions, achieving near-100 percent website availability each month strengthening service availability for the public and our partners. Our site withstood the Amazon Web Services (AWS) tech outage on Oct. 20 and the Cloudflare tech outage on Nov. 18, affecting millions of users and essential services worldwide, and continued to provide valuable services and information to an average 27,000 DPS website users who viewed an average of 83,000 pages during each of those events.

Critical information delivery

When tragedy struck Minnesota on June 14 with the targeted shootings of Minnesota lawmakers, kicking off a two-day manhunt, the website helped amplify the agency's messaging and connected more than 8,700 site users with information about the suspect and reward for information in the case.

Website enhancements

Delivered key website enhancements to support and enhance agency initiatives that improve communication and service to the public and partners, including:

- Adding a new Financial Crimes and Fraud section to the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension website to provide critical information about fraud investigations and reporting, including a digital form for reporting suspected state program fraud to help build trust in state government.
- Relocating the Office of State Safety Oversight under the Office of Pipeline Safety to align information architecture and enhance usability in coordination with the agency's efforts to streamline operations of the two work units.
- Updating branding elements for the State Patrol, State Fire Marshal and Office of Pipeline Safety divisions in coordination with the modernization of their division logos to create a consistent experience across digital and other communications platforms.
- Coordinating and collaborating with our external website partners to develop and launch the website's Document Finder tool to enhance findability of document-based content, improving user success over 40,000 times since the tool's launch in July.
- Conceptualized, developed and launched a website resources hub on our employee intranet to centralize and streamline access to website content management materials to increase staff proficiency and compliance with content publishing standards.
 - Resources available on the hub:
 - Training documentation outlining how to work in the website content management system
 - Instructional videos providing step-by-step guidance for managing website content
 - Reference documents to aid in efficient image use, file management, accessibility and more
 - More than 115 DPS staff members accessed the hub and collectively viewed the documentation 275 times and the videos 125 times to enhance their content publishing knowledge and increase operational efficiency.

The website administration team — a partnership combining expertise from MNIT and the OOC — played a key role in supporting the new website through the following efforts:

- Designed and implemented a web support request intake form to streamline operations, improving request tracking, increasing response efficiency and

strengthening workflows across the web administration team, resulting in improved service to internal partners.

- Directed website support operations through the coordination and management of more than 100 completed vendor support tickets, ensuring timely resolutions and driving continuous platform improvements for better functionality and user experience.
- Coordinated cross-team collaboration between internal and external partners to prioritize and manage more than 40 active vendor support tickets that will deliver improved functionality for content managers and website users upon completion.
- Triaged and managed more than 80 internal support requests, providing expert troubleshooting and guidance to optimize website functionality and reduce operational delays in content publishing.
- Delivered responsive, on-demand support and strategic consultation for non-ticketed requests, enabling content editors to resolve challenges and continue delivering necessary information and services to internal and external audiences.
- Developed, maintained and optimized 72 digital forms, strengthening data collection processes and elevating the user experience by digitizing services, and improving service efficiencies for internal partners.
- Enhanced site search performance by analyzing results and adjusting rankings, increasing content discoverability and user satisfaction.
- Executed ongoing quality assurance and accessibility monitoring, ensuring compliance and delivering a more inclusive and consistent user experience.

Top divisions for website traffic

- DVS generated 22.9 million pageviews, highlighting its role as the highest-trafficked division or core service on our website and the depth of content it provides to Minnesotans.
- BCA recorded 1.5 million pageviews, indicating strong public interest in investigative efforts and other program information.
- OTS achieved 1.1 million pageviews, demonstrating its value in providing information about traffic safety topics and campaign initiatives.

Social media

DPS social media efforts are managed through a broad network of accounts across social platforms to educate, inform and engage with community. From real-time updates to long-term awareness efforts, the OOC helps amplify key messages by making storytelling interactive, adaptable and audience focused.

Highlights

- 82.1 million views across platforms, a 188 percent increase year over year
- 2,990 posts across channels
- Major growth with post output on YouTube, X, Instagram and LinkedIn

An in-depth look at OOC social media efforts for DPS divisions

Top-performing content (all Facebook posts)

- Announcement of Trooper Mollie McClure's passing (3,670,933 views)
- No Kings image in Boelter's vehicle (1,841,197 views)
- Boelter search (1,795,353 views)

Numbers by platform

Facebook *(Data pulled from across 11 DPS accounts)*

- Total followers: 434,729, up 15.2 percent
- Top three accounts:
 - State Patrol: 193,506 followers
 - Bureau of Criminal Apprehension: 110,356 followers
 - Department of Public Safety: 45,233 followers
- Post views: 64,328,455
- Post engagements: 6,234,821

Instagram *(Data pulled from DPS account)*

- Total followers: 17,746, up 38.3 percent
- Page engagement: 82,839, up 33 percent
- Post reach: 1,625,107 users, down 21.1 percent
- Post views: 2,844,872 views, up 523 percent

X/Twitter *(Data pulled from across 12 DPS accounts. PIO accounts excluded from this data)*

- Top three accounts:
 - MnDPS_MSP = 89K followers
 - MnDPS_DPS = 53K followers

- MnDPS_BCA = 23K followers
- Post impressions: 7,101,348, up 265 percent
- Post engagements: 316,932, up 264 percent

LinkedIn (*Data pulled from DPS account*)

- Total followers: 3,922, up 72.4 percent
- Page reach: 140,609, up 68.8 percent
- Page clicks: 19,220, up 66.9 percent
- Page engagements: 6,605, up 128 percent

YouTube (*Data pulled from DPS account*)

- Posts: 100 (up from 59 last year)
- Public videos: 50
- YouTube shorts created and posted on our account this year: 21
- Subscribers: 11,600
- Page video views: 8,249,804

Video production

The OOC's video production is on call 24/7 to capture and deliver timely visuals. The OOC brings stories to life through dynamic visual content that informs, engages and inspires. From field shoots and press conferences to training videos and crisis response, the team produces high-quality video for a wide range of department and partner needs. With expertise in filming, editing and live streaming, the OOC supports both planned and rapid-response communications efforts.

Highlights

- 31 YouTube videos and 21 livestreamed events
- Major livestreams during crisis events reached hundreds of thousands of viewers.
- Media room upgrades and new video production processes implemented

An in-depth look at OOC's video support for DPS

Videos and livestreams for DPS divisions

The top three most viewed YouTube videos were:

1. [Woodbury family warns of lithium-ion battery dangers](#) (1,252 views)
2. [Lisa Dugan motorcycle crash footage](#) (1,376 views)
3. [SFM instructional video](#) (675 views)

The top three most viewed livestreams were:

1. [State officials provide update on overnight incidents in Brooklyn Park, Champlin](#) (104,519 views)
2. [Governor Walz to provide public safety update](#) (41,637 views)
3. [Livestream of the private funeral service for Melissa and Mark Hortman](#) (25,746 views)

Media room upgrades

The OOC oversaw a comprehensive upgrade to the media room, including the installation of new equipment and training staff to understand. Multiple meetings and coordination resulted in this success.

Upgrades consisted of updating the video switcher to a versatile ATEM Blackmagic system that is more reliable and current to obtain software upgrades as they occur.

This goes in concert with new video encoder systems that are more reliable and efficient. Part of this upgrade was to generate an accurate cable guide-path diagram that will assist anyone updating the equipment in the future.

Earlier in the year, the OOC upgraded its external encoder to an AJA Bridge. This was approved by MNIT and is working well with added security.

Graphic design

OOC design support delivers creative, brand-aligned visual solutions that elevate communication and marketing efforts and key messages across all of DPS. Whether it's a 50-page legislative report, sky-high billboard or photo suggestion, the OOC's design expertise helps translate complex information into clear, compelling visuals.

Highlights

- Hundreds of design deliverables including reports, billboards, manuals and templates
- New agency-wide accessible templates and email signatures
- Major projects including the DVS Driver's License Manual redesign

An in-depth look at OOC design work for DPS divisions

Design work

- 7 annual/strategic plan/crime statistics reports for PDF layout
- 46 fact sheet/flyer informational PDFs for divisions to distribute to public
- 28 hero images (some photo enhancements) divisions used for website graphics
- 14 graphics for social use
- 36 MMIR missing digital and print billboards
- 14 half-page card prints for distribution
- 10 large media backdrop displays
- 110-page new driver's manual layout (revised illustrations/text) accessible in two languages
- 15 printed brochures
- 18 table covers/vertical displays/tent printed graphics
- 13 easel display posters for media events
- 9 large lighted displays for DPS space at the State Fair
- 17 specialty/promotional/sign items set up for printing
- Revised 22 social and GovDelivery banners to align with state branding standards
- Revised social hero graphics to align branding across platforms

Largest projects

- DVS Driver's License manual
 - Modernized an outdated design
 - Re-formatted its size to make it easier for users to digest
 - Added plain language edits

- Updated old graphics to high-res standards
 - Added in and troubleshot accessibility standards when exporting from InDesign
 - Updated graphics and colors to meet accessibility standards
 - Made over a thousand edits from proofers
- DVS driver's license manual in Spanish
- State Fair booth redesign
- BCA Uniform Crime Report
- Agency-wide templates for DPS and divisions
 - Accessible
 - Standardized
 - Modern, refreshed design
 - Easier to use
 - More options
- New email signatures
 - Accessible
 - Standardized

Accessibility

Accessibility is foundational to public safety communication. The OOC strengthened DPS' commitment to accessibility by ensuring digital content, documents and tools were usable by all Minnesotans.

Highlights

- Accessibility trainings for the website
- AGE tribal compact agreements
- BCA, SFM, OPS docs on website all done

An in-depth look at the OOC's digital accessibility support for DPS

Document remediation

Completed comprehensive document remediation efforts to strengthen accessibility and compliance, including:

- Remediating BCA PDF-based forms to incorporate the latest tags required for form fields.
- Updating BCA Uniform Crime Reports and associated spreadsheets to correct issues and align them with the latest standards.
- Revising the State Patrol Commercial Vehicle Section Mandatory Inspection Program (MIP) manual to meet current standards.
- Enhancing State Fire Marshal annual reports to align with current standards.

RFP evaluations

Conducted an accessibility evaluation of proposed products submitted in response to a State Patrol RFP for a driving simulator, ensuring procurement decisions aligned with state accessibility standards.

ADA Title II updates

Reviewed and analyzed upcoming ADA Title II regulatory updates taking effect in 2026, to determine the impact of the required changes and assist with preparing the agency for future compliance.

Photography

Photography plays a vital role in telling the story of public safety. Through powerful images, we highlight the people behind our mission, document real-world impact and capture the moments that matter from everyday service to extraordinary events. Photos support education connection with Minnesotans by bringing programs, public messaging and stories to life.

Highlights

- Coverage of major events, trainings, ceremonies and funerals

An in-depth look at OOC photography services

Photo shoots

- REP drill at the new SEOC, Blaine
- DVS conference photo shoot (#1)
- DVS conference photo shoot (#2)
- OPS on-site photo shoot, Minneapolis
- DPS staff headshots, spring
- DPS staff headshots, fall

Events

- MMIR Day of Remembrance
- MMBWG Day on the Hill
- State Patrol award ceremony
- Fallen Firefighter Memorial Day
- Fallen Peace Officer Memorial Day
- BCA holiday party with Ames Lake
- DPS Picnic
- State Fair
- National Night Out
- Funeral for State Patrol trooper Mollie McClure
- Funeral for Goodview Fire Chief Jason Gruett
- Funeral for Amboy Firefighter Andrew Karels
- DPS annual employee awards

Safety Matters blog

The Safety Matters blog continues to be a central platform for meaningful public safety communication from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. The blog amplified division voices, explained complex topics in accessible language, shared real stories that resonate with Minnesotans and reinforced DPS' mission to keep people safe.

Whether reflecting on technology improvements, offering safety guidance or connecting readers with resources following critical events, Safety Matters strengthened engagement and trust across the communities DPS serves.

Highlights

- Shared in-depth storytelling and agency perspective on major initiatives, including a full year of insights on the redesigned DPS website and how it's serving Minnesotans
- Delivered clear safety guidance and practical tips — reinforcing Safety Matters as a go-to resource for everyday decisions
- Elevated voices across DPS divisions, translating technical subjects into accessible narratives that inform and empower readers
- Linked blog content with broader communications efforts to extend reach through newsletters and social media channels

Number of blogs: 56

Total views: 114,434

Top three:

1. [Fire Prevention Week 2025: Woodbury family warns of lithium-ion battery dangers](#) — 29,412 views
2. [Want to get your REAL ID faster? Here's how.](#) — 21,708 views
3. [Want a gold star? Get your REAL ID.](#) — 4,069 views

Safety First newsletter

The Safety First newsletter serves as a vital communications bridge between the Minnesota Department of Public Safety and the communities it serves, including employees, partners and the public. The newsletter delivered timely updates, insights and resources that made complex safety topics relevant and actionable. By combining practical guidance, division news and human stories, Safety First reinforced DPS' commitment to transparent, proactive engagement across multiple audiences.

Highlights

- Consistently informed both internal and external audiences with timely safety guidance, legislative updates and public-safety resource
- Linked readers to deeper content and tools by amplifying blog posts, campaign information, website features and division announcements
- Strengthened engagement through curated, audience-focused content that supported DPS priorities, from seasonal safety to statewide initiatives
- Enhanced newsletter visibility and accessibility by aligning content with digital strategy and cross-channel promotion

Communication by division

Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement

OOC supported Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement (AGE) in balancing enforcement responsibilities with service to Minnesota's alcohol and gambling industries. Communications elevated consumer protection efforts, reinforced regulatory clarity and positioned AGE as both an enforcement authority and trusted resource.

Highlights

- Coordinated statewide and national communications on illegal online gambling, including interviews, blogs, social media and web updates
- Led communications on a multiagency pull tabs racketeering case involving \$197,000 in stolen charitable funds
- Expanded social media storytelling, including K-9 Bia features, holiday compliance reminders and Citizens Academy promotion
- Modernized AGE web content, including new alcohol licensing pages and accessibility compliant posting of more than 100 Tribal compact agreements

An in-depth look at OOC's work supporting AGE

Illegal online casinos, sweepstakes and sports betting

Coordinated comprehensive communications on illegal online gambling — including interviews, blogs, social content, cross-agency messages and web updates — successfully positioning AGE as a credible enforcement authority within a nationwide effort to stop illegal operators, increasing public awareness of consumer risks and reinforcing Minnesota's commitment to protecting the integrity of legal gaming.

- **National industry interview**
Coordinated an interview with Covers, which featured Carla Cincotta and Jon Anglin discussing Minnesota's enforcement efforts. AGE was included in a major national story on states seeking federal support to combat illegal online gambling.
- **DPS blog: Minnesotan's lived experience with gambling addiction**
Humanized the consequences of unregulated gambling and reinforced why oversight and enforcement matter.
- **Social media reminders**
Directed consumers to the illegal-gambling story, highlighting AGE's actions

including letters sent to 21 illegal operators and multistate advocacy for federal action.

- **Attorney General collaboration**

Provided a DPS commissioner quote and amplified AG's announcement ordering illegal platforms to cease operation. Updated AGE web pages and shared through social media.

Pull tabs racketeering case

Led communications on complex, multiagency racketeering charges connected to a large pull-tab crime operation, generating statewide media coverage that highlighted AGE's investigative leadership and the seriousness of charitable gambling crimes, while reinforcing AGE's role in protecting charitable gaming revenue that funds Minnesota communities.

- Drafted and distributed a statewide news release demonstrating coordinated enforcement
- Secured broad media coverage across major outlets
- Published a DPS Blog featuring a police chief/American Legion board member describing the impact of stolen charitable funds
- Supported the story through complementary social content

Social media outreach and public information

Used dynamic, accessible messaging to educate consumers, licensees and industry partners on safety, compliance and enforcement, increasing engagement and awareness of AGE's mission, humanizing staff and operations, and strengthening AGE's identity as both a regulatory authority and a supportive resource.

- **K-9 Bia content:** Showcased her skills detecting hidden currency and educated the public on her role in unlicensed alcohol sales and stolen-fund investigations.
- **Super Bowl gambling reminders:** Helped consumers understand what's legal during peak betting season.
- **St. Patrick's Day license reminders:** Supported licensees in preparing for a busy holiday.
- **Prom and teen drinking messaging:** Reinforced laws and safety responsibilities for parents and bar owners.
- **National Police Week recognition:** Highlighted partnerships with law enforcement.

- **Memorial Day liquor law reminder:** Shared Q&A resources with exclusive liquor stores.
- **AGE Citizens Academy posts:** Promoted public participation and transparency.
- **Temporary alcohol permits (festival season):** Guided not-for-profits on legal requirements.
- **College/underage drinking reminders:** Emphasized fake ID detection and legal responsibilities for bars.
- **Leadership transition:** Drafted Carla Cincotta's retirement communications and highlighted continuity under new leadership via DPS LinkedIn and internal messages.

Web content and digital services

Built and updated AGE web content to improve guidance, transparency and access to licensing information, providing clearer pathways for compliance, preparing for future online service expansion, and strengthening education and support for industry partners.

- Posted content across AGE, DPS and partner platforms on Citizens Academy, racketeering charges, illegal gambling and holiday reminders
- Developed a new alcohol licensing and renewal page, designed for future online services
- Worked with a contractor on accessibility and posting for 100+ Tribal compact agreements, reinforcing transparency and trust with Tribal partners
- Maintained updated forms and guidance for complex alcohol and gambling regulations

Additional communications projects

Liquor inspection visual storytelling

Shot inspection b-roll and interviewed an alcohol inspector, developing compelling visual content for future media requests, web pages, and educational materials, ultimately improving public and legislative understanding of AGE's enforcement responsibilities.

State Fair booth photography

Captured inspection images for booth displays, producing engaging visuals for one of Minnesota's highest-traffic public engagement venues and showcasing AGE's work to thousands of fairgoers.

GovDelivery statute guidance

Distributed refrigerator-statute guidance to wholesalers, manufacturers and retailers, delivering clear, timely compliance information directly to thousands of industry contacts and preventing violations.

Kratom guidance (with MDA)

Provided messaging for MDA's warning and prepared AGE's own advisory, ensuring consistent statewide messaging among regulatory partners and increasing clarity for retailers on selling a potentially dangerous supplement.

"On Tap with AGE" GovDelivery template

Designed a branded outreach tool for ongoing guidance and updates, creating a scalable, recognizable communication format that strengthens AGE's identity as a proactive resource, not just an enforcement agency.

Stakeholder subscription sign-up planning

Developed an online sign-up method for industry stakeholders, establishing a new mechanism for direct, opt-in communication with licensees and partners, expanding targeted communication and building long-term industry engagement.

Proof magazine editorial opportunity

Explored recurring editorial placement in a publication reaching all Minnesota license holders, identifying a potential long-term communications channel that broadens AGE's industry presence and positions the division as a supportive partner.

Football boards and tip sheets

Planned a campaign with new online resources explaining laws around football boards, preparing clear, accessible educational tools that reduce confusion for consumers and protect licensees from violations.

Bureau of Criminal Apprehension

The OOC supported the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) through high-profile investigations, public safety alerts, stakeholder engagement and transparency initiatives. Work balanced fast-moving media response with proactive outreach, education and trust-building across communities statewide.

Highlights

- Coordinated communications for major investigations, initiatives and leadership events, including the Lutsen fire investigation and the groundbreaking of the new BCA regional facility in Mankato.
- Published 33 news releases and supported local law enforcement agencies with additional drafting, editing and strategic communications guidance.
- Produced 980+ social media posts, generating more than 16.5 million impressions, including messaging for missing persons cases.
- Launched a new BCA fraud website section with reporting forms to improve transparency and public access.
- Developed and supported data dashboards and reports to increase public understanding of BCA work.
- Provided communications support for AMBER Alert and Missing Person Alert programs; created a new social media channel specifically dedicated to missing and endangered persons.

An in-depth look at OOC's work supporting BCA

Public outreach and education

Coordinated BCA participation, messaging and collateral for 124 community liaison events, including career fairs, National Night Out and the BCA booth at the Minnesota State Fair. These efforts reached thousands of Minnesotans and increased awareness of BCA services, investigations and career opportunities.

Developed and maintained a public-facing list of hundreds of stationary license plate reader locations statewide, meeting statutory requirements and improving transparency.

Digital services and transparency

Worked with subject matter experts to develop a BCA data dashboard, complementing annual reports and providing quarterly data updates to the public.

Built a new Financial Crimes and Fraud section of the BCA website, including educational content and multiple reporting forms to help Minnesotans understand investigative processes and submit information.

Media relations and news conferences

Published 33 news releases on investigations, services, annual reports and emerging public safety issues.

Provided communications support to local law enforcement agencies by drafting six news releases, editing a dozen additional releases, and offering strategic counsel on numerous cases.

Hosted six news conferences, including three with the governor, addressing topics such as DMT devices, the Lutsen fire investigation and the Mankato facility groundbreaking.

Drafted talking points, coordinated quotes and supported communication planning for five additional news conferences led by partner agencies where the BCA conducted or assisted with investigations.

Blogs and storytelling

Published six DPS Safety Matters blogs highlighting BCA work and expertise, including:

- The value of a new BCA regional facility in Mankato
- The purpose and goals of the BCA missing persons Facebook page
- The work of the Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management team
- The role of BCA crime victim advocates, including sextortion cases
- Efforts to address crimes against children through public awareness
- The career of a long-serving BCA-State Patrol employee

Newsletters and internal communications

Produced a weekly internal BCA newsletter summarizing communications activity and media coverage to keep staff informed and connected.

Drafted the BCA biennial legislative report and produced four newsletters/summaries for the Criminal and Juvenile Justice and BCA Advisory Group.

Stakeholder and partner outreach

Collaborated with a multi-agency stakeholder group to develop and launch the Minnesota Guide to Sexual Assault Investigations, including coordinated communications to inform law enforcement and the public.

Supported development and rollout of the Targeted Violence Prevention Strategy, including media outreach to help communities prevent targeted violence incidents.

Produced a quarterly stakeholder newsletter reaching more than 10,000 criminal justice partners statewide, and delivered 39 targeted communications on statute changes, security requirements and system updates.

Provided communications strategy briefings for new BCA employee training sessions.

Legislative and accountability communications

Compiled 52 community engagement reports and 26 Tribal liaison reports documenting outreach and relationship-building efforts.

Developed seven legislative one-pagers and a booklet highlighting key BCA policy and funding priorities.

Drafted and/or edited seven statutory legislative reports, including:

- Evidence turnaround time
- Minnesota Financial Crimes Task Force
- Minnesota Fusion Center
- Violent Crime appropriations spending
- Use of Force Investigations Unit
- Automobile Theft Prevention Program
- Minnesota Gang File

Leadership and crisis support

Provided strategic communications counsel and support to BCA leadership during some of the state's highest-profile public safety events of 2025, ensuring consistent, accurate and timely messaging.

Community Affairs

The OOC partnered closely with Community Affairs to support public-facing engagement, outreach and education efforts that connect DPS with Minnesotans across the state. This work focused on strengthening visibility at major events, improving accessibility of resources, coordinating storytelling opportunities and ensuring outreach materials aligned with DPS messaging and brand standards.

Highlights

- **State Fair planning and execution**
Participated on the State Fair planning committee, contributing to strategy and coordination for booth design and layout, apparel, giveaways and overall visitor experience. Regular planning meetings supported cohesive messaging and effective public engagement at one of Minnesota's largest outreach opportunities.
- **Facility open house support**
Coordinated communications support for the open house of newly renovated DPS spaces, including planning assistance and collaboration with leadership and Community Affairs staff.
- **Driver's license manuals (English and Spanish)**
Collaborated with Community Affairs leadership and partners to support updates and rollout of English and Spanish driver's license manuals, ensuring accuracy, accessibility and alignment with DPS standards.
- **Website and resource updates**
Supported website updates and content coordination, including updates to Community Affairs resource guides to improve clarity, usability and access to information for the public.
- **Event documentation and storytelling**
Coordinated photography and video support for community-facing events such as National Night Out, BCA tours and other outreach activities, creating assets for use across social media, Safety First and additional DPS communications channels.
- **Strategic outreach coordination**
Collaborated on identifying opportunities to amplify Community Affairs work through social media, the Safety First newsletter and other channels, including observances such as MLK Day and Black History Month, firearm safety initiatives, and events hosted in communities across Minnesota.

- **Swag and materials process improvement**

Helped clarify and streamline internal processes for ordering outreach materials and swag, improving coordination between Community Affairs staff and OOC and supporting more efficient, consistent community engagement efforts.

Driver and Vehicle Services

OOC partnered with Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS) on complex regulatory issues and large-scale public education campaigns.

Highlights

- Rapid response communications on federal changes to non-domiciled CDLs, including talking points, web updates and media responses
- Statewide REAL ID campaign that exceeded goals, raising Minnesota's compliance rate from 38 percent to 49 percent
- Scam-text response campaign that reached Minnesotans within hours and prevented widespread fraud
- Production of the bilingual "What to Expect on the DVS Road Test" video, viewed more than 123,000 times

An in-depth look at OOC's work supporting DVS

Non-domiciled commercial driver's licenses changes

The OOC worked with DVS to respond to changing federal guidance on non-domiciled commercial driver's licenses (CDLs).

The U.S. Department of Transportation announced new regulations on Sept. 25 for issuing non-domiciled CDLs effective Sept. 29. The U.S. Court of Appeals issued an administrative stay on Nov. 10, which then changed to an emergency stay on Nov. 14.

For the September regulations and November stays, we developed communications plans to respond. The plans included:

- Key messages
- Talking points
- Email messages to partners
- Website updates

The federal government also shared results in December of an annual program review (APR), which indicated DVS was out of compliance with federal regulations. This was followed up by multiple media inquiries and a letter from the federal delegation on CDL.

We immediately crafted a statement from the DVS director, which we shared with the media. We then did an in-depth review of the APR and drafted appropriate responses to

that and the delegation letter contesting some findings, acknowledging where we fell short and our next steps.

Our collaboration with DVS, as well as other teams in the agency, allowed us to respond and adapt quickly to a constantly changing situation.

REAL ID campaign

The OOC, working with DVS, led a multi-pronged, statewide campaign to encourage Minnesotans to get a REAL ID.

Beginning May 7, Minnesotans and others needed a REAL ID license or identification card to board domestic flights or enter certain federal facilities. To encourage Minnesotans to apply before the federal deadline, we developed a communications plan that included:

- Media pitches
- Community events
- Targeted messaging
- A news conference with Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) and Transportation Security Administration
- Collateral
 - Posters
 - Handouts
 - State Fair giveaways
 - Digital signage at MSP

To reach Minnesota's diverse communities, we also partnered with Twin Cities PBS (TPT) to create a series of videos, web graphics and online ads in eight common languages in the state. The diverse media campaign alone received more than a million unique impressions.

As a non-required REAL ID state and one of the last states to adopt REAL ID, Minnesota had a compliance rate of 38 percent when the campaign started. The campaign's goal was to increase the number of Minnesotans with a REAL ID to 40 percent. The overall campaign exceeded our goal and resulted in a rate of 50 percent.

Scam texts

When fraudulent text messages requesting payment for fines were sent in Minnesota, the OOC quickly developed a communications plan to let Minnesotans know it was a scam.

Minnesotans started receiving texts from the "Minnesota Department of Motor Vehicles" or "DPSMN" requesting payment for outstanding tickets in early June. After realizing this was happening, OOC developed a communications plan to prevent Minnesotans from falling for the scam. The plan included:

- Social posts
- Website banners and callouts
- A recording for people in a call queue
- A news release
- Key messages for media inquiries
- Internal messaging and talking points

Within hours, our message was out and shared by media across the state.

When a second round of scam texts was sent in July, Minnesotans were prepared. We heard that people remembered our previous messages. They checked our website and saw a new image of the latest scam text. We received emails and calls letting us know how much Minnesotans — some of whom were communications professionals — appreciated our work to keep them safe from scams like these.

[“What to expect on the DVS road test” video](#)

The OOC created “What to expect on the DVS road test,” a video for Minnesotans preparing for their driver’s license road test.

The four-minute video covers what you can expect before, during and after the road test. Available in English and Spanish, the video was divided into shorter clips for social media and quick viewing.

We shared the video with our driving school partners across the state. We also posted the videos on our social media channels, including YouTube, and our website. The videos have been viewed more than 123,000 times and have over a thousand reactions on YouTube.

The videos are helping Minnesotans prepare for their road test, as shown by two comments on our YouTube page:

- “Thank you I passed my exam because of your video”
- “Thank you for this! I’m neurodivergent and I always feel like I need to know the specific information to expect and be prepared for! My test is today in just over an hour! :)”

Emergency Communication Networks

OOC supported ECN through public education, stakeholder engagement and leadership transitions.

Highlights

- Development of Text-to-911 PSA video and outreach materials
- Messaging and coordination for statewide interoperability exercises
- Launch of the “911 vs. 988: Make the Right Call” campaign
- Creation of six stakeholder newsletters and targeted social media content

An in-depth look at OOC’s work supporting ECN

Blogs and feature stories

Researched, wrote and published blogs and feature stories highlighting statewide priorities and training efforts, delivering engaging content that showcased Minnesota’s emergency communications work and elevated visibility of these initiatives to reinforce their value to public safety.

Text-to-911 PSA video

Developed the concept, script and production plan for a Text-to-911 PSA video, producing an accessible message that demonstrated real-world use and strengthened public understanding of emergency communication tools.

Statewide interoperability exercises

Created targeted messaging and coordinated communication for two statewide interoperability exercises, reinforcing awareness of exercise goals, enhancing partner engagement and supporting statewide preparedness while promoting collaboration among emergency communications stakeholders.

RFP for the TPT Text-to-911 project

Contributed writing, review and guidance for the TPT Text-to-911 project RFP, ensuring clarity, transparency and alignment with ECN goals, encouraging strong vendor participation, and laying the groundwork for a high-quality public education initiative.

New director content

Produced and promoted announcements introducing the new ECN director, ensuring audiences were informed and strengthening trust, transparency and continuity during leadership transitions.

Social media posts

Created 15 targeted social media posts across DPS platforms, amplifying ECN messaging and highlighting key initiatives, expanding digital outreach and increasing public engagement with emergency communication services.

Stakeholder newsletters

Wrote, designed and distributed six newsletters to statewide partners, providing timely updates on projects and resources, strengthening communication and reinforcing collaboration among emergency communications stakeholders.

Special projects

Text-to-911 outreach

Delivered clear messaging through social media, partner communications and educational materials explaining when and how to use Text-to-911, clarifying that calling remains the fastest way to reach 911 while positioning texting as a critical option for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, speech-impaired or unable to speak safely, promoting proper system use and increasing awareness of this important accessibility tool.

“911 vs. 988: Make the Right Call” campaign

Launched a coordinated statewide campaign explaining the distinct purposes of 911 and 988, delivering unified messaging across social media, digital channels and stakeholder networks, improving public understanding of emergency versus mental health response systems and helping residents connect with the right support at the right time.

North Star interoperability communications exercise at Camp Ripley

Coordinated communications and messaging in support of the full-scale North Star interoperability exercise, highlighting participation across local, state, Tribal and federal agencies, reinforcing Minnesota’s commitment to statewide readiness and improving interoperable communications through large-scale exercises.

Fiscal and Administrative Services

Highlights

IGX Grants Management

The OOC, working with Fiscal and Administrative Services, created a communications and engagement plan to support the new IGX Grants Management system.

Driven by legislative changes, IGX Grants Management replaced the old e-Grants system to standardize, streamline and improve grant-making practices across DPS divisions.

IGX was launched in August. However, the communications and engagement plan started in April 2025 and will continue into 2026. It includes:

- New web pages on DPS website for grantees and other external users
- Intranet pages with links to IGX registration, training PowerPoints and videos, guides, a question form and more for DPS staff
- Live webinar training sessions for grantees and other external users
- Regular updates for DPS leadership, grant managers and project sponsors

As of November 2025, 12 funding opportunities were released, nine grants were awarded and eight applications are in process.

Homeland Security and Emergency Management

OOC supported HSEM communications before, during and after emergencies.

Highlights

- Communications support for six State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) activations and nine state disaster declarations
- Coordinated messaging for a national disaster declaration
- Campaigns for Severe Weather Awareness Week, National Preparedness Month and Winter Hazard Awareness Week
- Media coordination and storytelling around the opening of the new SEOC

An in-depth look at OOC's work for HSEM

News releases

Developed and disseminated six timely press releases to media outlets and partner agencies, providing clear updates on statewide emergencies and preparedness initiatives, increasing public awareness and supporting informed decision-making during emergencies.

Blog features

Researched and wrote three blog features showcasing statewide priorities, resources and community preparedness efforts, delivering accessible educational content that improved public understanding of HSEM programs and support available to Minnesotans.

Informational and storytelling videos

Planned, scripted and produced three videos highlighting HSEM capabilities and preparedness strategies, delivering visually engaging content that explained disaster response concepts and reinforced public trust in Minnesota's emergency management system.

News conference

Coordinated briefing logistics and messaging for a press conference elevating agency leadership visibility, delivering timely updates to media and the public, strengthening transparency and ensuring authoritative, consistent communication during a key emergency response.

Radiological Preparedness Drill

Provided communications coordination and partner messaging for a statewide Radiological Preparedness Drill, reinforcing information-sharing and exercise objectives

across agencies, strengthening Minnesota's readiness for radiological emergencies through improved collaboration.

SEOC activations

Supported six SEOC activations by coordinating messaging, maintaining situational awareness, and delivering timely updates, streamlining communication among responding agencies and ensuring the public received consistent, accurate information.

State Disaster Declarations

Developed and shared clear information for nine State Disaster Declarations, providing transparency and timely guidance to affected communities, helping residents and local governments understand available assistance and recovery pathways.

National Disaster Declaration

Coordinated messaging and collaborated with federal partners to support one National Disaster Declaration, delivering accurate, unified information to statewide audiences and reinforcing trust and understanding of federal support available to impacted communities.

Social media posts

Produced 67 targeted social media posts highlighting preparedness, response and recovery efforts, expanding digital engagement, keeping the public informed, and promoting safer decision-making before and during emergencies.

Leadership feature

Created and distributed a feature introducing the new director, providing stakeholders with insight into leadership priorities and vision, strengthening confidence and promoting connection with agency leadership.

HSEM conference

Supported planning and communications coverage for the HSEM conference by coordinating messaging, promoting key sessions and capturing event highlights, amplifying preparedness messages, and enhancing engagement among emergency managers while reinforcing statewide resilience priorities.

SEOC opening

Provided communications support for the new SEOC opening by promoting the event and crafting messaging showcasing the facility's capabilities, highlighting Minnesota's investment in emergency coordination and elevating public and stakeholder awareness of enhanced emergency response capacity.

Special projects

Severe Weather Awareness Week

Coordinated statewide messaging with the National Weather Service and local emergency managers, delivering preparedness messages through social media, press outreach and educational materials, providing consistent, accessible guidance on tornadoes, storms and flooding, increasing public readiness and helping Minnesotans adopt life-saving preparedness actions.

National Preparedness Month

Led a month-long statewide outreach campaign with sustained social media messaging and partner collaboration, delivering simple, practical preparedness guidance to households across Minnesota and strengthening community resilience by encouraging residents to plan for emergencies.

Winter Hazard Awareness Week

Coordinated winter safety messaging with the National Weather Service and local partners across digital platforms, equipping Minnesotans with critical guidance for cold-weather hazards, reducing risk and increasing public preparedness during winter months.

SEOC building opening

Planned and executed a coordinated communication effort highlighting the opening of the new SEOC, promoting the open house event and showcasing the facility's enhanced emergency-response capabilities, elevating stakeholder engagement and demonstrating Minnesota's commitment to advancing public safety and interagency coordination.

Human Resources

Highlights

Promoting DPS job openings

The OOC helped the human resources (HR) division find ways to spread the word about our open positions.

DPS is a popular employer at the State of Minnesota, and people are interested in our job postings. HR sends two weekly newsletters highlighting open DPS jobs, with one focusing only on Driver and Vehicle Services jobs.

To help get open positions in front of interested job seekers, OOC had suggestions to increase our reach. Starting in January 2025, we:

- Added QR codes to physical advertisements. The codes direct job seekers to sign up for the newsletters or to our Jobs web page, which also has a link to sign up for the newsletters.
- Posted job openings on social media twice a month. We previously did not post job openings on our social media channels.
- Launched a series of one-minute videos for social media. HR recruiters answer commonly asked job application questions.
- Added a Featured Opening section and improved the resources available on our Jobs web page.

Between January and March, there was a 37 percent increase in new subscribers to the weekly newsletters. There's been a steady increase in subscribers since. Although the increases are due to a variety of factors, including more engagement opportunities with job seekers, HR credits OOC with a significant portion of it.

Internal Affairs and Affirmative Action

Highlights

Supporting inclusion and belonging

The OOC helped Internal Affairs update agency staff on the Inclusive Spaces Initiative, which is reimagining how our physical spaces support our work.

The Office of Inclusion and Belonging guided the initiative to create work environments that make employees feel connected, supported and valued. It started as a room-naming project and expanded to focus on belonging, accessibility and collaboration. However, many staff were not aware of the work being done or the impact it's having.

Office of General Counsel

Highlights

Rulemaking process

Helped the administrative and legislative drafting program manager expand DPS' rulemaking website and notification process.

Office of Justice Programs

OOC supported victims, families and communities through trauma-informed communications.

Highlights

- Development of victim resource materials following the Annunciation Church shooting, resulting in hundreds of reimbursements and applications
- Digitization of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR) case intake to accelerate support for families and law enforcement
- Comprehensive rollout of the MMIR Reward Fund, resulting in increased case registrations and national media coverage
- Branding, media coordination and collateral for the first-ever Missing and Murdered Black Women and Girls (MMBWG) Day on the Hill

An in-depth look at OOC's work supporting OJP

Annunciation Church shooting

In response to the Annunciation Church shooting, the OOC developed resources and materials to share with those impacted by the tragic events.

Shortly after the August shooting, the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) had staff on-site to provide comfort and support to victims, their family members and community support. They also planned to staff the Family Assistance Center and the Minneapolis Emergency Operations Center.

Within hours of learning OJP was staffing the centers, OOC developed communications for OJP and our partners. The resources and handouts focused on what victims requiring emotional and financial support needed to know. They included:

- Printable victim resource cards
- Print and digital document with key services and supports
- Social media posts for partners to share
- Customized web page with additional resources for support after a shooting

The materials helped us reach those impacted by the shooting. Hundreds of resource cards were handed out at the Family Assistance Center, and over 300 applications have been submitted for reimbursement through the Crime Victims Reimbursement Program.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office case intake digitization

The OOC helped the MMIR Office modernize their case intake process.

When someone goes missing, every second counts. The previous intake process was a time-consuming email-based process. Staff sometimes traveled across the state to get necessary signatures, adding hours if not days to onboard a case and share information with the community.

The OOC and MMIR Office recognized an opportunity to streamline the process. Before implementing it, they consulted with Minnesota Information Technology Services (MNIT) to ensure the new process met state privacy, data practices and disclosure requirements.

The new digital workflow eliminates most manual processing and travel. It gives the MMIR Office immediate authority to directly support families, coordinate with law enforcement and create flyers using a pre-approved template when receiving a case. In addition, we updated information gathered to support broader data collection efforts.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office Reward Fund

The OOC developed and implemented a complex communications plan to announce the Gaagige-Mikwendaagoziwag Reward Fund tip program.

The reward fund offers monetary rewards for tips in eligible missing persons, suspicious death and homicide investigations. The MMIR Office worked with various partners for over a year to develop policies and procedures to support the fund's operations.

We reached out to and coordinated with partners before the reward fund announcement. Over a dozen law enforcement agencies were briefed on their reward-eligible cases. They needed to understand how the fund worked, be prepared to receive tips and have creative assets ready to promote the rewards.

Other communications spanned Tribal law enforcement, partner organizations, victim advocates, legislators and the MMIR Reward Fund Board. New creative for billboards, social media and the MMIR website was developed to draw attention to the rewards.

We took extra care to welcome families to the news conference and prepare them to participate. A space for families to grieve was available and time was built into the program for those attending to smudge and pray.

At the news conference, Department of Public Safety Commissioner Bob Jacobson, Sen. Mary Kunesh, Bemidji Police Chief Mike Mastin and two families whose loved ones are missing or were murdered spoke.

The comprehensive rollout resulted in local and national media coverage centering victims and raising awareness of the efforts to combat the MMIR epidemic. The following months saw a 100 percent increase in registration of homicide cases with the MMIR Office and the establishment of new collaborative efforts with law enforcement.

Office for Missing and Murdered Black Women and Girls Day on the Hill

The OOC, working with the Office for Missing and Murdered Black Women and Girls (MMBWG), created collateral for the first-ever MMBWG Day on the Hill.

The inaugural MMBWG Day on the Hill was on April 9. The day's goals were to raise awareness about the office, call for policy change, and honor Black women and girls who have experienced violence.

OOC developed collateral to brand the event, including:

- A save the date
- Social posts
- Backdrops, including a step and repeat banner
- Brochures and handouts
- Posters highlighting important statistics

During the event, OOC coordinated media interviews, as well as took photos and video. Coverage of the event was extensive across the Twin Cities. It also created a hook for a national story about Minnesota's MMBWG Office on the PBS News Hour.

Office for Missing and Murdered Black Women and Girls logo design

The OOC helped the MMBWG Office develop its new logo.

A logo can help illustrate the identity of an office, generating a distinct and symbolic visual recognizable across the state and even the nation. As the first of its kind in the nation, the MMBWG office wanted a visually compelling logo that is sustainable and adaptable for long-term use.

As part of a working group with MMBWG and an external vendor, we brainstormed, refined and ensured every element of the design was intentional. We also shared our expertise on

palettes, typography and other design elements to guarantee cohesion with other agency logos.

The MMBWG logo was carefully crafted to embody the office's mission and values, as well as the emotional gravity of its work. Each design choice was made to honor the lived experiences of Black women and girls, while also serving as a reminder of resilience, remembrance and justice.

Office of Pipeline Safety

Highlights

- Coordinated rollout of the Office of Pipeline Safety's (OPS) modernized logo
- Messaging around OPS/OSSO separation and appointment of a new division director

An in-depth look at OOC's work supporting OPS

New logo rollout

Planned and executed the rollout of OPS' modernized logo, coordinating messaging across internal teams and external partners to ensure it was used consistently across websites, printed materials and communications, which strengthened OPS' visual identity and made the brand easier to recognize.

New director and OPS/OSSO split from SFM messaging

Drafted and distributed clear, timely communications about the OPS/OSSO separation from SFM and Jonathan Wolfram's appointment as division director, ensuring audiences received accurate information, supporting a smooth transition, minimizing confusion and reinforcing trust through transparency.

Office of Traffic Safety

OOC supported the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) through year-round traffic safety campaigns.

Highlights

- Speeding, impaired driving, seat belt and distracted driving campaigns with strong media and social engagement
- Lane splitting and filtering law rollout with live demonstrations and statewide media coverage
- Survivor centered storytelling that humanized traffic safety impacts

An in-depth look at OOC's work supporting OTS

100 Deadliest Days / extra speed enforcement messaging

Coordinated year-round speeding-prevention communications, including social media posts, video and photo stories, two blogs, a press conference and a live RSIC software demonstration with two ride-along experiences (Eden Prairie and State Patrol). These efforts delivered consistent, engaging multimedia messaging that highlighted high-risk summer driving behaviors and showcased enforcement strategies. The campaign increased public awareness of speeding dangers, strengthened media coverage and bolstered understanding of innovative enforcement tools.

Holiday impaired campaign

Coordinated a statewide impaired-driving campaign with multiple partner organizations, beginning with a press conference at a local fire department. Officer-recorded videos and additional social media content shared personal accounts of impaired-crash responses, producing emotional and compelling storytelling. The campaign elevated public urgency about safe driving during the holiday season and strengthened collaboration with contributing law enforcement departments.

St. Patrick's Day campaign

Organized a press conference and supporting blog in response to higher-than-average fatalities during the holiday. Partnered with St. Patrick's Day parade staff to record a joint impaired-driving safety message with Trooper Mike Lee and Ms. St. Patrick. These efforts delivered timely, holiday-specific messaging with strong community relevance, increasing both reach and credibility of impaired-driving warnings during a high-risk celebration.

August campaign

Coordinated a campaign featuring MADD advocate Trish Wehling, who shared her story of

losing her daughter to an impaired driver. Secured an hour-long WCCO radio segment with Trish and an MSP trooper to amplify survivor and enforcement voices. The campaign deepened public understanding of impaired-driving consequences and leveraged media coverage to increase lifesaving messaging.

November/December holiday campaign

Produced a campaign featuring Woodbury Police Officer Alan Olson and his son, who shared their story of being hit by an impaired driver while on an ATV. Developed a 4-minute video, vlog, news release and press conference with partner agencies to share the story. These efforts ensured that impaired-driving messages reached large audiences through major media outlets and DPS social media channels, increasing public awareness of real-life consequences and motivating safer behavior during high-risk holiday periods.

Spring child passenger safety and seat belt campaign

Partnered with the Minnesota Safety Council to host a press conference in Maple Grove featuring Jennifer Storkin, who shared how proper safety restraints saved her grandchildren's lives. Captured video clips for social media, securing coverage from all major Twin Cities outlets. This campaign reinforced seat belt and child passenger safety messaging with strong emotional impact and high media visibility.

Distracted Driving Awareness Month

Coordinated with the Minnesota Safety Council and St. Paul Police to host a press conference at MSC headquarters, showcasing traffic safety vehicles and facilitating media ride-alongs. Recorded and published a ride-along video for social platforms. These efforts provided hands-on reporting opportunities, strengthened public understanding of distraction-related risks, and elevated the credibility of enforcement messaging.

Special projects

Roadside Information Safety Center (RSIC)

Promoted RSIC through targeted media relations, focusing on high-risk periods such as the 100 Deadliest Days. Explained how the platform integrates multiple data sources to support crash-prevention analytics. Media coverage highlighted local law enforcement testing of the tool, increasing public awareness of Minnesota's investment in data-driven traffic safety and showcasing innovation in crash prevention.

Ted Foss Move Over Law 25th Anniversary

Created a custom memorial sign, placed it at the Minnesota State Fair for public signing and coordinated media engagement with Minnesota State Patrol leadership and Trooper Jake Miller. Delivered live and recorded interviews to elevate awareness of the Move Over

Law. This initiative honored Trooper Foss’s legacy while raising visibility of a critical traffic-safety law during a high-traffic statewide event.

The Current Happy Hour Education Events

Partnered with The Current to staff traffic-safety booths across bars statewide, coordinating outreach on new lane-splitting and filtering laws and facilitating “Learn Your Limits” preliminary breath test (PBT) demonstrations with St. Paul Police. These efforts provided direct engagement with nightlife patrons, strengthening community awareness of impairment risks and new motorcycle safety laws through interactive, face-to-face education.

Lane splitting and lane filtering news conference

With limited funds to educate Minnesotans on a new motorcycle lane splitting and filtering law, OOC looked for a unique way to show drivers and motorcyclists how the new law would impact them.

Motorcycle lane splitting and filtering became legal in July 2025, and DPS was tasked with making sure Minnesotans were ready to follow the law safely and legally. To reach the most Minnesotans for the least cost, multiple DPS divisions worked together to hold a news conference, which included a live demonstration of lane splitting and filtering.

Held at the Driver and Vehicle Services exam station in Eagan, OTS and the Minnesota State Patrol shared information about the new law and answered questions from the media. Following that, four motorcycles and six vehicles demonstrated lane splitting and filtering on a closed road test course. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources captured aerial footage of the maneuvers using a drone.

Every major metro media outlet attended the news conference and broadcast the demonstration. We also posted footage of the demonstration on our social media channels. The posts have had a far reach with 805,000 views, over 1,800 shares and nearly 9,000 interactions.

State Fire Marshal

OOC partnered with SFM on statewide fire prevention and safety initiatives.

Highlights

- Statewide carbon monoxide safety campaign with more than 1 million views.
- Fire Prevention Week media appearances and lithium ion battery safety storytelling.
- Task Force 1 deployment communications and return news conference.
- Ongoing GovDelivery messaging and NERIS transition communications.

An in-depth look at OOC's work supporting SFM

CO safety and awareness campaign

Collaborated on concept development, coordinated production and managed a statewide ad rollout featuring memorable character-based ads (werewolf, alien, lake monster), which reached over 1 million views and significantly raised public awareness of CO dangers.

- **Media advisory and Rochester news conference**
Drafted a media advisory, coordinated logistics and secured partner participation for a Rochester news conference highlighting a federal CO-safety grant, which showcased local alarm installations and generated broad TV, radio and print coverage to amplify public understanding of CO risks.
- **Post-event news release**
Produced and distributed a comprehensive news release outlining the federal grant, ad campaign and alarm installations, reinforcing CO-safety messaging and extending the initiative's reach across Minnesota.
- **Campaign blog post featuring Cheryl Burt's story**
Researched, wrote and published a blog post blending campaign messaging with Cheryl Burt's personal CO-poisoning story, creating compelling, relatable content that emphasized prevention and connected with the public.
- **Social media content on CO dangers**
Developed educational social media posts tailored for multiple channels, increasing engagement with digestible safety information and helping Minnesotans understand CO risks and prevention steps.
- **New CO-prevention page on SFM website**
Designed, wrote and launched a dedicated CO-prevention webpage that centralized critical resources in a user-friendly format, improving public access to lifesaving information.

Fire Prevention Week

- **Minnesota Live TV cooking-fire safety appearance**
Coordinated logistics for Marshal Krier and Maple Grove FD to demonstrate grease-fire safety on live TV, delivering a clear prevention demonstration that reached a large audience with practical cooking-safety guidance during a high-visibility week.
- **Woodbury lithium-ion battery fire video project**
Conceptualized and led a video project including an interview with the affected family, directing the shoot and gathered fire-damage visuals, resulting in an educational video that increased public understanding of lithium-ion battery risks during Fire Prevention Week.
- **Blog post on Woodbury family story**
Drafted and published a blog post detailing the personal impact of the Woodbury battery fire, creating compelling content that strengthened emotional connection and encouraged safer consumer behavior. This blog had exceptional reach on social media.
- **Social media posts on cooking and battery safety**
Developed and shared social media posts highlighting prevention tips, campaign videos, and blogs, which received strong engagement and expanded the reach of core safety messages to thousands of Minnesotans.

Task Force 1 deployment to Texas

- **Social media updates during deployment**
Crafted daily posts with photos and operational updates during deployment, keeping the public and partners informed while increasing transparency and recognition of TF1's critical disaster-response role.
- **Return news conference coordination**
Coordinated with the team leader and planned a return news conference featuring all team members and K-9 units, generating extensive TV, radio, and print coverage that showcased Minnesota's disaster-response capabilities.
- **Blog post on TF1 and TF2 capabilities**
Researched and wrote a clear, accessible blog post explaining TF1 and TF2's missions, providing the public with an inside look at their skills and responsibilities while building understanding and support for Minnesota's disaster-response infrastructure.

Additional projects

- **New logo rollout**
Coordinated internal and external communications to launch SFM's modernized

brand identity, ensuring consistent adoption across digital, print and partner channels while strengthening organizational cohesion and improving brand recognition.

- **TV coverage of investigations training in Nowthen**

Developed a story pitch and coordinated with a reporter, earning televised coverage of SFM's investigations training that increased visibility of the agency's expertise.

4th of July fireworks safety

- **Social posts on fireworks hazards**

Developed engaging, timely social media content on fireworks hazards and safe practices, providing Minnesotans with clear guidance during a high-risk time of year and helping reduce preventable injuries while raising awareness of common dangers.

- **Blog post on Minnesota fireworks injury**

Conducted an interview and wrote a blog post detailing a Minnesota man's fireworks injury, sharing a personal account in hopes of influencing public attitudes toward safer holiday behavior.

GovDelivery and communications support

- **GovDelivery messages**

Wrote, organized, and distributed 70+ GovDelivery messages across multiple audiences—including announcements on funerals, job postings, trainings, and conferences—ensuring timely, accurate communication that strengthened relationships and kept fire chiefs, firefighters, partners, and the broader fire-service community informed.

- **NERIS incident-reporting transition communications**

Drafted messages and created a new NERIS webpage to support the major reporting-system change, providing clear guidance for departments preparing for the 2025 federal implementation deadline and supporting statewide readiness for a nationwide reporting transformation.

- **Lutsen lodge fire**

Worked with BCA comms specialists to coordinate a fast-turn news conference to announce the arrest and charges in the Lutsen Lodge Resort fire. This news conference went statewide, being carried by many metro and greater Minnesota news outlets.

Media relations

- Worked with investigators to gather facts and provide accurate responses to dozens of media inquiries on fire investigations and incident data, ensuring timely,

consistent communication that built trust and reinforced SFM's reputation as a reliable source of public-safety information.

State Patrol

OOC supported Minnesota State Patrol through crisis response, enforcement messaging and recruitment.

Highlights

- Coordination of communications during the June 14 shootings and multiday manhunt.
- Recruitment video campaigns and major media events.
- Support for approximately 1,650 media inquiries.
- Storytelling through blogs, videos and social media that highlighted enforcement, innovation and service.

An in-depth look at OOC's work supporting State Patrol

Social media

Produced 100 social media posts, including 40 videos, featuring enforcement highlights, safety education and video storytelling. These posts maintained a strong digital presence, keeping Minnesotans informed about enforcement actions, safety trends and behind-the-scenes operations. The campaign increased community awareness and trust, strengthening the State Patrol's ability to educate the public at scale.

Recruitment Video Campaigns (March and August)

Developed seven August recruitment videos featuring troopers statewide, in coordination with MOD and Minnesota State Patrol's contracted marketing partner, which produced three law enforcement training opportunity (LETO) recruitment videos in March. These visually engaging recruitment assets were shown across multiple platforms, reaching prospective applicants with compelling content. The initiative contributed to increased Minnesota State Patrol recruitment applications during a year when law enforcement hiring remained a national challenge.

Media pitches and daily media support

Responded to approximately 1,650 media inquiries, providing factual updates and coordinating with investigators and leadership. This ensured reporters across Minnesota and beyond received timely, accurate and consistent information. The effort reinforced Minnesota State Patrol's credibility as a trusted public safety authority and shaped accurate reporting on fast-moving incidents.

News conferences and major media events

- **Holiday Impaired Driving Campaign**
Planned a press conference featuring a Woodbury officer struck by an impaired driver and developed supporting social media content. The event highlighted real-world consequences of impaired driving, increasing public urgency for safe holiday travel.
- **World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims**
Coordinated messaging for the colonel to address statewide traffic-fatality impacts. The messaging delivered a tone of remembrance and cautious optimism, elevating awareness of traffic-safety progress and ongoing challenges.
- **Child Passenger Safety: Seat Belts**
Produced an emotional video featuring a grandmother whose daughter died in a crash but whose grandchildren survived because they were properly buckled. The video reached over 240,000 Facebook views, significantly raising awareness about proper child-passenger restraints.
- **State Patrol Day at the Fair: Ted Foss 25th Anniversary**
Showcased State Patrol services and created a public signing opportunity on large memorial boards. Strong engagement reinforced Move Over Law awareness and deepened public understanding of roadside-response dangers.
- **Capitol Security News Conference**
Provided updates following June lawmaker shootings, earning widespread statewide media coverage and reassuring Minnesotans that enhanced Capitol security measures were underway.
- **New Helicopter Rescue Demonstration**
Rolled out the Bell 429 helicopter with a live rescue demo, blog and social video series. Media coverage highlighted the first rescues and showcased Minnesota State Patrol's expanding rescue capabilities and investment in lifesaving technology.
- **Lane Splitting and Filtering Law Launch (Multiagency)**
Coordinated ads, social media, live demonstrations, and a news conference to educate Minnesotans on the new motorcycle-safety law. The campaign increased statewide understanding and compliance ahead of the law taking effect.
- **Minneapolis Fourth of July Safety Messaging**
Partnered with city leadership to highlight holiday travel and public safety efforts.

The campaign showcased Minnesota State Patrol's role assisting communities and strengthened public trust in Minnesota State Patrol operations.

- **Hortman/Hoffman Shooting and Suspect Search (Three News Conferences)**
Coordinated rapid communications during a 40-hour multiagency manhunt, serving as liaison to Brooklyn Park and Champlin officials. Accurate, consistent messaging maintained clarity during a high-profile, fast-evolving event and built public confidence.
- **Minneapolis Safe Summer Nights**
Delivered messaging about joint efforts with the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) to reduce summer violence. Efforts increased visibility of multiagency safety initiatives and highlighted Minnesota State Patrol's community-centered approach.
- **100 Deadliest Days Kickoff**
Unveiled an Office of Traffic Safety pilot project using RSIC real-time predictive data, demonstrating Minnesota State Patrol leadership in innovative crash-reduction strategies. Awareness of proactive enforcement methods increased, emphasizing strategies that can save lives.
- **Work Zone Safety: Duluth**
Provided media reminders about slowing down for construction crews, earning coverage that reinforced driver responsibility in work zones.
- **Minnesota State Patrol Day at the Capitol**
Displayed the new helicopter and other resources to lawmakers and visitors, increasing transparency and strengthening confidence in Minnesota State Patrol operations.
- **Academy Graduation (70th Academy)**
Organized coverage of 42 new troopers being sworn in and promoted recruitment campaigns, highlighting workforce growth during challenging recruitment cycles.
- **April Distracted-Driving Enforcement Event**
Unveiled new squad cars with advanced camera systems, demonstrating enforcement capabilities for detecting phone-using drivers and elevating statewide awareness of distraction risks.
- **Oral Fluid Drug Testing Pilot Results**
Provided a detailed presentation on cannabis-impairment detection tools, generating extensive media interest and educating the public on evolving enforcement strategies and safety risks.

- **St. Patrick’s Day DWI Education: “Learn Your Limits”**
Hosted an impaired-driving education event at a Chisago City bar, demonstrating preliminary breath testing (PBT) and impairment effects firsthand. The event increased community understanding of alcohol’s rapid effects.
- **Minnesota State Patrol Awards Ceremony**
Highlighted trooper and citizen lifesaving acts, generating multiple stories that reinforced the value and professionalism of Minnesota State Patrol personnel.

News releases

Minneapolis Encampment Shooting Assistance

Provided timely updates on Minnesota State Patrol’s expanded support for MPD in response to a shooting at a Minneapolis encampment. Communications reassured the public and emphasized coordinated law enforcement efforts. The messaging increased community trust and reinforced confidence in Minnesota State Patrol’s support during critical incidents.

Minneapolis School Shooting Assistance

Delivered clear, transparent communications during a school shooting response, highlighting Minnesota State Patrol’s partnership with local authorities. Information shared helped manage public concern and demonstrated responsiveness to community safety needs. These efforts reinforced transparency and strengthened public trust in law enforcement coordination.

Capitol Security Entrance Changes

Informed visitors of new safety protocols at the State Capitol following security reviews. Clear, timely messaging helped the public navigate changes and understand enhanced security measures. This initiative promoted confidence in Minnesota State Patrol’s ability to protect visitors and maintain secure government operations.

Third-Party Capitol Security Review

Communicated findings and actions resulting from an independent review of Capitol security practices. Messaging emphasized accountability and Minnesota State Patrol’s commitment to continuous safety improvements. This transparency strengthened public understanding of security oversight and demonstrated a proactive approach to risk management.

Man Arrested at State Capitol

Provided immediate, accurate updates following the arrest of an individual at the Capitol. Clear communication addressed heightened public interest and potential safety concerns.

The response maintained public trust and ensured the information shared was consistent and factual.

Death of Trooper Mollie McClure

Communicated the tragic loss of Trooper Mollie McClure with care, accuracy and sensitivity. Messaging honored the trooper's service while keeping the public informed. These efforts reinforced Minnesota State Patrol's commitment to transparency during difficult events and maintained public confidence in the organization.

Clear Lake Crash and Internal Review

Announced the agency's response and internal review following a serious wrong-way driver incident. Communications emphasized accountability and the steps being taken to address the situation. This transparency increased public understanding of Minnesota State Patrol operations and demonstrated a commitment to organizational responsibility.

Overall Impact Across All Releases

These communications efforts consistently increased public transparency, trust and understanding of Minnesota State Patrol operations during high-visibility events, helping residents feel informed, reassured and confident in the agency's professionalism and responsiveness.

Blogs and web stories

Produced nine Safety Matters blogs and four additional website articles featuring narrative-driven content on enforcement, heroic trooper actions, safety trends and Minnesota State Patrol operations. Each story was crafted to engage readers and highlight real-life examples of public safety work. The content consistently generated additional media coverage or follow-up reporting, amplifying the reach of key messages. These efforts strengthened the public's connection to Minnesota State Patrol's mission and humanized the work of troopers across the state.

Tribal Relations

The OOC partnered with OTS and Tribal Relations to support the Minnesota Tribal Traffic Safety Summit, a three-day convening focused on culturally grounded approaches to traffic safety and community well-being.

Highlights

- Provided strategic communications support for promotion, message development and on-site documentation of the summit, centering Tribal voices and Indigenous-led safety practices.
- Supported sessions addressing indigenized traffic safety messaging, the intersection of MMIR and human trafficking, and youth-focused prevention strategies.
- Translated technical traffic safety information into clear, accessible narratives for Tribal, state and local partners.
- Helped document and elevate community-identified safety priorities, strengthening feedback pathways between Tribal nations, DPS and public safety partners.

Summit by the numbers:

- 109 total attendees
- 9 Minnesota Tribal nations represented
- 12 resource tables
- 20 hours of collaborative traffic safety programming
- 38 post-summit survey responses identifying top concerns:
 - Driver behavior (29 percent)
 - Speeding (20 percent)
 - Infrastructure and pedestrian safety gaps (28 percent combined)