



OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

- 2025 -

Accomplishments and Highlights

Letter from Communications Director Howie Padilla

I sometimes ask the 26 Office of Communications team members why they do what they do and why they do it for the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

The team is made up of professionals with more than three centuries of combined communications experience. They can go to any number of places to work. They choose DPS. Often the theme of why they come here mimics the desire of the more than 2,400 employees that make up the DPS family:



They want to serve.

In the pages that follow, you lay witness to that tenacious desire to serve. You see it in the data with millions of engagements, thousands of media inquiries responded to and so much more. You see it in the images of crises we were called to and in the images that make up the foundation of storytelling. You read it in the highlights of each of the DPS divisions.

We all serve with a commitment to the tenets of our guiding principles: Respect. Professionalism. Rapid response. Objective-based strategies and messages. Preparation for what's to come. Ready for the unknown.

Beyond these pages and beyond any measurements, what this communications team shows on a regular basis is caring. Caring for the work, of course. More than that, however, is the caring for the people that make up the state of Minnesota. Caring for their stories. Caring for the state's businesses, visitors and all who call Minnesota home.

It's what makes me proud to be part of this team, part of this agency and part of this state.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Howie Padilla', written in a cursive style.

Office of Communications 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 always work toward honesty, fairness, and clear and accessible communication.
- 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 the hood. 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 because we have always done it that way.



Overview and 2025 at a glance

The Office of Communications (OOC) is often the voice of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS), its divisions, core services and its more than 2,400 employees. Through media relations, digital communication, creative services and crisis response, the OOC ensures Minnesotans receive clear, timely and trustworthy information.

The OOC supported DPS during a year marked by major public safety incidents, complex regulatory changes, expanded digital engagement and continued modernization of communications tools. Across crisis response, life-safety messaging, public information and long-term storytelling, the OOC helped DPS meet rising expectations for honesty, accuracy, accessibility and responsiveness.

The OOC's work not only supported DPS divisions, it helped them improve trust and serve all communities to build a safer Minnesota. From high-profile emergencies to statewide education campaigns, the OOC helped DPS show up for Minnesotans when it mattered most.

For more detailed information on communications accomplishments for each division, go to the DPS intranet.



By the numbers

Engagement

- **28.4 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 distributed statewide


5,500+ media inquiries responded to with statements or interviews 


Creative services

- **7** major reports designed (annual, strategic and statistical)
- **36** missing and murdered Indigenous relatives (MMIR) digital and print billboards
- **9** large lighted displays for the State Fair

110 pages redesigned for the 
Driver and Vehicle Services Driver's License Manual 

Campaigns, education and outreach

- **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

REAL ID compliance increased from **38%** to **50%** statewide 

Crisis response, media and public relations

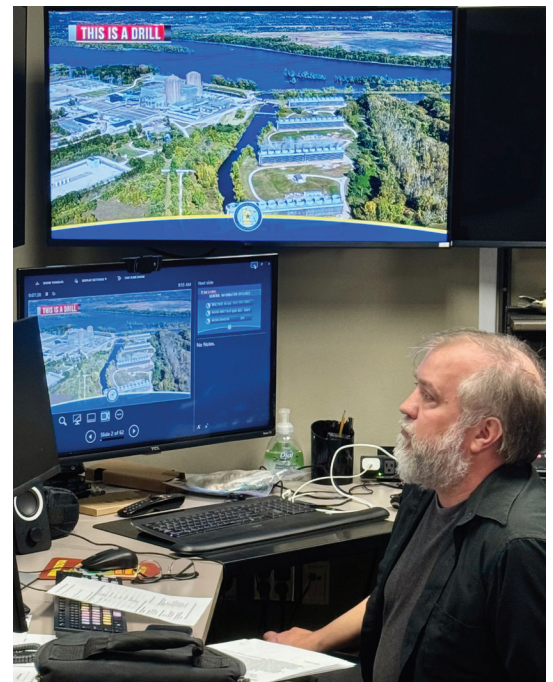
Crisis communications and media relations

The OOC provided communications leadership during some of the most challenging moments of the year, including the June 14 targeted shootings of Minnesota lawmakers and the subsequent multi-day manhunt, as well as the Aug. 27 shooting at Annunciation Church in Minneapolis. During these events, the OOC coordinated messaging across agencies, supported news conferences, responded to media inquiries and ensured information was shared accurately, quickly and with care for victims, families and communities.

The OOC served as the department's central hub for media relations — responding to inquiries, drafting and distributing news releases and advisories and supporting on-scene public information officers during incidents statewide.

Public relations and proactive storytelling

In addition to reactive response, the OOC pursued proactive public relations efforts that elevated DPS programs and initiatives, highlighted prevention and education work, and centered survivor- and community-focused storytelling. These efforts helped Minnesotans better understand the real-world impact of public safety work and strengthened trust in DPS and its divisions.



Digital, social and video services

Website and digital services

The redesigned DPS website completed its first full year of operation in 2025, serving as a reliable hub for public safety information. The OOC managed daily operations, vendor coordination and platform enhancements, earning four national awards while improving user satisfaction, accessibility and stability — even during major global technology outages.



Social media and video

DPS social media engagement grew significantly in 2025, with tens of millions of views across platforms. The OOC expanded video production and live streaming capabilities to support crisis response, training, education and public engagement. Upgrades to media room infrastructure improved reliability, security and production quality, strengthening DPS' ability to communicate in real time during critical events.

Minnesota Department of Public Safety's Post

Minnesota Department of Public Safety
June 14, 2025

In connection to today's shootings in Champlin and Brooklyn Park, law enforcement are searching for Vance Luther Boelter, a 57-year-old male. He was wearing a light-colored cowboy hat, dark-colored, long-sleeved, collared shirt or jacket, light pants and a dark bag. Send tips to bca.tips@state.mn.us or call 877-996-6222.

TIPLINE INFORMATION
877-996-6222 | bca.tips@state.mn.us

VANCE LUTHER BOELTER

- Light-colored cowboy hat
- Dark-colored long sleeve collared shirt or coat
- Light pants

TIPLINE INFORMATION
877-996-6222 | bca.tips@state.mn.us

Male
6'1"
220 lbs
Brown eyes

553 405 comments 5.4K shares

Minnesota Department of Public Safety - DPS
4,035 followers
6mo

John Morris didn't wear a badge. He didn't get a paycheck. There was no take-home squad or health care benefits.

He volunteered to be the State Patrol's chaplain and to show up for our troopers 24/7 during some of their most challenging moments because he cared — and because it was the right thing to do.

Morris started the State Patrol's chaplain program four years ago. He recently retired but his wisdom, support, kindness and dedication to helping us and so many others have left a lasting impact.

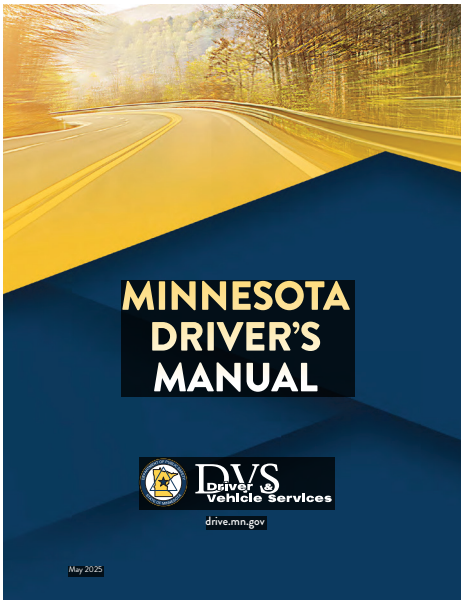
Happy retirement, John!

496 39 comments · 3 reposts

Creative, accessibility and storytelling

Creative and design services

The OOC delivered hundreds of creative assets across photography, video and graphic design. Work ranged from legislative reports and public-facing campaigns to manuals, training materials and visual assets that translated complex information into clear, compelling communication.



Accessibility

Accessibility remained foundational to OOC's work. The team completed extensive document remediation, delivered website accessibility training, supported accessible procurement reviews and prepared DPS for upcoming American with Disabilities Act Title II regulatory changes.

Storytelling platforms

Through the Safety Matters blog and Safety First newsletter, the OOC shared clear, relatable stories that explained complex public safety issues, amplified division voices and reinforced DPS's mission to serve all communities and build a safer Minnesota.



Division highlights

Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement

- Led statewide and national communications on illegal online gambling enforcement.
- Modernized the division's web content and improved accessibility for Tribal compact agreements.

Bureau of Criminal Apprehension

- Supported high-profile investigations and news conferences, including major arson charges.
- Launched a new Financial Crimes and Fraud website section and digital reporting form.

Community Affairs

- Partnered on high-visibility outreach efforts, including the State Fair, community events and open houses, with coordinated visuals and storytelling across DPS channels.
- Assisted with updates to resource guides, websites and bilingual driver's license manuals, while streamlining coordination for outreach materials and giveaways.

Driver and Vehicle Services

- Led a statewide REAL ID campaign that exceeded compliance goals.
- Delivered rapid-response communications on commercial driver's license regulatory changes and scam prevention.

Emergency Communication Networks

- Supported Text-to-911 education and statewide interoperability exercises.
- Launched the "911 vs. 988: Make the Right Call" public education campaign.

Fiscal and Administrative Services

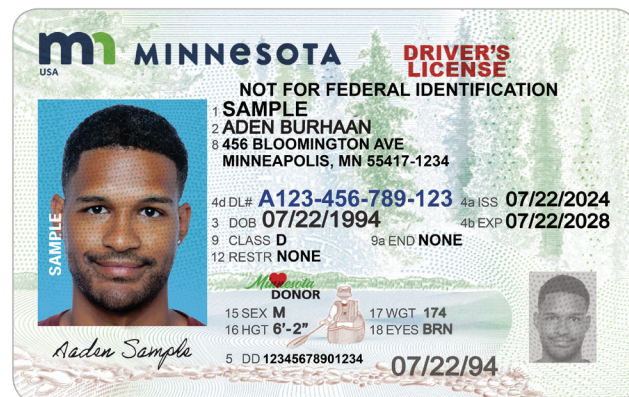
- Developed and implemented a communications plan supporting the rollout of the new IGX grants system.

Homeland Security and Emergency Management

- Supported communications for multiple State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) activations and disaster declarations.
- Coordinated preparedness campaigns and messaging around the new SEOC.

Human Resources

- Expanded recruitment outreach through social media, videos and improved job resources.



Division highlights

Internal Affairs/Affirmative Action

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

Office of General Counsel

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

Office of Justice Programs

- Developed victim resource materials following the Annunciation Church shooting.
- Led communications for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR) Reward Fund rollout and digitized MMIR case intake.

Office of Pipeline Safety

- Coordinated rollout of the division's modernized logo and leadership transition messaging.

Office of Traffic Safety

- Supported year-round traffic safety campaigns with survivor-centered storytelling.
- Coordinated statewide media coverage for the new lane splitting and filtering law rollout.

State Fire Marshal

- Led statewide carbon monoxide safety and lithium-ion battery education campaigns.
- Coordinated communications for Task Force 1 deployments and fire prevention initiatives.

State Patrol

- Coordinated communications during the June 14 shootings and multi-day manhunt.
- Supported recruitment, enforcement campaigns and approximately 1,650 media inquiries.

Tribal Relations

- Partnered with Tribal Relations and Office of Traffic Safety to provide communications support for the Minnesota Tribal Traffic Safety Summit.
- Helped translate technical safety information into clear, accessible narratives and documented community-identified concerns such as driver behavior, speeding and pedestrian safety to inform future DPS and partner efforts.



Looking ahead

In 2026,

the Office of Communications will continue
strengthening storytelling,
expanding digital accessibility,
supporting divisions
through increasingly complex communications challenges

and ensuring Minnesotans
receive clear,
timely and trusted
public safety information.

Go to dps.mn.gov/news to sign up for our Safety First newsletter and to read our Safety Matters blog.

Join the conversation and follow us on social media.



