



# HELP WANTED:

Must have integrity, loyalty and courage

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Recruitment has been a hot topic surrounding both the Alaska State Troopers and the Village Public Safety Officer program. The exceedingly unique duties of these two jobs makes recruiting easy in the respect that it attracts many applicants. Where the job takes people to in real life can make it difficult to retain quality individuals over the long run.

Any given recruitment cycle can draw in between 900 to 2500 applications for trooper positions. From there, approximately 100 to 250 actually complete the application process by filling out the background check paperwork- which is approximately 40 pages thick. By the end of the cycle, an average 15 to 20 people are invited to attend the academy. Of those individuals, not all make it through the academy or the field training process.

Troopers and VPSOs can work in the most challeng-

ing of environments. Harsh temperatures and small, isolated communities do not make law enforcement convenient or easy- especially when the ranks of both are thinly spread across the vast state.

In contrast, there are plenty of benefits to working in Alaska as a trooper or a VPSO that can be overlooked when people specifically focus on the deterring aspects of the job. The life of a trooper or VPSO is noble and exciting. Every day comes with new and endless possibilities. Best of all, these individuals work in places that often look like a majestic painting.

The Recruitment Unit at AST works continuously. With normal inquiries, conferences and job fairs, processing applications, conducting interviews and background checks, the staff stays busy year-round.

The past month has been especially busy for the re-



**Sgt. Mo Hughes speaks to a woman interested in joining the ranks of the Alaska State Troopers. Hughes spent the day speaking to men and women at the one-day law enforcement job fair at the University of Alaska Anchorage. The event was supported by the group Women in Law Enforcement and federal and municipal law enforcement agencies operating throughout the state.**

**UAA posted a blog on the event at: <http://uaajusticecenter.blogspot.com/>**



Trooper Tom Alkelkok helps out at the VPSO booth at the AFN. Many people stopped to comment on the National Geographic show featuring many of AST's finest.



Trooper John Simeon speaks with a group of eager AFN participants while manning the Alaska State Trooper Booth. Simeon is apart of the Rural Recruitment unit.



A young AFN-goer becomes an honorary Junior Trooper after Trooper Tom Akelkok outfits her with a badge and plane.

recruitment unit. Multiple events and the airing of a new series on National Geographic entitled "Alaska State Troopers" have had the staff on overdrive.

While the commercials were airing announcing the show featuring AST, about a third of the callers requesting information from the recruitment unit mentioned the upcoming show.

"At recruitment events, people would come up and ask about the show- If I was in it or what I thought of it," said Sgt. Maurice "Mo" Hughes, sergeant in the recruitment unit. "It served as a positive icebreaker. I think people took a real sense of pride in the fact that Alaska was being showcased and it garnered interest about the troopers and what we do."

Troopers are always looking for quality applicants, however men have continually dominated the applicant pool. Sgt. Hughes, who is new to the recruitment unit, put together a small campaign designed to specifically target women. There is a concern that women simply don't view wearing the badge and walking the thin blue line as a viable career opportunity. AST is out to discourage that way of thinking. For a well balanced force, law enforcement needs the best of what both women and men have to offer.

Alaska has a long history of women wearing the badge with great success. Retired Col. Julia Grimes was the first woman to lead the Alaska State Troopers. She was appointed to Colonel under the Murkowski administration.

"We received a lot of good contacts from women and men both at the UAA law enforcement job fair," said Hughes. "The majority of the people who came, knew we were going to be there along with other law enforcement agencies and they came prepared with good questions and great interest."

**For more information on joining the Alaska State Troopers, contact Sgt. Mo Hughes at 269-5976.**

**[www.alaskastatetrooper.com](http://www.alaskastatetrooper.com)**

