

KANSAS CITY, MO • SEPT. 8-13, 2024

2024

# LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW

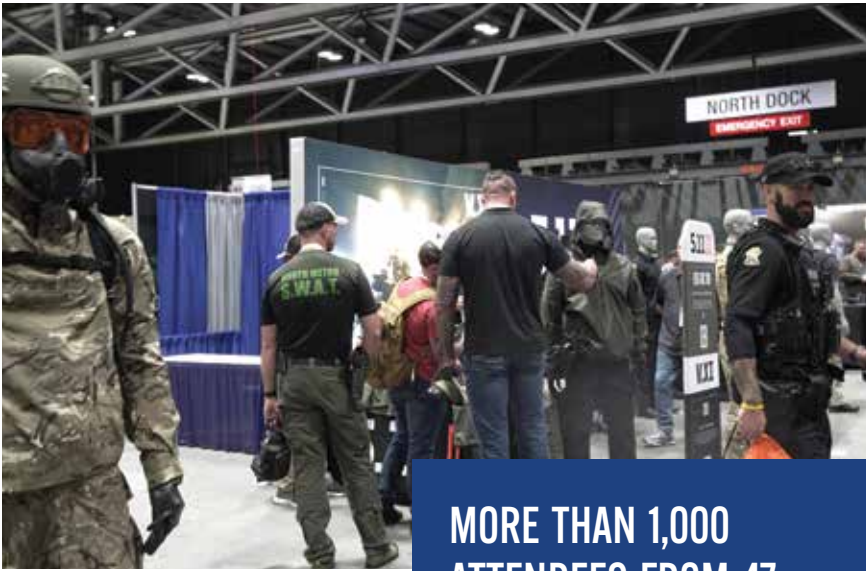
## 2024 LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW - Kansas City, MO

BY BUCK ROGERS

The NTOA's 41st Annual Law Enforcement Operations Conference and Trade Show was held Sept. 8-13 in Kansas City, Missouri. More than 1,000 attendees representing 388 agencies from 47 states and seven countries as far away as Ukraine, Tunisia, Italy, Singapore, and the UAE, joined us for a week of seminars, incident debriefs, and networking with leaders and innovators in the law enforcement community. On Tuesday night, we had our first international reception for our attendees from around the world. Members were invited to network and discuss tactics in responding to similar but different operational calls for service.

Over 200 companies, including more than 50 first-time exhibitors, showcased the latest technologies and products during our two-day trade show. Attendees saw many of the products featured in our Member Tested Program throughout the year. The trade show was one of our largest to date and members networked with the makers of some of the best products in the industry. The NTOA also had the opportunity to showcase our new BrainHQ partnership, allowing members to test their abilities with BrainHQ staff on-site to offer insight into the program.

A warm welcome from Executive Director Thor Eells opened the conference Monday morning. It began with a moment of silence for those who have given their lives protecting their country and communities.



Honor Guard, KCPD

**MORE THAN 1,000  
ATTENDEES FROM 47  
STATES, 7 COUNTRIES  
AND 388 AGENCIES  
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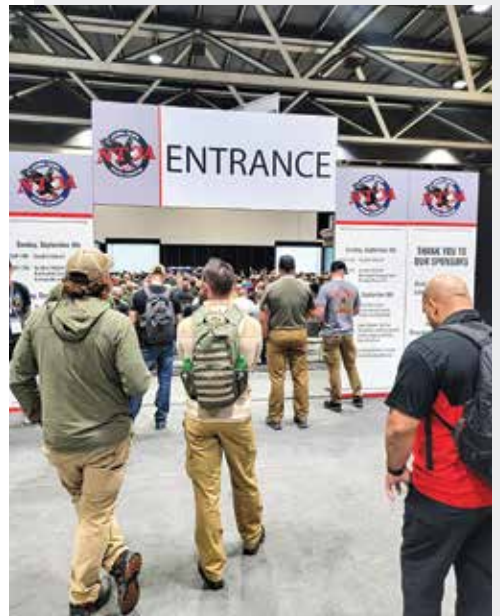
Thor Eells, NTOA Executive Director



Bagpiper, KCPD



National Anthem singer,  
Cheri Cooley



# Thank You



**Chaplain John McCann**



**Chief Stacey Graves, KCPD**



**Keynote Speaker: David Horsager**

Eells then thanked Heartland Tactical Officers Association members for their support in co-hosting the conference. Also recognized were the board of directors and agencies supporting the HTOA, which worked tirelessly for over a year to make this conference a reality. Kansas City police Chief Stacey Graves also made comments opening the conference.

David Horsager was our keynote speaker. Horsager is CEO of Trust Edge Leadership Institute, Trust Expert in Residence at High Point University, and The Wall Street Journal bestselling author of “The Trust Edge.” He has advised leaders and delivered life-changing presentations on six continents, with audiences ranging from FedEx, Toyota, MIT and global governments to the New York Yankees and the Department of Homeland Security. Horsager spoke about the importance of trust in organizations and how it applies to the policing profession. He focused on the eight pillars of trust and how we can apply those principles to lead successful organizations.

The annual NTOA Awards were presented to outstanding individuals for their significant achievements throughout the law enforcement special operations community over the past year. Such accomplished and dedicated members contribute to our field in many ways, and the NTOA was gratified to acknowledge some of these exceptional individuals. (See award winners on page 26).

New this year, the NTOA created the Hall of Honor in memory of phenomenal leaders worthy of the highest recognition for their contributions to the tactical profession. Inaugural inductees were NTOA founder John Kolman, Michael Hillmann, and the late Charles “Sid” Heal and Ronald McCarthy. Hillmann was in attendance and honored Heal and McCarthy with a speech highlighting each man’s contribution to our industry. These four remarkable men shaped our profession and dedicated their lives to advancing and professionalizing our industry. We are all better for knowing them, and by studying their life’s work, we can continue improving in our endeavors. (See the Hall of Honor recipients on page 25 of this issue and visit [ntoa.org/hall-of-honor](http://ntoa.org/hall-of-honor) to learn more about their enormous contributions to our profession through dedications and videos.)

Our annual Welcome Reception was held Monday evening at the College Basketball Experience. At this high-energy, highly interactive venue, casual and hard-core fans of any age can immerse themselves in college basketball. Attendees enjoyed a night of fun and socializing. Point Blank Enterprises and Lenco Armored Vehicles generously co-hosted the event.

Beginning Tuesday, attendees had their pick of more than 100 seminars and incident debriefs. Debriefs included a critical incident review of the events at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, which was standing-room-only as members of a review team gave a two-hour presentation on significant factors in the active shooter incident. One of the most essential takeaways was that agencies should not have the mindset that it can’t happen here just because they are a smaller agency. The Uvalde Consolidated Police Department consisted of five sworn officers, the Uvalde Police Department had 39 officers, and the Uvalde Sheriff’s Department had 25 sworn officers. Yet the tragedy still occurred, resulting in the deaths of 19 innocent children and two adults. If you have attended

any NTOA command-level course, you would recognize that all factors of primary mistakes made by law enforcement agencies were present in this multijurisdictional response, including failure of a leader, inability to activate the incident command post system, indiscriminate parking, inappropriate self-deployment (over 300 officers responded), and lack of communication. Please take the time to review the report yourselves to prevent another tragedy.<sup>1</sup>

Another well-attended presentation was the incident debrief of a Nov. 11, 2023, hostage rescue in Austin, Texas, in which a SWAT officer was killed. The commander and both team leaders gave the debrief. Patrol officers

had responded to the scene of a stabbing and activated an emergency hostage rescue when the suspect opened fire, which kicked off a SWAT activation. Once on scene, given the intelligence and the fact that two victims were stabbed inside, the SWAT team developed an emergency entry to rescue the hostages. As the team cleared the house room by room, they located the suspect deep in a back bedroom, and he shot one of the officers. Senior Officer Jorge Pastore initiated a rescue to save the downed officer and was mortally wounded by the suspect. Pastore showed extraordinary heroism to save another officer but lost his life in the attempt.

## Hall of Honor Awards



(l-r) Ron McCarthy's stepson Todd Mackler and Michael Foreman



(l-r) Sid Heal's children Cassidy, Kaydee, Kasey and Kellee with Jon Becker.



(l-r) John Kolman's family Grant and Judy Hucko and Heather and Joe Juliani



(l-r) Mike Hillmann and Lt. Lee McMillion, LAPD

FEATURE

The presenters gave several takeaways and ideas for improving their response. One takeaway was the need to prepare for a well-defended suspect, as they had to fight through an ambush where the suspect had barricaded with 60-pound sandbags for a fighting position. They discussed the need for a trauma pit crew for callouts involving medics, assistant medics, and officers to strip away gear and clothing to treat wounds. Some areas of improvement that were denoted included procedures for patrol gathering intelligence before their arrival and using shields for hostage rescue for certain circumstances. They spoke about how many standard operating procedures don't discuss the use of shields in hostage rescue. After this incident, they will consider each hostage rescue in the future as situational dependent, and the need to use the right tools to accomplish the mission while mitigating risks to hostages, innocents and the team. Their openness reflected the professionalism of their team.

These are just a few examples of the remarkable debriefs presented at our annual conference. We acknowledge the profound impact these moments have had on presenters' lives and appreciate their willingness to share with their fellow officers. May their stories inspire us all to strive for a safer, more supportive community for everyone.

Our outstanding seminars featured topics such as Critical Incident Decision-Making by Chief Randy Watt (ret.), and The Importance of Human Performance in Tactical Operations by Kent Werner and Stephen Scrobe. Werner and Scrobe discussed fitness, nutrition, sleep and other factors in detail. Werner is one of the country's leading experts on



**K9 SWAT Deployment Award** - Trooper Austin Donner of the Nebraska State Patrol for demonstrating extraordinary courage and dedication to protecting his fellow officers.

## Awards



**Unit Citation for Valor** - Arapahoe County SWAT Team for bravery in the face of danger and selflessly putting themselves in harm's way to safeguard the lives of others.



Protecting Our Nation's Defenders™



## THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS CONFERENCE SPONSORS:

5.11 Tactical • First Tactical • Lenco Armored Vehicles Point Blank Enterprises Inc. • Tru-Spec • Vertx

### RAFFLE PRIZES

Thank you to the many companies who donated prizes to be raffled off at our conference to help raise funds for various scholarships offered by the NTOA.

### SCHOLARSHIPS

Through the generosity of our sponsors, 14 conference scholarships were awarded to attend the conference. Thank you to all who applied, and congratulations to our scholarship recipients.

#### LENCO

Capt. William Sanderson  
Shawnee (KS) PD

Chief Sam Larson  
Shawnee (KS) PD

Major Jason Brunner  
Shawnee (KS) PD

Capt. Sean Bergert  
Aventura (FL) PD

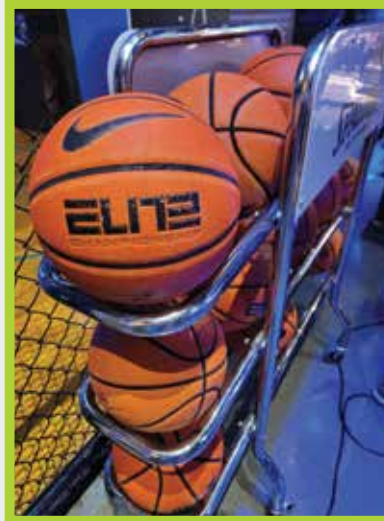
#### FEDERAL

Dep. Chief Matt Moir  
Mountain Village (CO) PD

#### VERTX

Sgt. Michael Rasmussen  
Waterloo (IA) PD

Sgt. Troy Foles  
Coweta County (GA) SO



Welcome reception at the College Basketball Experience.



#### PEACEKEEPER PRODUCTS

Sgt. David Reim  
Garfield County (OK) SO

#### TYR TACTICAL

Cpl. Dustin Lowry  
Republic (MO) PD

Capt. Phillip Van Diepen  
Huron (SD) PD

#### POINT BLANK ENTERPRISES

Lt. Darren Shelley  
Seminole County (FL) SO/  
Altamonte Springs PD

Sgt. Trent Gold  
Monett (MO) PD

Sgt. Erika Moir  
Mountain Village (CO) PD

Cst. Hamza Ammoumou  
Winnipeg (MB) Police Service



sleep and how it affects our performance and health. Other seminars included The Six Layer Concept: Tactical Threat Recognition by Jay Seese; Deliberate Versus Dynamic Tactics by Trey Lindsey; Police Performance in Critical Incidents by Jamie Borden; and Path to Tactical Peak Performance by coach Lealem Mulugeta, to name a few. A diverse group of speakers passed along a plethora of information to this year's attendees.

Some new presentations included Dr. Mitch Javidi's seminar on the Impact of Stress on Tactical Operators, as well as Integrating UAS in Tactical Operations, Harnessing the Power of Individual Performance, and Implementing the PFQ for your Team.

Our conference brought in over 100 instructors to lecture on various topics, sharpening attendees' skills and educating members on legal updates, trends in policing and significant incidents across the nation. We appreciate these instructors, who traveled far and wide to provide some of the best training.

Back by popular demand, Jon Becker of Aardvark Tactical led a well-attended panel discussion on current issues, trends and standards in the field. The conversation covered emerging trends in tactical operations, standards for tactical teams and task forces, public order protocols and other key topics impacting the SWAT community. Panelists included Steve Mescan, Spencer Fomby, Travis Norton, Justin Dodge and Chris Eklund. This was a packed, standing-room-only presentation.

Our commitment to providing high-quality training opportunities remains unwavering, and we look forward to continuing to deliver exceptional events like this.



### Endnote

1. [portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter/content.ashx/cops-r1143-pub.pdf](https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter/content.ashx/cops-r1143-pub.pdf)



**Next year's conference will take place  
Aug. 24-29, 2025, at the  
Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center  
in National Harbor, Maryland.**

**Watch our website for updates on the  
conference and online registration.**



**2025**

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**THE GAYLORD NATIONAL HARBOR  
WASHINGTON, DC**

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**LAW ENFORCEMENT  
OPERATIONS  
CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW**

**AUGUST 24-29, 2025**