

**NEWS RELEASE** | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | June 16, 2022

## **Minot Area Residents Awarded NDHP Colonel's Award for Excellence**

### **NARRATIVE:**

On April 13, 2022, North Dakota was impacted by a devastating blizzard. The Northwest Region of the state was hit hard. The Minot area accumulated three to four feet of snow which was accompanied by wind gusts of up to 55 miles per hour. Roads going out of Minot were closed by the North Dakota Department of Transportation and the North Dakota Highway Patrol. Highway Patrol troopers were stationed at road closure gates around Minot to keep motorists from attempting to travel out of Minot.

On the night of April 13, two NDHP troopers were at the gate on Highway 83 south of Minot. Weather conditions at the time were much worse than anticipated, causing near zero visibility and covering the road with large snow drifts. Snow drifts were as high as the road closure gate, making it impossible for vehicles to get through. Because of the worsening conditions, the troopers were pulled from watching the gate so they wouldn't become stranded.

As the two troopers were leaving, one of their patrol vehicles got stuck. While the troopers were digging the vehicle out, two snowmobile riders, David Dannewitz and his 11-year-old son, Dayson, from Minot, stopped to help shovel the vehicle out. Once snow was cleared from around the vehicle, the trooper was able to drive it about 100 yards before becoming stuck again. The Dannewitzs again assisted with shoveling and then left once the vehicle was able to get moving again. The two troopers didn't make it very far before they couldn't see the roadway. One trooper drove into the median causing his vehicle to get stuck, this time beyond what any shoveling could help. The trooper climbed into the other patrol vehicle and the two troopers proceeded to try and leave the area. A short distance later the second patrol vehicle became stuck after striking a snow drift, causing it to go into the median and become stuck beyond what any shoveling could help.

By this time the Dannewitzs had returned to help. After it was determined that shoveling the second patrol vehicle out wasn't going to work, they offered to give the troopers a ride on the snowmobiles, back into Minot. The troopers took them up on the offer since no snowplows were operating at the time to come to their aid. Several Minot area snowplows had become stuck as well and the remaining plows were pulled from the road because of the weather conditions and the remaining plows not being able to keep up with the blizzard conditions.

Without the voluntary assistance of the Dannewitzs the two troopers would have had to wait out the storm in their patrol vehicles. Their willingness to help out at the time and in such severe blizzard conditions allowed the troopers to get to a safe location to wait out the storm. For their efforts the Dannewitzs were awarded the Colonel's Award for Excellence for their selfless act that day during the historical blizzard.



Pictured left to right: Lt. Ryan Panasuk, Trooper Austin Hilzendeger, Dayson Dannewitz, Sgt. Jeremiah Bohn, and David Dannewitz

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