

Introduction

Kirsten Barber: Hi, and welcome to the NCDPS Safety Scoop, a podcast sponsored by the North Carolina Department of Public Safety. There are great people, programs and resources within the department. In each episode of the Safety Scoop, we'll share how NCDPS employees prevent, protect and prepare North Carolinians and help enhance safety in our state. We hope you'll listen along and learn something you may not have known about the largest state agency in North Carolina.

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Julia Jarema: Hi, I'm Julia.

Kirsten: And I'm Kirsten!

Julia: And you're listening to the NCDPS Safety Scoop, a podcast sponsored by the North Carolina Department of Public Safety.

Kirsten: NCDPS is the largest department in the North Carolina state government with some amazing programs and resources...

Julia: ...as well as phenomenal personnel and volunteers.

Kirsten: Listen along as we take you behind the scenes and dive into how the people, programs and resources within this department enhance the safety of the people of North Carolina—give you the scoop, if you will, of all things NCDPS.

Julia: NCDPS's mission is to safeguard the people of North Carolina through prevention, protection and preparation. As you listen to this podcast, we hope you'll learn something you may not have known about the ways the people of NCDPS are working to keep our state safe.

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Season 1 Episode 9

Kirsten: March is Women's History Month, so today on the Safety Scoop, we're talking with Alcohol Law Enforcement's Assistant Director for Administration, Angela Hayes, who is the first female to serve in ALE leadership. Angela began her career in law enforcement in 1994 as an ALE Special Agent and over the years has developed specialized experience with internal administrative investigations, ALE policies, procedures, accreditation and human resources processes. She took a nine-year detour as a fraud investigator for the North

Carolina Industrial Commission before rejoining ALE in 2018 as the Assistant Supervisor for Professional Standards. In January of this year, she was named Assistant Director for Administration for the Alcohol Law Enforcement division of North Carolina Department of Public Safety. Welcome, Angela!

A.D. Angela Hayes: Hi, Kirsten. How are you?

Kirsten: Good. So, just to start off, can you tell us a little bit about your role with ALE?

A.D. Hayes: My current role with ALE is an Assistant Director for Administration. It encompasses all of the human resource aspects as well as the business processes of fiscal management, budgetary things. I'm also responsible for overseeing our training programs and our law enforcement support services program which includes bingo, lottery, ABC and nuisance abatement.

Kirsten: And that's a great point to start out with: just because Alcohol Law Enforcement does include alcohol in the name, that is not the only section of North Carolina that you guys patrol.

A.D. Hayes: No, not at all. We do a wide variety of things, including alcohol, lottery, gaming or gambling, tobacco laws. Our agents are the ones who actually go in and inspect all the businesses that sell alcohol, all the businesses that sell lottery tickets, as well as work complaints involving the sale of alcohol to underage people as well as intoxicated. We have that kind of, like, stereotype, you know, that ALE just does moonshine, you know.

Kirsten: [Laughs]

A.D. Hayes: You know? But we do still have stills that—that pop up, and, you know...

Kirsten: Yeah.

A.D. Hayes: Yeah, so, it's, yeah, it is all great fun.

Kirsten: Tell us what made you want to pursue a career in law enforcement and why ALE?

A.D. Hayes: I grew up in a really small community called Broadway in Lee County, and, um, I had a mother who was a schoolteacher. My dad worked at the power plant. He was also a volunteer fireman. They showed me the example of serving the community that you live in. That community that you live in, that community that you serve, they kind of become your extended family. I used to think that that small town, you know, you got tired because everybody knew everybody and everybody knew what everybody did. And as I've gotten older, I realized, um, how influential that community was in—in my life in giving me a desire to—to serve and help others.

I began college thinking that I wanted to be a lawyer. I was gonna be a political science major, and a semester in, I changed my mind and decided I'd go to criminal justice. When I got out of college, I had a really close family friend who introduced me to ALE. The more I researched it, the more I talked to people, I thought this was really a place that I wanted to be. Their mission was very specific, and it was, you know, something that I was passionate about. So, uh, ALE sponsored me through, uh, going to BLET, and then when I got out, I was able to be hired in October. But like I said, ALE's mission is very focused, and our agents have a—a real potential and opportunity to make a difference in their communities.

Kirsten: That's awesome! Was there a role model or mentor who inspired you when you were growing up and deciding what kind of career you wanted to pursue?

A.D. Hayes: Like I said, my parents were very supportive of me. I was, um, I had a very independent spirit and thought I could do anything I wanted to do, and they supported me and helped me believe that I certainly could do that. I served on our local fire department. I had a cousin who was in law enforcement, and he—always admired him as a person and him as his career choice, and like I said, that small community sort of fostered my belief and my desire to want to give back and serve others.

Kirsten: Law enforcement has historically been a male dominated field. Tell us about your experience as a woman working in this career and what challenges have you faced?

A.D. Hayes: Early on, when I was a law enforcement officer, as—as a female you would get surprised looks when people saw you take your jacket off and you had a gun and a badge on. I think that's kind of changed as—as time has passed, you know, because it's much more common. I think that the challenges, per se, would have just been that perception, you know, that she's not as strong or she can't do that because she's not a guy or she's not a boy. I've never expected or requested to be treated different because I'm a female, and I think because of that maybe I haven't had quite as many challenges.

Kirsten: And just looking at a 2010 report released by the Bureau of Justice Statistics team, some numbers, uh, between 1998 and 2008 at the Drug Enforcement Administration in 2008 had a total of 412 women working in law enforcement across the nation, and then in that same year the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives had 333. So, out of all their agents nationwide, that's how many women in 2008 were working. And just from other statistics in other reports that have been put out, it's said that across the United States, women make up of around 13% of all law enforcement agents. And so, that's an—an interesting fact, uh, but in your experience, have you seen any benefits or advantages for being a female in this field?

A.D. Hayes: I think sometimes females have better communication skills or maybe better de-escalation skills sometimes than... I don't want to stereotype a man, but...

Kirsten: Sure.

A.D. Hayes: ...you know, just in general, sometimes. So, I think that that kind of can lend to our, um, to our favor.

Kirsten: So, maybe that element of surprise when you do walk in and you have that gun and a badge, you can use that maybe aspect of your person to maybe de-escalate a situation where someone may be alarmed, not really knowing what's going on, and communicate with them that you are who you are...

A.D. Hayes: Exactly.

Kirsten: ...and working with ALE.

A.D. Hayes: Exactly.

Kirsten: Very interesting. Can you describe the training you went through and what it takes to be an ALE a-agent? Were there any other females in the academy with you?

A.D. Hayes: I completed my undergraduate degree at--at UNC Charlotte and my Master's at UNC Pembroke. I did BLET through the community college in 1994 and then attended the ALE New Agent Training Academy in early 1995. There were several other females in the class with me at the time, um, one of which is still with ALE. She's currently an Assistant Supervisor in Greensboro. I think that to be an ALE agent, you have to be dedicated, and you have to be passionate about the cause, and you have to be, um, determined...

Kirsten: Mmm-hmm.

A.D. Hayes: ...um, that you can go and make a difference, and you have to be willing to--to put that work forward to--to make that happen.

Kirsten: ALE is a smaller, more unique law enforcement agency than many others. Describe the agency's culture and what it's like to be part of ALE and what's the best thing about being a special agent.

A.D. Hayes: ALE is small. We only have 109 agents, and that's for the entire state. Our mission is very specific, and because our size is small, that sort of gives us the tool to allow us to be more proactive in what we do, and I think that that's part of what makes us who we are. We're allowed to use various techniques to develop long-term, lasting solutions for community problems.

I can't really say that there's one best thing about being an ALE agent. I've asked a couple people, um, over the last week or so what they thought the best thing was, and I've gotten a couple of different answers. Probably one of the biggest or most repeated is flexibility. We are not your standard, traditional law

enforcement that has a, you know, a shift where you work rotating shifts. Our schedules are very flexible. We have really good, um, equipment. We have awesome opportunities for different kinds of training across the state. So, I think that all of those things combined together allows us the opportunity to, uh, make those lasting impressions.

Kirsten: What things should people know who may be considering a career with ALE, and are you guys hiring?

A.D. Hayes: Unfortunately, we just closed our hiring process. Um, we do anticipate on opening another one up in late summer. We prefer that our applicants have a four-year degree. It's an added bonus if they have some law enforcement experience to go along with that. An agent's schedule every day, it is really, it's different. It varies day to day which is, like I said, another positive of being an ALE agent because there's some days that you may be in court. There's some days that you may be in training. There's some days that you may be working a long-term assignment, and you're preparing, you know, for an operation, or you're preparing for a search warrant. You may be doing inspections in stores. You may be working an enforcement project for a weekend with your district as a whole, or you may be assisting a local agency with a project that they have. So, I think that, um, that's the biggest difference between us and local law enforcement agencies is that we have that flexibility and we do so many different things. We're plainclothes. We get take-home cars. It really is the—the best state law enforcement job that North Carolina has to offer.

Kirsten: Mmm-hmm. You guys work alongside other local law enforcement agencies...

A.D. Hayes: We do.

Kirsten: ...for the safety missions?

A.D. Hayes: We do.

Kirsten: Okay.

A.D. Hayes: We do, yeah. Sometimes, a lot of times, we are—we work alone.

Kirsten: Mmm-hmm.

A.D. Hayes: So, those 109 agents are assigned—well, you have to subtract out all of the supervision—but you have field agents who are assigned counties. So, we have 100 counties in the state. We don't have 100 field agents. So, some agents are gonna have multiple counties that they're responsible for all of the places that sell alcohol there. Every place that has a permit whether it's a QuikStop or a, you know, a nightclub or a white tablecloth restaurant. We are responsible for doing inspections and enforcement in all of those outlets across the state.

Kirsten: Okay. Can you tell us about any cases that have stood out during your years in ALE?

A.D. Hayes: Probably the ones that stand out the most are what we call source investigations. These are investigations where someone under the age of 21 is involved in a serious crash or incident of some sort in which they sustain either fatal injuries or life-threatening injuries. We take that investigation, and we kind of go backwards. We start from the crash or the wreck scene, and we look for all the evidence inside the vehicle. Then we start interviewing people who may have known, and our—our efforts are to go backwards to determine who provided the alcohol to that underage person. And there's large civil ramifications as well as criminal charges that stem from that. Those investigations are hard because they take a lot of resources. They take a lot of time, but oftentimes they—they provide a little bit of closure for the family as to how or why it happened.

Kirsten: So, how has ALE evolved during your time with the agency?

A.D. Hayes: When I first started with ALE, we had, like, 12 district offices. So, we have eight now. Over the last 25 years, there's been, you know, there's that change in leadership which causes, sometimes, a change in direction or a change in focus. So, ALE was ABC prior to 1977, and in 1977 it became Alcohol Law Enforcement under then when it was the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety. We were put under the SBI in 2014. We were separated from the SBI and returned to a standalone division within DPS in October of last year. I'm kind of sad because I feel like, I don't know, I feel like we've kind of lost, um, or we're losing our history.

Kirsten: I mean, yeah, when you move around, I mean, stuff just gets lost in the transition.

A.D. Hayes: Yeah.

Kirsten: It's like moving from house to house, it just...

A.D. Hayes: Yep. Yeah. So, we kind of...

Kirsten: Things can get...

A.D. Hayes: I just, yeah. That's kind of one of the things I want to try to do is I want to try to start piecing some of that together, and, um, reaching out to some of those people who are former and, if nothing else just, you know, to have them write a letter and send some pictures and, you know.

Kirsten: Yeah!

A.D. Hayes: Kind of try to put some of that together, yeah. But you know, I think over time, ALE's mission has sort of, um, ebbed and flowed, you know. It's kind of been

outlet-driven, you know, alcohol-related, and then maybe it moved some to some other directions, and we are trying to kind of pull things back to focusing on those ABC outlets and working in those outlets and providing the service to those people who have ABC permits. You know, we want to be their first line of defense. You know, when they have a question, they—we want them to call us, so that we can help them and partner with them to—for them to be a successful business under their permits.

As far as our agency makeup over the years, we've lost agents to legislative cuts, and, um, so we are in the process of still trying to rebuild that back up and to bring everything back to full staff and—and have, uh, an agency that reflects the population that we serve.

Kirsten: Mmm-hmm.

[Pause]

Thanks for joining us for this episode of the Safety Scoop. Angela, thank you for sharing, uh, your career history and a little bit more about ALE. If anyone is interested in learning more, you can go to ncdps.gov and type Alcohol Law Enforcement into the search bar to learn more. Thanks again.

A.D. Hayes: Thanks.

[Both laugh]

Conclusion

[Music]

Julia: Thanks for listening to this episode of the Safety Scoop. To learn more about NCDPS, go to ncdps.gov. Tune in next time on your favorite podcast app to hear more behind-the-scenes stories from the North Carolina Department of Public Safety.

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