

“Under the Trooper’s Hat”

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NDHP Troopers often get comments from motorists when issuing a citation that we are just, “raising revenue for the state” or “funding a new NDHP office toaster?” Most residents truly don’t know where the money from traffic and criminal fines go. The following information may dispel common misconceptions about financial revenue from citations and arrests.

It is important to note this article only address fines submitted to the district courts (counties). All citations issued by North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers are processed by district courts. Municipalities (cities) have the option to set their own fines for violation of city ordinances. Those fees can be directed into a general or set fund.

According to the North Dakota State Constitution Article IX section 2, revenue obtained from ALL fines for violation of state laws must be *faithfully used and applied for the benefit of the common schools of the State of North Dakota*. This money must never be diverted, even temporarily, from this purpose or used for any purpose other than the maintenance of common schools. When a NDHP trooper writes a \$20.00 ticket for failure to stop or arrests a DUI suspect who is then found or pleads guilty, the revenue collected from the associated fines goes directly to the State School Fund. At no point, does law enforcement monetarily benefit from tickets written or arrests made.

Each month, the county Clerk of Court or Treasurer from all counties, forwards the money collected through fines to the State Treasurer. The State Treasurer places all the collected revenue into the State Tuition Fund. According to Ryan Skor, Director of Finance – Office of State Treasurer, “The money in that fund is then transferred to the Public Instruction Fund, which is overseen by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). DPI then uses all of this money as part of their formula payments out to the school districts across the state.” This means that fines directly benefit the students and schools in North Dakota.

According to Skor, the amount collected by the State Treasurer and transferred to the State Tuition Fund during fiscal year (July-June) are as follows:

- Fiscal Year 2016 - \$6,945,205.53
- Fiscal Year 2017 - \$5,511,246.91
- Fiscal Year 2018 - \$6,055,397.45

For fiscal year 2018 (July 1, 2017- June 30, 2018), counties submitted the following amounts of fines and fees to the ND State Treasurer:

- Emmons County: \$31,815
- Kidder County: \$42,608
- Logan County: \$13,188
- McIntosh County: \$16,391

If you have been caught on the wrong side of the law and were required to pay a fine, there may be some solace knowing that your money went into our state's educational system.

The mission of the North Dakota Highway Patrol is to make a difference every day by providing high quality law enforcement services to keep North Dakota safe and secure. NDHP invites you to visit the FAQ section of our website: www.nd.gov/ndhp, like our Facebook page www.facebook.com/northdakotahighwaypatrol or join us on Twitter @NDHighwayPatrol where you can learn more about traffic safety, tips, and NDHP news.