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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Troopers Arrest Lincoln Man After Laser Strike on NSP Helicopter

MARCH 13, 2023 (LINCOLN, NEB.) — Troopers with the Nebraska State Patrol have arrested a man for striking the NSP helicopter with a laser multiple times as it was in flight over the city of Lincoln. Pointing a laser at an aircraft is a federal offense and any laser strike constitutes an in-flight emergency.

At approximately 10:00 p.m. Friday, NSP pilots launched from the Lincoln Airport to assist the Lincoln Police Department with an operation. Shortly after launching, while flying west of downtown Lincoln, the pilots reported a laser strike on the helicopter. The pilots immediately reported the laser strike to Lincoln Air Traffic Control.

While searching for the origin location of the laser, the pilots reported additional laser strikes on the helicopter. The pilots were then able to identify the source of the laser, which was a subject walking on a path near Salt Creek, south of West O Street. The pilots directed troopers and LPD officers to the subject's location.

Troopers located the subject just south of West O Street on the Salt Creek Levee Trail. The subject was found to be in possession of a laser pointer and was taken into custody without incident. After consultation with the Lancaster County Attorney's Office, the subject, Lee Cimfel, 42, of Lincoln, was lodged in Lancaster County Jail for second degree assault. NSP has reported the laser strike to the Federal Aviation Administration.

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Note: Requests for booking photos should be made to the county jail.

State Patrol – John A. Bolduc, Colonel

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