

Kevin Reeves named Louisiana State Police superintendent

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BATON ROUGE -- Louisiana's State Police superintendent will be Col. Kevin Reeves, the same officer who's been holding down the fort on an interim basis for three months, Gov. John Bel Edwards said Tuesday (June 13). Reeves, a 27-year veteran, took the temporary job in March when Mike Edmonson retired amid criticism.

"Col. Reeves has done an exceptional job at the State Police, and he has won the praise of his colleagues and law enforcement across the state," Edwards said. The governor was "impressed by his level of professionalism and the new ideas he has brought."

When he became superintendent, Reeves inherited an agency rocked by questions about spending and under financial review. He said he's "humbled" by the permanent appointment. "It is a tremendous responsibility to ensure the safety and security of the citizens of our state, and I shall never take it for granted," he said.

State law requires the superintendent to be a trooper from within the agency's ranks. Before being named interim superintendent, Reeves commanded a statewide quick reaction force and oversaw patrol operations in central and north Louisiana. He started with the State Police in June 1990 as a motorcycle trooper in Baton Rouge and has worked as a squad leader for a mobile field force, an undercover agent on narcotics investigations and a troop commander.

His predecessor was Louisiana's longest-serving State Police superintendent. Edmonson retired after nine years in the position as pressure mounted about his management.

Concerns had been raised about thousands of dollars that the agency spent on a trip to a law enforcement conference in California and about a nonprofit trooper organization's donations to political candidates despite bans on political contributions from troopers. He also had been under fire from blogs and a social media site allegedly run by anonymous troopers accusing him of misconduct and mishandling agency finances. Outside auditors are digging into State Police travel records.

Without specifically referencing the controversy, Reeves acknowledged the scrutiny on his department. "As we move forward, accountability begins with me and extends to every employee in the department," he

said. "We know we have some challenges ahead, but we will face these challenges together and be stronger because of them. The public demands nothing less."

Reeves' appointment wasn't unexpected. There were suggestions he likely would be the governor's permanent pick.

Lawmakers were asked in the just-ended legislative session to rewrite Louisiana's anti-nepotism laws to carve out a special exemption for Reeves' son to continue to work as a state trooper, even though Reeves was in charge of the agency. Edwards has signed that bill.