



Badges, Buckles, Belts & Beyond

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Back issues of the BBB&B Newsletter can be found at <http://www.smartsafeandsober.org>

Again this May: Click It or Ticket

Focusing on males aged 18 – 34 years, the *Click it or Ticket* national program will once again be making its mark. From **May 17 to June 13**, you are asked to participate in Virginia's statewide *Click it or Ticket* campaign. You will hear television and radio spots designed to convince the public, especially males, to buckle up! We ask that you take this program very seriously. Checkpoints and strong enforcement seem to

be very effective when combined with a strong media campaign to get the public to wear a seat belt.

New this year will be the Trucks for Bucks lottery ticket. This is another way for us to reach those folks who just haven't gotten the word that a seat belt will save your life!

Good luck in raising the seat belt usage rate in your locality. Remember to conduct your pre- and



post- seat belt surveys to measure how you are doing. Remember, the state rate is 74.6% — let's raise it together!



CHECKPOINT STRIKEFORCE
You drink & drive. You lose.

2003 Mobilization Enforcement Activities

July 1, 2003 through January 2, 2004

Approximate number of checkpoints	298
DUI Arrest	753
Safety Belt Citations	790
Child Safety Seat Citations	223
Felony Arrest	169
Recovered Stolen Vehicles	6
Fugitives Apprehended	68
Suspended Licenses	715
Uninsured Motorists	39
Speeding	2291
Reckless Driving	583
Drug Arrest	180
Other Violations	1708
TOTAL NUMBER OF ARRESTS/CITATIONS	7525

Update on Federal and State Traffic Safety Legislation

By Dana Schrad, Executive Director
Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police

Traffic safety advocates continued this year to fight for passage of a primary safety belt law in Virginia and saw efforts begin to pass a national law in support of primary safety belt legislation.

Early in 2004, U.S. Senator John Warner (R.-Va.) and U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton (D.-N.Y.) introduced S. 1993, a Congressional bill to create incentives for the states to enact primary safety belt laws. Virginia had 913 automobile fatalities in 2002. Of those 913 fatalities, 438 (62.7%) were not wearing a safety belt. In those 913 fatality crashes, 9,912 injuries were sustained by unbuckled occupants.

Under Virginia's current secondary enforcement law, front seat safety belt use is 74.6%, which includes drivers and front seat passengers. Research indicates that front seat occupants of vehicles involved in potentially fatal crashes in states with primary safety belt laws have a 15 percentage point higher belt use than persons in states without primary laws.

On February 11, 2004, the Warner/Clinton national primary safety belt measure was defeated in the Senate on a close 56-42 vote. However, highway safety advocates have indicated that the effort will continue on the national level until the measure is passed.



Senator John Warner (R.-Va.) and VACP Executive Director Dana Schrad spoke in support of national seat belt legislation.



Photos by Erin Schrad, VACP
Arlington County Police Detective John Ritter (left) and Officer Ralph Rice (right) attended to show law enforcement support for the bill.

Efforts continued this year to get a primary safety belt bill passed by the Virginia General Assembly. Senate Bill 235, sponsored by Senator Tommy Norment, was passed by the Senate, but carried over to 2005 in the House Transportation Committee. A canvassing of the House Transportation Committee members indicated that there were not enough votes to pass the bill to the House floor. Bills that are carried over to 2005 must be acted on by the committees before the end of 2004. If House Transportation Committee Chairman Leo Wardrup decides to call a meeting, it most likely will be in December.

An effort to water down Virginia's motorcycle helmet law failed on a close 48-51 vote, and advocates to repeal the helmet law are expected to return with another effort next year. This year House Bill 374 would have allowed certain persons who are more than 21 years old, subject to payment to DMV of a fee of \$1 per year, to ride motorcycles helmet-free and would have

made the law a secondary offense.

Four photo red enforcement bills (SB 92, SB 132, SB 176, and HB 370) were introduced in 2004, but none of the bills were passed. There are several members of the House Militia, Police and Public Safety Committee that are opposed to expanding photo red authorization beyond the existing demonstration projects. It will be imperative for the existing programs to get legislation passed in 2005 to allow those programs to continue past the sunset date in the present law. Efforts will continue to expand the authority to other interested jurisdictions.

For more information on the status of traffic safety legislation, visit the VACP website at www.vachiefs.org and click on "[Legislative Priorities for the 2004 Virginia General Assembly Session](#)." This will link you directly to a list of bills that are hyperlinked to the Virginia Legislative Services website, where you can review the bill's history and read the text.



**April 4-7
Arlington,
Virginia**

6th Annual Virginia BikeWalk Conference Packed Full of Power!

The agenda for the 6th Annual Virginia BikeWalk Conference (<http://www.bikewalkvirginia.org/conference/ConfSchedule.htm>), scheduled for April 4-7th in Arlington, Virginia, is packed with national experts and leaders.

The theme is "Creating Living Communities." Headline speakers include national walking and community experts, Mark Fenton, Rich Killingsworth, Barbara McCann, and Thomas Hylton, and Transportation Secretary Whitt Clement will update us on the new VDOT pedestrian policy. The breakout sessions will feature speakers who have been leaders and planners in areas such as the new school initiative, Walk Smart Virginia; various bike

and pedestrian plans throughout the Commonwealth; New Urbanism; the development of "friends" groups; bike-friendly communities; and creating Active for Life communities.

Registration materials are available at: <http://www.bikewalkvirginia.org/conference/registration.html>

Although the conference hotel block has been released, there may still be rooms available at the Holiday Inn Arlington. For hotel reservations, call (703)243-9800. Mention the BikeWalk conference.

For more information, contact us at info@bikewalkvirginia.org. See you in Arlington as we walk and bike to see the cherry blossoms!



Click It or Ticket in Frederick County



The Frederick County Sheriff's Office has been very serious about the *Click It or Ticket* Campaign. Here is how they worked to raise the seat belt usage rate in the county:

According to Corporal Mike A. Richardson, the Sheriff's Office began in 2003 by building a rapport with local radio stations, TV stations and area newspapers.

The first stage was to educate as much of the public as possible in the County. To their credit, the Sheriff's Office participated in 5 live radio shows on seat belt awareness, participated in 2 live TV shows, taped 4 PSAs (which aired for most of May 2003 and November 2003), and published several newspaper articles. It seemed the more information brought to the stations, the more they wanted to help get the *Click It or Ticket* message out. The entire local media campaign was done at no cost to the Sheriff's Office.

Observational survey results showed for May, 2003 the county-wide pre-survey compliance rate was 71%, with a post-survey rate of 75% — slightly over the statewide average of 74.6%. Then in November 2003, the pre-survey rate started at 81%, with a post-survey rate of 75%. Ultimately, the rate stayed at 75%!

The program's second stage was to recruit all

neighboring agencies and volunteers to participate in the enforcement waves. Along with the Frederick County Sheriff's Office, there was the Winchester City Sheriff's Office, Stephens City Police Department, Middletown Police Department, Old Dominion ASAP, media and several area youths.

According to the Deputies, most of the success of these efforts goes to Sheriff Robert T. Williamson for his support of the program and the lives and safety of the County's residents. He has dedicated himself to do whatever it takes to ensure the safety of the citizens and motorists of Frederick County.



NOT SO FAST!

Safe Driving Can Mean Big Savings on Auto Premiums; Nationwide Mutual Insurance Co. Explains Pricing Impact of Accidents or Moving Violations

COLUMBUS, Ohio—While the majority of Virginia motorists consider themselves to be safe drivers, they also engage in a number of potentially dangerous activities while behind the wheel, according to a recent poll by Nationwide Mutual Insurance Co. and the State Highway Safety Alliance.

Seventy-six percent of Virginia motorists say they are “always safe” behind the wheel, but a large number of those motorists also admit they speed to beat traffic lights (30 percent), fail to signal before a lane change or turn (33 and 27 percent, respectively), regularly speed more than 10 miles over the posted limit (48 percent), or respond to aggressive drivers (24 percent).

The survey results suggest these actions, coupled with common distractions, such as eating, drinking, smoking, or talking on a cell phone, show drivers are not as safe as they believe. The lack of focus while driving doesn’t only threaten motorists’ safety; it may also affect their wallets.

The cost of paying future claims is among the key factors when companies formulate auto insurance rates. Your personal driving history can have a significant affect on your future auto insurance rates. For example, a single minor violation, such as a speeding ticket, can affect your premium by up to 26 percent*.

“After having an at-fault accident or receiving a citation for a moving violation, insurance companies may adjust your premium through a temporary ‘surcharge,’” according to Kevin Craiglow, a Nationwide Insurance spokesperson. “It’s not a penalty. Nor is it an attempt to recover money paid for a prior claim. The temporary “surcharge” is to account for the increased statistical likelihood that the motorist will have a

claim during the next few years.”

Seventy-nine percent of motorists say people with an accident or citation should pay higher auto insurance rates, according to the consumer telephone survey of 650 Virginia motorists (Dec. 9-30, 2003) by Western Wats, an independent survey firm based in Provo, Utah, for Nationwide Insurance and the State Highway Safety Alliance.

For the most egregious actions, such as passing a stopped school bus, driving under the influence, or highway racing, premiums may more than double for the first year after the violation. An at-fault accident can increase rates by nearly 50 percent.

Accidents and less severe citations affect premiums via a “surcharge” on a sliding scale over multiple years. So while one speeding ticket may cause rates to rise by around 25 percent in the first year, the surcharge would be reduced each of the following consecutive years (providing there are no subsequent accidents or citations).

Multiple minor violations in a relatively short period of time, however, drive rates higher. Two minor violations can affect a driver’s premium by up to 50 percent. And three minor violations can affect a driver’s premium even more. Repeated infractions, minor or major, can disqualify a motorist from the company’s lowest-rated program.

Many companies do not take rate increase or surcharge actions when certain circumstances apply.

Long-term customers with clean driving records can receive “forgiveness,” meaning their premium will not be surcharged because of their safe driving record and history with the company. With Nationwide, “forgiveness” is typically five years as a policyholder and three years without

To view the summary tables of the survey results, visit:

www.smartsafeandsober.org

Click on the “Resources” tab and look under “NATIONWIDE Insurance Survey on Habits of Auto Drivers” to download the summary tables.

a major traffic violation or accident.*

Comparing “surcharge” percentages, however, will not accurately reflect the true costs of citations or accidents among insurance companies. Companies employ varied pricing principles and practices. Following an at-fault crash or moving violation, some insurance companies place a driver in a higherrated company instead of, or in combination with, employing a surcharge.

Your driving record can even affect other insurance premiums—including individual life, health, disability or long term care insurance. Speeding, at-fault accidents, or other moving violations can be an indication of a risk-inclined lifestyle. Many insurance companies consider your driving record when determining life, health, disability or long term care rates.

For those motorists with a clean driving record, most companies recognize policyholders with a safe driving history with an additional premium discount. With Nationwide, that can be up to a 10 percent discount.

“It is in the best interest of motorists—for their well-being and their finances—to avoid distractions and drive safely. Your driving behavior, in large measure, determines not only your propensity for a crash but also the cost of your financial protection,” said Timothy A. Hoyt, Nationwide vice president of safety.

*Discounts, rates and policies vary by state, are based on historic and expected loss experience, and are subject to change.



100 seats inspected and installed during child safety seat checkup

On February 12, as a project for Child Passenger Safety Week, members of the Roanoke SAFE Kids Coalition, Carilion Health System Level 1 Trauma Center, and the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police held a safety seat checkup in the parking lot of Target in Roanoke near Valley View Mall. Despite the threat of inclement weather, between

12:00 noon and 4:00 p.m., members of five police agencies and State Police troopers from the Roanoke Valley inspected and educated the parents of **100 child safety seats** as to the proper installation of the seats in motor vehicles.

During the checkpoint, 95% of the seats inspected by the CPS certified officers were found to be installed incorrectly with an average of two installation mistakes per seat. Parents' were made aware of the dangers of an incorrectly installed seat and were shown the way to properly install the seat. CPS materials were given to the participants and free gun safety locks were provided to those who owned weapons.

Everyone connected with the checkup was impressed by the attitude and concern of the parents that attended the event. "This was truly worth the time and effort, I am so pleased with the response by the parents here in the Roanoke Valley",



quoted Jill Lucas, a member of the Roanoke SAFE Kids Coalition and co-sponsor of the event.

Plans are under way for a second checkup event to be held in the Roanoke Valley during the summer months.



**FREE
Car Seat Check-Up**
Make Sure Your Child's
Car Seat is Installed Safely.

For your child's safety and for your own peace of mind, learn the importance of proper car seat installation. During this car seat check up, specialists will help install seats and answer questions. Also, find out which car seats are compatible with your automobile. Attendees are encouraged to bring old, used or abused car seats for disposal.

The Roanoke Sheriff's Office will also be on hand to pass out free gun lock safety devices to help prevent accidental shootings.

For more information, call Carilion Direct at 981-7641.

In the event of inclement weather, please call 981-7641 for cancellation information.

Roanoke SAFE KIDS Coalition.
Carilion Health System

Date: Thursday, Feb. 12
Time: Noon - 4 p.m.
Location: Target parking lot (near Valley View Mall)
Sponsors: Roanoke SAFE Kids Coalition, Carilion Health System Level 1 Trauma Center and Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police

SAVE THE DATE!!

NHTSA Region III Occupant Protection Law Enforcement Training Seminar

April 22-23, 2004
Williamsburg Marriott – Williamsburg, VA
\$100.00 Registration Fee / \$99.00 Room Rate
Registration Form online at www.smartsafeandsober.org

NHTSA Region III Impaired Driving Summit

June 2-4, 2004
Clarion Hotel & Conference Center – Shepherdstown, WV
\$100.00 Registration Fee / \$79.00 Room Rate

5th Annual Mid-Atlantic DUI Conference

April 26-28, 2004
Virginia Beach Convention Center
1000 19th Street, Virginia Beach, VA
\$35.00 Registration Fee (Lunch provided daily.)
\$79.00 Oceanfront Room Rate

For a copy of the registration form and a detailed listing of the conference schedule, please visit the web site at <http://www.vbgov.com/dui>.



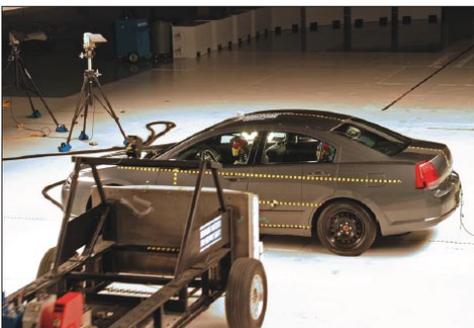
Photos by Erin Schrad, VACP

Steve Oesch of the Insurance Institute guided committee members on a tour of the facilities and described traffic safety research activities of the facility.

Virginia's Highway Safety Committee Provides Guidance for Smart, Safe and Sober Programs

Virginia's Highway Safety Committee has reorganized and met recently at the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. The committee is comprised of six police chiefs, six sheriffs, and the superintendent of the Virginia State Police, and has advisory members from the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles. Traffic safety staff from the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police arranged for the committee members to tour the Institute's facilities and witness the controlled crash of a 2004 Mitsubishi Galant. The crash was a 50 km/h side impact that simulated a collision between the sedan and a sport utility vehicle. Steve Oesch of the Institute directed the tour and described the traffic safety research activities of the facility.

The Virginia Highway Safety Committee is co-chaired by Virginia Beach Police Chief Jake Jacocks and New Kent County Sheriff Wakie Howard. The committee will be meeting in the future to provide guidance on the development of the Virginia Law Enforcement Challenge traffic safety awards program, and to offer policy direction on a variety of traffic safety efforts that are part of the Smart, Safe and Sober Program. The chiefs and sheriffs on the committee agreed that the Highway Safety Committee provides a sounding board for the Smart, Safe and Sober Program partners to utilize in scheduling traffic enforcement mobilizations and in planning traffic safety training and education for the law enforcement community.



Highway Safety Committee members witnessed the controlled crash of a 2004 Mitsubishi Galant at the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. The crash was a 50 km/h side impact that simulated a collision between the sedan and a sport utility vehicle.

2004 VIRGINIA HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE

c/o Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police
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 Richmond, VA 23288
 P: (804) 285-8227
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CO-CHAIRS:

Chief Jake Jacocks
 Virginia Beach Police Department

Sheriff F. W. "Wakie" Howard
 New Kent Co. Sheriff's Office

COMMITTEE:

Sheriff James Agnew
 Goochland Co. Sheriff's Office

Chief Dan Boring
 Culpeper Police Department

Colonel James Bryant
 Salem Police Department

Chief Doug Davis
 Waynesboro Police Department

Colonel Steve Flaherty
 Virginia State Police

Sheriff Charlie Jett
 Stafford Co. Sheriff's Office

Sheriff E. Stuart Kitchen
 Sussex Co. Sheriff's Office

Chief Doug Scott
 Arlington Co. Police Department

Sheriff Tommy Whitt
 Montgomery Co. Sheriff's Office

Law enforcement officer fatalities reach 148 for 2003

Shootings and automobile accidents cited as leading causes of death

WASHINGTON, D.C.—In the year 2003, 148 law enforcement officers across the nation were killed in the line of duty, representing the second year in a row that the number has been well below the decade-long average of 166 annual police deaths. The 142 male and six female officers who died worked in 38 of our nation's 50 states, as well as Puerto Rico and one federal agency. According to the 2003 "Fallen Heroes Report" released jointly by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF) and the Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS), the states with the highest number of officer fatalities were: California (18); Georgia (10); Texas (10); Virginia (8); and Florida, Louisiana, and Tennessee (7). California saw the greatest increase in officer fatalities with an increase of eight from the previous year. The most significant drop in officer fatalities was

experienced by federal law enforcement with nine fewer deaths in 2003 than in 2002. The 148 officers killed in 2003 matched the fatality figure recorded in 2002.

Of the 148 officers killed during 2003, preliminary data shows that 53 died in automobile accidents; 52 were shot to death; 13 were struck by automobiles while on duty outside their vehicles; 11 died in motorcycle accidents; six succumbed to job-related illnesses; four drowned; two suffered fatal beatings; two fell to their deaths; one was stabbed to death; one died in an aircraft accident; one was electrocuted; one was strangled; and one was hit by a train.

"The Memorial Fund is committed to honoring every fallen police officer," said NLEOMF Chairman Craig W. Floyd. "Every U.S. law enforcement officer fatality is a national tragedy," said Linda Hintergardt-Soubirous, President of

COPS. "COPS pays tribute to those brave men and women who made the supreme sacrifice and, in our 20th year of service, as in years past, promises to provide healing, love and life renewed to their surviving families and affected coworkers as well." Dating back to the first known law enforcement fatality in 1792, there have been more than 16,000 federal, state and local officers killed in the United States. All of those names are inscribed on the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, which is located in Washington, D.C. The names of the officers killed in 2003 will be formally added to that Memorial at a candlelight vigil on May 13. The NLEOMF is now in the process of building a National Law Enforcement Museum across the street from the Memorial to tell the history of law enforcement in America, including the individual tales of these fallen heroes.

Look what we have to brag about!!!

Officer Clarence J. Seamster, Jr. of the Smithfield Police Department serves as the Coordinator of the Community Traffic Safety Program for Smithfield. Here is what he has to share about the Departments traffic safety efforts in his words...

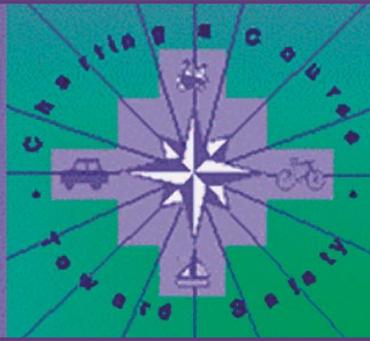
I feel like I have tried to tackle this new responsibility with unwavering fervor. First, I added an updateable traffic safety program webpage to the Town of Smithfield website. Using a generous \$15,000 corporate grant, I formed a partnership with Smithfield Foods, Inc. for a concession-style trailer for our traffic safety efforts. The trailer will not only be used for public information and education at special events here and abroad, but also will be outfitted with cones, signs, etc. for conducting courtesy and enforcement sobriety, safety seat, and occupant protection checkpoint activities as well as CSS installations!

I have worked hard to get the media and

newspaper more involved in traffic safety efforts. I think one of the most important projects that we have undertaken is an impaired driving public information and education poster. The poster is now in distribution statewide! The concept for this project came from my twelve year-old stepson Steven Hinson and his ten year-old brother Mathew. The Virginia State Police has been a big help, especially Sgt. Sammy Carr, with the distribution and promotion of this project. The boys came up with the idea after hearing the tragic news of Trooper Daryl Campbell and his son Andrew being killed in a senseless traffic crash on the Eastern Shore this past year. I am proud of the boys for developing the poster and for the departments in displaying the message.

If you would like more information call Officer Seamster at (757) 357-3247 during business hours Tuesday through Friday.

ACTS



2004

TUESDAY, MAY 11th AGENDA (Tentative)

PRECONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

- * Registration — 8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
- * Exhibit Hall — 8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
- * Board Meetings — 10:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. (*by invitation only, lunch provided*)
 - Driver's Education
 - DRIVE SMART® Virginia
 - Governor's Transportation Safety Board
 - Local Transportation Safety Commission
 - Smart, Safe and Sober Coordinators
 - VDOT Traffic Engineering
 - Virginia Alcohol Safety Action Program Directors
 - Virginia State Police Division Commanders
 - Youth of Virginia Speak Out About Traffic Safety

OPENING CEREMONY — 1:00 – 1:45 p.m.

- * **Opening Remarks** – *Invited Speaker:* The Honorable Whittington Clement, Secretary of Transportation
- * **“Charting A Course”** – *Invited Speaker:* Dr. Jeffrey Runge, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

CONCURRENT SESSIONS — 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

- * **“Collision Avoidance Technology”**
- * **“Courage 2 Live”**
- * **“Drink, Drive, Go To Jail — DUI Prosecution Training”**

CONCURRENT SESSIONS — 3:15-4:00 p.m.

- * **“In The Zone”**
- * **“Motorcycle Crashes on the Rise, What Is Virginia Doing About It?”**
- * **“CSI on the H₂O”**

CONCURRENT SESSIONS — 4:15-5:00 p.m.

- * **“Bike and Walk Your Way to Bucks”**
- * **“Fast and Furious in Virginia”**
- * **“Safety Starts with Crash Data”**

EXHIBIT HALL — 5:00 – 6:00 pm.

RECEPTION — 5:30 – 8:00 p.m. — Nauticus National Maritime Center

WEDNESDAY, MAY 12th AGENDA (Tentative)

REGISTRATION CHECK-IN AND CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST — 8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

REAUTHORIZATION — 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

DRIVER BEHAVIOR STUDY — 10:15 – 11:00 a.m.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE — 11:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

AWARDS LUNCHEON — 12:00 – 1:30 p.m. (Dr. Beth Baker, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION — Register online at <http://www.vcu.edu/cppweb/oppt/>

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Please contact the Norfolk Waterside Marriott directly for hotel reservations at (888) 840-3143. Call by April 19th to secure the conference rate of \$109/night.

2004 Smart, Safe & Sober Calendars are still available!!!



If you would like more for your agency or would like a supply to use as giveaways, please contact the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police at (804) 285-8227 to request additional copies!



Virginia Law Enforcement Challenge Deadline Extended

Even though we said this wouldn't happen, the **deadline for submitting your Challenge application has been extended to April 30**. The judging process for our Virginia entries has been changed, so we can extend the deadline to give you more time to prepare your entry. Application forms are online at www.smartsafeandsober.org, or you can call the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police at (804) 285-8227 for assistance.

Passive Alcohol Sensors workshop

The NHTSA Region 3 office conducted a workshop for Law Enforcement and Highway Safety Office personnel to promote the use of Passive Alcohol Sensors as part of the *Checkpoint Strikeforce* and *You Drink & Drive, You Lose* campaign. This one-day workshop also included a sobriety checkpoint afterwards so students could experience practical applications with the instruments. National MADD President Wendy Hamilton also attended the training and checkpoint. A total of 55 attended the workshop!



NHTSA Region 3 Administrator, Dr Beth Baker, conducts a mock traffic stop using a Passive Alcohol Sensor flashlight on Virginia's DMV Alcohol coordinator Butch Letteer. Seems that Mr. Letteer had a few drinks as the sensor detects the presence of alcohol!

FR300 Crash Forms

Effective January 1, 2004, law enforcement agencies throughout Virginia began to use the newly revised FR300 for reportable crashes.

New categories have been added to include reporting information on work zones, road surface type, air bags, type of driver distraction, vehicle damage, drug use and method of alcohol determination, Commercial Vehicle Weight, Emergency information, GPS Latitude/Longitude, US DOT number, Towed information, passenger age count, lane direction and VIN number.

You can download the editable, revised FR300P form in Excel and/or Word formats. The forms can be found at www.vcu.edu/cppweb/tstc/fr3000903. These are user-friendly forms with pop up lists that are helpful in assisting officers who have laptop entry capabilities when completing the form.

If you have not placed orders for the new forms, please contact Ms. Sharita Bryant, DMV, by fax at 804-367-1054, or by e-mail at dmvsb2@dmv.state.va.us to request a supply. If you have placed an order and have not received it yet, please download the forms from the website and use those until you received your ordered supply. You also may use your old crash forms until you receive the new forms.

VCU Crash Investigation Team study examines reliability of automobile “black boxes” in crash investigations

RICHMOND, Va. – A device that tells your car when to fire the airbag in a crash can also help tell investigators what caused the crash. The finding by researchers at Virginia Commonwealth University could lead to safer cars and help police and insurance companies determine who was at fault.

The VCU Crash Investigation Team studied eight crashes to verify the accuracy of data from so-called “black boxes,” also known as “event data recorders,” which more and more law enforcement agencies are tapping to help determine the cause of mysterious crashes. Before the study, not much was known about their reliability.

One of the case studies involved a 2001 Corvette that ran off a winding road in rural Virginia on a clear, dry day and crashed, instantly killing the 55-year-old driver. By plugging a laptop computer into the black box that fired the powerful car’s airbags, VCU crash investigators were able to verify what happened five seconds before impact.

The palm-sized device, located in the car’s dashboard, indicated the driver was not wearing a seat belt, did not brake, floored the accelerator, and traveled at about 90 mph in a 25 mph speed zone. “For a person to be going that fast and not wearing a seat belt, plus accelerating into the turn altogether indicated he intended to go that fast,” said VCU Crash Investigation

Team leader David O. McAllister.

By comparing the data with the physical evidence at the crash site and information from the driver’s family that he was emotionally disturbed at the time of the crash, VCU investigators concluded the cause was likely suicide.

“The capability of downloading data from black boxes is tremendously significant to a law enforcement officer who is investigating a crash because of the ability to correlate pre-crash data with physical evidence and to state confidently what the vehicles’ speeds were at the time of the crash,” said VCU Transportation Safety Training Center Director Robert J. Breitenbach.

Black box data is the most revolutionary development in crash investigation in 50 years, according to Breitenbach, but he cautions that it must be compared with physical evidence at the scene before investigators draw any conclusions.

Currently, crash data only can be read by investigators from select General Motors and Ford vehicles built after 1993 and a handful of import cars. Not all automobile manufacturers provide the necessary access codes to their black boxes.

To read the full report of the study, go to <http://www.vcu.edu/uns/Releases/2003/dec/121003.html> and click on the “Full Report” link. You can also click on the “Video News Release” link and view a short video on black boxes from your computer.

Enforcement Zone Set

Traffic violations on I-81 between Salem and Ironto could cost motorists more

SALEM, Va.—Beginning Tuesday, Jan.13, motorists traveling Interstate 81 between Salem and Ironto should pay special attention to their driving. If drivers are cited by law enforcement officers for traffic violations or criminal infractions in that area, they could receive tickets with increased fines up to \$2,500, depending on the citation.

The increased fines are part of a Highway Safety Corridor Program created by the 2003 General Assembly to improve safety on designated stretches of Virginia’s interstate system.

“The purpose of this program is to reduce highway deaths and injuries,” said State Police Captain Charles Compton. “With increased enforcement and higher fines, we

can enhance safety on this section of I-81, which seems to be a high crash location.”

Starting this week, motorists will see bright yellow signs marking the 15-mile “Safety Enforcement Zone” where increased fines can apply. The zone extends from mile marker 127 near Ironto in Montgomery County to mile marker 142 near Salem in Roanoke County. More than 20 12-foot-wide signs will be posted throughout the zone.

The I-81 safety enforcement zone is the first to be designated in the state. The program will expand this spring to include sections of other interstates, which are yet to be determined. VDOT engineers continue to analyze safety statistics about the commonwealth’s

interstates to identify stretches with unusually high numbers of crashes.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is coordinating with the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles and the Virginia State Police to implement the program. Two local public hearings about the program were held in 2003. The first focused on the statistical analysis criteria for identifying highway zones with safety issues. The second hearing focused on the 15-mile stretch of I-81 in the Salem area as a potential safety enforcement zone.

In 2002, 93 people were injured in 177 crashes on this section of I-81. Statewide, 913 people died and nearly 79,000 more were injured in Virginia motor vehicle crashes in 2002.

Officers detect sophisticated smuggling system

Bedford Co. officials make their biggest drug bust after uncovering high-tech hiding spot

By Jay Conley
The Roanoke Times

BEDFORD - A routine traffic stop in Bedford County just after Christmas has yielded the the largest drug bust in Bedford County history, authorities said.

In a news conference Thursday, Sheriff Mike Brown announced that investigators had recovered 6.5 kilograms of cocaine that had been carefully hidden in a remote-control operated compartment of a Roanoke man's 2001 Chevrolet Tahoe.

Brown's office said it's the kind of ingenious concealment used by criminals busted in major cities that are featured on the television program "Cops."

"This is significant," Brown said. "It's a major bust."

The cocaine was vacuum sealed in plastic bags and covered with mustard to hide its tell tale scent from drug-sniffing dogs. Investigators weren't sure if the mustard was the high-priced Grey Poupon or the standard yellow hot dog variety.

The sheriff's office said an investigator found the cocaine a week after authorities arrested Jermaine Vidal Niblet, 23, of the 3700 block of Signal Hill Road. Deputies stopped Niblet in his vehicle Dec. 28 around 1:30 a.m. at a routine driver's license checkpoint to examine driver's licenses on Hardy Road near the Hardy Road Trailer Park.

Niblet's license had expired, and the North Carolina tags on his Tahoe

were also invalid, Brown said.

Authorities then checked his vehicle and found a digital scale with cocaine residue on it, a Glock 40-caliber handgun and about \$7,400 in cash, Brown said. Niblet was arrested and charged with possession of a weapon while possessing a controlled substance, Brown said.

Deputies impounded the SUV and obtained search warrants for it after they learned from the Drug Enforcement Administration that Niblet had a reputation for drug involvement, sheriff's investigator Collin Byrne said.

The first search of the vehicle turned up nothing, and drug-sniffing dogs didn't smell anything suspicious either. But on the second search, on a hunch, Byrne dismantled the left rear taillight and discovered a hidden compartment inside the SUV's body. He said he found 6.5 kilograms of cocaine wrapped in bulk in the compartment and a little more than \$25,000 in cash.

The taillight had a sophisticated hinge on it that could be operated by remote control.

"This wasn't just something you could do in your garage," he said. "It was real professional job."

The street value of the cocaine is estimated at \$1.2 million, Brown said. Previous drug busts in the county pale in comparison, he said.

Niblet was charged with possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance along with the firearms charge and faces 25 years to life in prison if convicted of the



Photos courtesy Jessica Bland, YOVASO

charges. He is being held without bond in the Blue Ridge Regional Detention Center.

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