

Smart, Safe & Sober



NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2007

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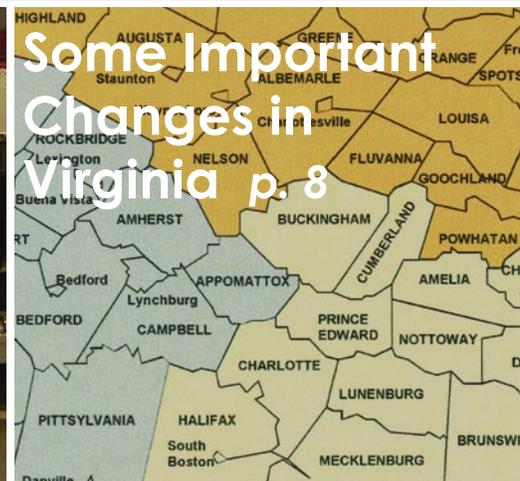
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Smart, Safe & Sober

NEWSLETTER

The *Smart, Safe & Sober Newsletter* (formerly known as *Badges, Buckles, Belts & Beyond*) is published quarterly for Virginia's transportation safety community by the Smart, Safe & Sober Partnership.

The Smart, Safe & Sober Partnership is comprised of the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police, the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, the Virginia State Police, the Virginia Sheriffs' Association, and DRIVE SMART Virginia.

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Quarterly deadlines for submissions are as follows:

Spring Quarter — February 28
Summer Quarter — May 31
Fall Quarter — August 31
Winter Quarter — November 30

PREVIOUS ISSUES

Back issues of the newsletter can be found at www.smartsafeandsober.org/news. Click on "SS&S Newsletter" on the left.

ADDRESS CORRECTIONS

Contact Erin Schrad, VACP Communications Manager (see above) with any address corrections or mailing list changes.

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Safe Driving: A New Year's Resolution For Virginians to Live By In 2007

Virginia ends year with 945 traffic fatalities; 13 deaths over New Year's holiday

RICHMOND—With the dawning of a new year, the Virginia State Police are encouraging all drivers, passengers and pedestrians to make safety a yearlong resolution to live by in 2007. In 2006, at least 945 men, women and children lost their lives in traffic crashes on Virginia roadways. As of Jan. 1, 2007, 81 of those killed were pedestrians.

"We are losing people every day on Virginia's highways because of excessive speed, driver inattention, driver inexperience, alcohol and a failure to buckle up," said Colonel W. Steven Flaherty, Superintendent of the Virginia State Police. "This year safety behind the wheel must become a priority for us to truly save lives on our roads, from the interstates to the rural routes."

According to the 2005 Virginia Traffic Crash Facts published by the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), 946 persons were killed statewide in 2005, a 2.60 percent increase from 2004.

Over the New Year's holiday weekend, a preliminary count indicates 13 individuals lost their lives in 10 traffic crashes on

Virginia's highways. The statistical counting period began Friday, Dec. 29, 2006, at 6 p.m. and ended at midnight Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2007. Alcohol was a factor in at least two of the fatal crashes. Of the 12 drivers and passengers killed, eight were not buckled up. During the 2005-2006 New Year's holiday weekend, 13 people were killed in traffic crashes.

Of those killed during the 2006-2007 holiday weekend, one involved a pedestrian struck in Dinwiddie County. Two of the fatal crashes occurred in Henrico County.

The remaining fatal New Year's weekend crashes occurred in the counties of Accomack, Amherst, Buckingham, Carroll, Chesterfield, Fauquier and Fluvanna.

"The Virginia State Police has spent the past 75 years committed to highway safety in the Commonwealth," said Colonel Flaherty. "This anniversary milestone for the Virginia State Police simply renews our public safety mission to safeguard the Commonwealth's citizens and visitors both on and off our highways."

With 18 State Challenges & Over 400 Applications Nationwide, How Do You Meet The Challenge?

It's that time of year again! Applications for the Law Enforcement Challenge are due May 1, 2007 — is your agency up for the challenge? Have you pulled all of the data needed to participate? Now is the time to gather your materials and start putting your application together for 2006.

For more than 17 years, the Virginia law enforcement community has met the challenge of traffic safety head-on. In 2005, Virginia had 44 applications in the state and National Challenge competition. Seventeen of the applications from Virginia were recognized as National Challenge winners at the IACP Annual Conference last fall in Boston.

This year, the competition on a national level is even greater with 18 states now conducting their own state Challenges. Virginia still remains one of the first and best in the field of law enforcement traffic safety efforts, but we need all Challenge applicants from previous years and new applicants to keep the pressure on. **This year, our goal is to have at least 50 Virginia applications in the Challenge!**

Reminder:

The Virginia Law Enforcement Challenge program recognizes law enforcement agencies for what they do to address the issues of traffic safety in their jurisdictions. The Challenge targets three major traffic safety priorities:

- Occupant protection (seat belts and child restraints)
- Impaired Driving
- Speed-Related Offenses

This competition is a friendly way for departments to increase their attention to traffic safety. It provides opportunities for public recognition of exemplary programs, incentive for continuing traffic safety activities, and documentation of agency effectiveness that can be used in future grant proposals.

Detailed judging criteria can be found on the Smart Safe & Sober web site., but here are the major areas of competition:

- Policy & Guidelines (20 possible points)
- Training (20 possible points)
- Incentives & Recognition (15 points)
- Public Information & Education (40



- possible points)
- Enforcement Activity (40 possible points)
- How Effective Were You? (40 possible points)
- Quality of Submission (15 possible points)

Each of the state's Law Enforcement Liaisons (see page 8) are available to assist your department in the application process. Good luck and thanks for all the hard work!

FEATURED AGENCY

Henrico Police Target Violators With Operation “Operations”

Throughout the last quarter of 2006, the Traffic Safety Unit of the Henrico County Division of Police — which is comprised of five motors, four Camaros, and three crash investigators — conducted numerous traffic safety operations targeting red light runners, impaired drivers, school zone speeders, and school bus safety violators.



Operation “Bear on the Bus”

In support of School Bus Safety Week, the Traffic Safety Unit devised Operation “Bear on the Bus” to catch drivers ignoring the school bus lights. As part of the operations plan, they notified the media about School Bus Safety Week and of their upcoming initiative to crack down on school bus light violators. Then during School Bus Safety Week, they had an officer riding on the school bus to observe the violators and another officer following the bus in an unmarked vehicle to stop the violators. Throughout the week, there were zero violations observed, but it is likely that this is directly related to the numerous media advertisements about School Bus Safety Week that ran the week before and the week of the initiative.



Operation “Stop on Red or Stop on Blue”

For Operation “Stop on Red or Stop on Blue”, the Traffic Safety Unit conducted 17 red light specials at various high crash locations in the county to crack down on red light runners. During the operation, **the Unit netted 382 traffic arrests**, the majority of which were red light violations.



Checkpoint Strikeforce

The Division of Police had participated in several *Checkpoint Strikeforce* checkpoints throughout 2006, but really stepped up their efforts around the holidays with **over six road checks being conducted** between mid-November and mid-December to take unsafe/impaired drivers off the roadways.

Operation “EggNog”

The Traffic Safety Unit also conducted Operation “EggNog”, which began Thanksgiving Day and ran through New Year’s Day. Many extra officers were out conducting high-visibility impaired driving enforcement to make the holidays much safer for the motoring public.



Operation “Back to School”

During the second week of school in September, the Unit conducted a high-visibility effort to reduce speeding in and around school zones. Their efforts during this operation resulted in **238 summonses being issued** — most for speeding in the school zones.

One Year After Primary Seat Belt Law Passage: Fatalities Are Down, Compliance Is Up in South Carolina

Males still least likely to buckle up, most frequently cited for no seat belt

COLUMBIA (December 8, 2006)—The South Carolina Department of Public Safety has reviewed highway safety statistics and enforcement results as the one-year anniversary of the primary seat belt law approaches.

The good news is that seat belt compliance is up across the board. The bad news remains that the majority of people who die in collisions are not buckled up and the majority of those are male motorists. Through December 7, 2006, 716 males died in collisions compared to 254 females. Males also were most likely to receive a safety belt citation.

The motor vehicle fatality rate has fallen in 2006 compared to 2005. The overall fatality rate, while lower than last year, has not dropped as much as safety officials had hoped because of an increase in motorcycle and pedestrian deaths.

The Highway Patrol issued 111,688 safety belt citations from December

9, 2005, the date the mandatory seat belt law became effective, to December 4, 2006. Of that number, 69 percent of the seat belt citations were issued to men, while 31 percent went to women.

Whites received 62 percent of the citations compared to 34 percent for blacks. Hispanics totaled three percent of the tickets issued. Seat belt citations issued by local law enforcement agencies are not included in these numbers.

The largest number of seat belt citations issued — 7,164 — was in York County, while Richland County, with 6,272 citations, had the second highest number of tickets issued. Motorists were less likely to receive a citation for not wearing their seat belts in McCormick County, where a total of 265 tickets have been issued since December 9, 2005.

For additional information, contact:
Sid Gaulden, (803) 896-8409.

Total Citations Issued:	111,688
White Females	
	20,970
Black Females	
	12,787
Hispanic Females	
	357
Other Females	
	161
Unknown Females	
	2
TOTAL FEMALES	34,277
White Males	
	49,045
Black Males	
	24,918
Hispanic Males	
	2,988
Other Males	
	458
Unknown Males	
	2
TOTAL MALES	77,411

SAVE THE DATE!

Upcoming Conferences

8th Annual Mid-Atlantic DUI Conference March 19-21, 2007 Holiday Inn Surfside — Virginia Beach, VA

This conference is intended for professionals involved in the identification, arrest, prosecution and treatment of persons arrested for DUI.

This training will provide individuals with a better understanding of various elements of DUI enforcement. Presenters for this conference are nationally recognized as experts in their field. Although this conference will not certify individuals in field sobriety testing, it will provide them with a better understanding of DUI enforcement. (As in the past, it is anticipated that DCJS In-Service Credit will be awarded for Virginia police officers attending the conference.)

For additional information and to download a registration form, go to <http://www.vbgov.com/dui>

Lifesavers 2007 March 25-27, 2007 Chicago, IL

Lifesavers is the premier national highway safety meeting in the United States dedicated to reducing the tragic toll of deaths and injuries on our nation's roadways. It offers the latest information on advances in highway safety, highlights successful programs and draws attention to emerging safety issues. For additional conference information and to register, go to <http://www.lifesaversconference.org>

NHTSA Mid-Atlantic Region **Young Driver Traffic Safety Summit** April 3-4, 2007 Clarion Resort Fontainebleau Hotel — Ocean City, MD

Get the latest information on impaired driving, occupant protection, speeding, aggressive driving and other emerging highway safety issues as it relates to young drivers.

Registration form available at <http://www.smartsafeandsober.org>



Danger: Drivers Who Type

Text-messaging is a rising cause of auto accidents

By Kimra McPherson

Mercury News

Still complaining about drivers talking on their cell phones?

That's nothing compared with the ones who are typing.

From teenagers and twentysomethings text-messaging friends from their Sidekicks and Razrs to tech execs who can't step away from the "CrackBerry," it's hard for some to resist the urge to e-mail and text on the road.

"I know it's dangerous and I shouldn't," said Shannon Gonzalez, a San Jose State University freshman who said she occasionally pulls out her phone to send messages at red lights. "But I do it anyway."

Law enforcement officials and others say it might be just the beginning, as high-tech cell phones and other handheld devices tempt bored commuters

with games, videos and Web browsers.

It's a growing danger — and not just because of teens texting with their friends from the driver's seat. It's now possible to send text messages to Google to get directions, and many professionals stay tethered to the office with their ever-present BlackBerrys — even on the road.

"We're all guilty," said Pierre Khawand, the founder of People-OnTheGo, a San Francisco-based company that advises professionals on how to manage their e-mail and electronic devices.

Sending a text message on a phone is a lot like dialing: Letters are assigned to the number keys, and users hit the keys multiple times until they reach the letter they want to type. Other devices, including Sidekicks and Treos, have full keyboards.

In one of Khawand's workshops, he asks BlackBerry users how often they use e-mail while driving, and offers multiple-choice

Distractions Add to Traffic Dangers

By Jim Talbert

Richlands News-Press/Clinch Valley News

TAZEWELL (November 9, 2006)—Last week's double fatality on U.S. Route 460 in Cedar Bluff may be a sad underscore to what area police say is a major local and national problem in automobile safety.

Cedar Bluff Police Chief Michael Mosley — whose department is handling the case of the head-on collision that killed 24-year old Joseph Vencill and led to the death a day later of four-month old Laken Vance — says there were indications that cell phone use may have contributed to the crash.

Mosley said the crash's combination of two factors — cell phone use and questions about how safe the Vance baby was in its car seat — is attracting the interest of national safety experts who want to look at information on the wreck.

And whether it's talking on a cell phone, putting the final touches on makeup or making the kids behave, driver distraction is a major cause of automobile accidents.

Statistics from the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles show 11,025 accidents in 2004 were attributed to driver distraction.

The statistics show over 80 million miles driven in the Commonwealth in 2005 and there were 153,849 accidents and 946 of them resulted in fatalities.

Virginia State Police First Sgt. David Fowler of the agency's Claypool Hill area office said driver distraction is a factor in two-thirds of the single-vehicle accidents his officers work. State troopers typically work accidents in the county and town officers handle those within the corporate limits.

Fowler said the accident report form troopers used prior to 2003 did not have a category for driver distraction. The form was revised that year and troopers have 10 categories for listing driver distraction: cell phone use, adjusting a radio or CD player, looking off the road, adjusting other vehicle controls, talking to someone else in the vehicle, daydreaming, eating or drinking, reading billboards, site seeing, fatigue and other cause.

Fowler said the other category is for things drivers report as a factor in accidents that are not one of the specific categories on the form. Fowler said his detachment's reports through this past

answers: never, only at red lights, at red lights and in traffic jams, or on the highway "but only going slowly in the right lane."

That last one was initially included for laughs, Khawand said. But now, two to three people in a workshop of 15 to 20 will admit to e-mailing on the freeway.

What makes texting and e-mailing on the road especially dangerous is that all but the most skilled texters have to look down at their screens to see what they're typing. A study released earlier this year by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration showed that punching in numbers or letters on a cell phone or other handheld device tripled a driver's risk of a crash or near-crash because they were looking at the phone, not the traffic.

"It's another challenge for drivers, another temptation," said Sgt. Les Bishop of the California Highway Patrol.

The CHP only recently started tracking cell phones as a contributing factor in crashes, Bishop said, and doesn't yet break out text messaging as a separate category.

Reports of crashes caused by texting are scattered nationwide — possibly, law enforcement officials say, because drivers don't always fess up. But in one case, a Colorado teen served nine days in jail after he struck and killed a bicyclist with his car while texting in November 2005. In another, a 26-year-old Tennessee man flipped his pickup truck and died while attempting to send a text message in March 2005.

And the news isn't good from countries where texting is more prevalent: England, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Switzerland, among others, have reported fatal crashes involving text-messaging drivers.

"It comes down to responsibility by people who are driving," Bishop said. "They need to realize that they're poten-

"In one of [my] workshops, [I ask] BlackBerry users how often they use e-mail while driving... two to three people in a workshop of 15-20 will admit to e-mailing on the freeway."

Pierre Khawand
Founder, People-OnTheGo
(<http://www.people-onthego.com>)

tially in a deadly weapon."

Khawand said he understands the impulse to text from the road — in an instant-gratification culture, many are afraid that missing one crucial text message or e-mail will mean they're out of the loop. But it can be a dangerous way to multitask, he said.

"In one second, it's possible to get into an accident," he said, "and then be very unproductive for a while."

August show the trend continuing.

Cell phone use was a factor in at least one fatality in Tazewell County this year, Fowler said. Most of the accidents his troopers handled on the stretch of 460 between Claypool Hill and Cedar Bluff involved vehicles sliding on the bridges during bad weather.

Fowler, who is a member of the county's Highway Safety Commission, said that group recently asked the Board of Supervisors to request lowering the speed limit to 35 mph on the stretch of U.S. Route 19 that goes past Wal-Mart.

Fowler said his officers work a lot of rear-end collisions in that area. He said speed and driver distraction are factors there as well as poor visibility of traffic lights around sunset.

Bluefield Police Chief Harry Cundiff said speed and driver inattention are the two biggest factors in accidents his officers handle. He said Bluefield does not have categories on the report for driver inattention.

Cundiff said cell phone use, drinking coffee, talking to other passengers and things like putting on makeup are causes his officers have heard. Cundiff said those

factors also distract other drivers.

"Other drivers see someone passing and talking on the phone or something and start watching them instead of the road," Cundiff said. Both Fowler and Cundiff said driver inattention is also a factor in a lot of near misses.

"A lot of times you see somebody run off the road and get it back successfully or they cross the center line and come back without hitting anything," Cundiff said. Fowler said there are often black marks where vehicles skidded to a stop at red lights.

Tazewell Police Chief Brian Heatt said his officers had not dealt with any accidents that he is aware of involving cell phone use. He said the town's accident report form does not have any space for driving distraction as a cause.

Heatt said new devices make it easier for people to use cell phones while driving. He said the hands-free devices are recommended when his officers give safety talks.

He said an even newer device allows the user to mount the speaker in their sun visor and communicate without using hands. He said one of the town officers recently

Statistics from the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles show 11,025 accidents in 2004 were attributed to driver distraction.

purchased that device and is using it.

"It is not against the law to use cell phones while driving but it is not a good idea," Heatt said. He said town officers encourage drivers to pull off the road when talking on the cell phone.

Heatt said town officers also report cases where drivers were distracted by talking, adjusting the radio or other things. He said drivers need to keep their eyes on the road and their mind on driving.

Many states outlaw cell phone use while driving but Virginia failed to pass such legislation. Mosley echoed his fellow chiefs about that legislation's future Monday as he watched a State Police accident reconstruction team plot the road marks and scars from last week's crash.

"I think we're going to see the General Assembly bring that up again soon," Mosley said.

Some Important Changes in Virginia

By Erin Schrad, Communications Manager

Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police

Ten years ago, in an effort to encourage statewide participation in NHTSA-funded traffic safety education and enforcement programs, the Smart, Safe & Sober Partnership was formed between the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles and the representative law enforcement organizations for the state — the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police, the Virginia Sheriffs Association, and the Virginia State Police. DRIVE SMART Virginia also was welcomed into this partnership to assist with the media component of these programs and to help advocate for traffic safety legislation in the Commonwealth.

For many years, DMV has granted federal traffic safety money to law enforcement agencies and other organizations in the state through the Community Traffic Safety Program of their Transportation Safety Services office. However, while some agencies had discovered the benefits of participating in these programs, the majority of agencies in the state had not been involved. In forming this partnership, DMV hoped to increase the participation rate among law enforcement agencies by educating them not only about the need to improve safe driving behaviors on Virginia's roadways, but also the benefits to the agency for participating.

With this goal in mind, the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police has employed a number of former law enforcement professionals over the years in the role of "Traffic Safety Specialists." Our current Traffic Safety Specialists are Don Allen, Frank Kowaleski and Bob Wall. They were assigned to work with the DMV Community Traffic Safety Program Managers (CTSPs) to train law enforcement officers on traffic safety issues and to encourage agencies to apply for grants and participate in mobilizations. They also have organized the Virginia Law Enforcement Challenge Awards program that recognizes agencies for outstanding efforts in traffic safety.

Over the years, the VACP Traffic Safety Specialists have worked with many state and local law enforcement agencies to improve their traffic safety efforts. These specialists have functioned primarily as resources that were available to any agency that requested help with their programs. Now, their role is being restructured to take a more proactive approach.

Beginning this year, the VACP

Traffic Safety Specialists are operating as the **Commonwealth's Law Enforcement Liaisons (LELs)**, following the NHTSA model that is used in a number of other states. Their main responsibilities will include communicating and working with law enforcement agencies on traffic safety programs — such as *Click It or Ticket*, *Checkpoint Strikeforce* and the Law Enforcement Challenge — and providing a multitude of different traffic safety trainings for law enforcement. In addition, they now will be taking on more coordinating responsibilities and establishing closer relationships with the Smart, Safe & Sober coordinators in each agency, and also with the NHTSA Regional LEL. They will be distributing more highway safety related materials to agencies and will assist in the collection of mobilization data.

In addition to this change at VACP, DMV is restructuring their Transportation Safety Services office. The TSS office will now be known as the **Virginia Highway Safety Office**, in keeping with similar offices in other states.

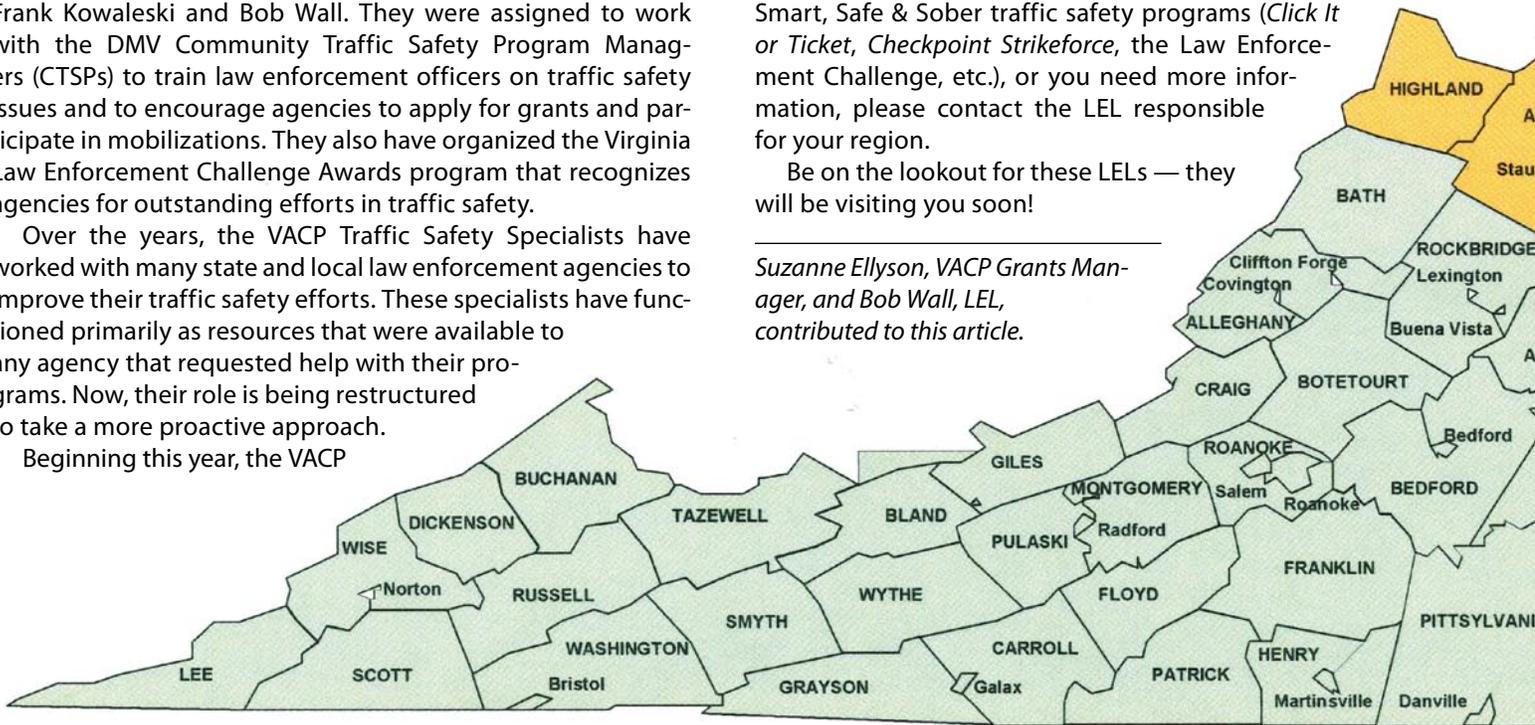
In their new roles, Don, Frank and Bob will be assisting the Virginia Highway Safety Office in coordinating many of the enforcement programs across the state. Soon they will begin making personal contacts with law enforcement agencies in their districts.

Don Allen will continue to serve the region of Southwest Virginia. Frank Kowaleski, on the heels of completing a Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) project with NHTSA, is assisting agencies in the Tidewater region. Bob Wall is assigned to the agencies in the Northern and Central areas of the state.

If your agency is interested in participating in the Smart, Safe & Sober traffic safety programs (*Click It or Ticket*, *Checkpoint Strikeforce*, the Law Enforcement Challenge, etc.), or you need more information, please contact the LEL responsible for your region.

Be on the lookout for these LELs — they will be visiting you soon!

Suzanne Ellyson, VACP Grants Manager, and Bob Wall, LEL, contributed to this article.



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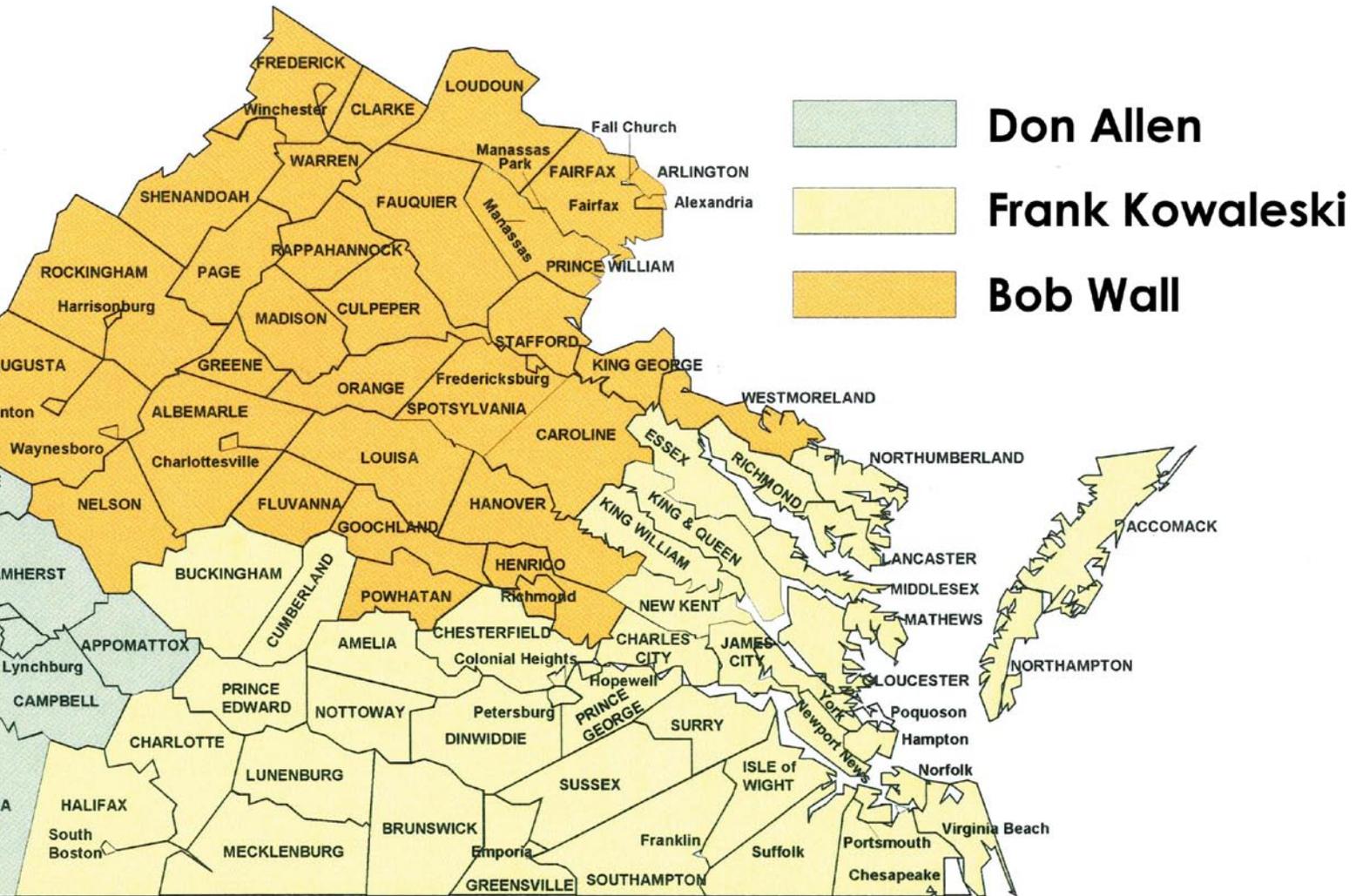
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Liaison (LEL) Regions

Culpeper County Sheriff's Office Educates High School Students About Traffic Safety

Rhonda Simmons, Staff Writer
Culpeper Star-Exponent

(December 17, 2006) — Standing outside of his unmarked vehicle, Cpl. Jason Compton administered a few breath alcohol concentration tests to some Culpeper County High School students on Thursday.

A few yards away, motor officer Greg Butler pointed a laser imaging detection and ranging device at Dep. Chad McKnight's Harley Davidson motorcycle clocking him at about 30 miles per hour.

These demonstrations were part of the Culpeper County Sheriff's Office Traffic Division's special presentation to educate students about traffic safety.

"With the increasing population in our area, it has also increased the volume of traffic," said Compton, who supervises the division. "And our main focus is to enforce traffic (laws) and educate the public on traffic safety and make this a safer community to drive in."

The division also apprehends impaired drivers, assists patrol units and manages other traffic related responsibilities, according to the Sheriff's Office.

The three-member team — Compton, Butler and McKnight — began their duties within the division July 1.

As for the unmarked car, Compton says it's a non-conventional way to enforce traffic.

"It helps get more of the aggressive drivers," Compton said. "It's more mobile and blends within the egregious violators who are passing, speeding or tailgating."

With the Fatal Vision goggles, which simulate poor vision giving off the effects of a driver under the influence of drugs or alcohol, students tried to pass several sobriety tests.

Culpeper County High School student Caleb Cooper gave it a try. Wearing the goggles, 15-year-old Cooper started the test before Dep. McKnight even got the chance to instruct him.

"You've got to watch me first," McKnight said, causing the students to giggle. "Take the tip of your finger and touch the tip of your nose. All right, looks like you failed that one."

McKnight gave Cooper another chance by giving him the stand- and leg-lift test.

"You failed that one too," McKnight said.

McKnight usually gives these assessments for a reason.

"If I detect an odor of alcohol or if I feel that their ability to drive is impaired, then I'm going to give them these tests," he

said. "For some reason if they are not medically able, like if they've had hip surgery or something, then I revert to other tests."

Then McKnight would have them count from one specific point to another.

After his tests, Cooper said he felt drunk wearing those glasses.

"I learned not to try to run from the cops while I'm drunk," he said. "And don't drive drunk."

During the presentation, deputies shared statistics about teenage drivers and car accidents with students taking driver education classes. They even showed footage of deputies put in dangerous situations while pulling traffic violators over on the side of the road.

McKnight asked if wearing a seat belt is a primary or secondary offense.

After polling the audience, McKnight said while he can't pull a driver over for that violation, he would find another reason to cite the driver.

"I love the seat belt ticket," McKnight said. "Because that's going to save your lives out there. A lot of people have ended up with fatalities that could have walked away if only they were wearing their seat belts."

Culpeper County Sheriff H. Lee Hart, who stopped by briefly, said the decision to start the traffic division was because of a 37 percent increase in the fatality rate in Culpeper County over the years and the Virginia State Police having limited staff.

"We didn't have the resources," said Hart, addressing the young, future drivers. "And we just want people driving in a safe environment."

Hart said the biggest problems his deputies face are attitudes.

"I've seen people and talked to people," he said. "Some of the nicest people you could ever meet, but when they get behind the wheel of an automobile, it's like a Jekyll and Hyde."

Bonnie Templeton, who teaches physical education, health and driver education at CCHS, said this is a positive way for the students to interact with law enforcement.

"It's a good resource for them (the students) to hear it from them (the deputies)," Templeton said. "We can preach, but when it comes from the persons that are actually out there and to hear it from them, it means so much more to the students."

By the Numbers...

<i>Culpeper County</i>	Crashes	Fatalities	Injuries
Total accidents in 2005	820	9	471
Alcohol-related accidents in 2005	68	2	45

<i>Town of Culpeper</i>	Crashes	Fatalities	Injuries
Total accidents in 2005	181	2	116
Alcohol-related accidents in 2005	11	0	6

Source: Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles web site

PROJECT UPDATE: Virginia's Traffic Records Electronic Data System (TREDS)

Over the past year, DMV has provided several updates on Virginia's Traffic Records Electronic Data System (TREDS) project. Below is a quick summary:

Current Scope

Develop an electronic statewide solution for use by all law enforcement jurisdictions with expanded analytical/reporting access to crash data by local, state & federal agencies:

- Provide an automated front-end for data entry
- Provide ability to electronically submit Virginia crash reports to DMV's Office of Highway Safety
- Eliminate multiple exchanges in processing of data among several state agencies
- Provide flexible architecture for easy data access and various reporting needs

Law Enforcement Implications

Automated Front-End data entry capability with no paper FR300 to mail:

- data edits and drop down features in each field

- consistent, enhanced solution for diagramming
- use of GPS for automatic and consistent population of location
- use of scanning to further eliminate keying of registration and driver's license information

Improved Back-End Query Engine/ Timeliness of Data:

- ability to select all data entered in electronic crash form
- ability to review crash data across jurisdictions
- improved reporting ability that can be created and managed locally
- expanded user access to data for faster analysis

System Flexibility

The TREDS system will be able to:

- continue accommodation of paper submission to DMV's Office of Highway Safety
- provide an automated front-end (free software) for electronic transmission to DMV's Office of Highway Safety

- integrate into existing local technology to minimize process change

New Crash Report Form:

In anticipation of system changes, DMV's Office of Highway Safety is coordinating a crash report form change in advance of the system rollout - the current target for an effective date is January, 2008. Prior to the rollout, sessions will be scheduled with law enforcement throughout the Commonwealth for feedback and awareness. Training is also being developed in advance of any such change.

Proposed Timeline

- Q3 2006 Business Requirements — *completed*
- Q4 2006 Design — *underway*
- Q1 2008 New Crash Report Form Rollout
- Q3 2008 Pilot & Subsequent Phased TREDS System Rollout

For more information, contact Randy Mantspile, TREDS Program Manager, at (804) 367-0011 or Randy.Manspile@dmv.virginia.gov.

Speeding Triples Odds of Crashing, New AAA Foundation Report Reveals

WASHINGTON, DC (December 12, 2006) — The AAA Foundation's research found four driving behaviors directly associated with an increased crash risk. Speeding was found to nearly triple the odds of being involved in a crash. Driving while drowsy was associated with a similar increase in the odds of being involved in a crash. When a driver's eyes were off the road for more than two seconds, for any reason, the odds of a crash occurring were nearly double those of a driver paying attention to the road. The odds of a crash more than doubled when a driver exhibited aggressive driving behaviors.

"Unfortunately, many drivers choose to drive and behave in ways that increase their risk of crashing," according to Peter Kissinger, AAA Foundation president and CEO. "It is our desire to reduce the number of crashes by educating all drivers about specific behaviors that increase their crash risk. Although you may have driven too fast or while fatigued in the past and haven't crashed yet, these risks are real and thus will eventually catch up with you if you continue to drive in this manner."

The data used for the analyses in this report were collected during the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) 100-Car Naturalistic Driving Study conducted by the

Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI). The 100-Car Study collected naturalistic, continuous, real-time data over a 12- to 13-month period from a sample of 109 primary drivers and 132 secondary drivers in the Northern Virginia/Washington, DC area. Video and electronic sensors in the vehicles allowed researchers to detect data on several driving behaviors (e.g., speeding, safety belt use, and so forth). The AAA Foundation funded a study through VTTI with Sheila G. Klauer, Jeremy Sudweeks, Jeffrey S. Hickman and Vicki L. Neale to conduct the analysis to understand more about the relative risks associated with driving behaviors known to be dangerous from previous studies.

Established in 1947 by AAA, the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety is an independent, publicly funded, 501 (c)(3) charitable research and educational organization. The AAA Foundation's mission is to prevent traffic deaths and injuries by conducting research into their causes and by educating the public about strategies to prevent crashes and reduce injuries when they do occur.

The report "How Risky Is It? An assessment of the relative risk of engaging in potentially unsafe driving behaviors," is available online at www.aaafoundation.org.



In 2006, approximately 40 Saved by the Belt & Bag Awards were presented to Virginia residents of all ages who were involved in a traffic crash and whose injuries were reduced or lives were saved because they were wearing a safety belt or were in a child safety restraint.

Firefighters Earn 'Saved By The Belt' Award

Carrie J. Sidener
The Lynchburg News & Advance

(January 18, 2007)—Four Forest volunteer firefighters say they owe their lives to the seat belts that kept them from coming out of the emergency vehicle they were riding in when it flipped several times.

For remembering to buckle up when they were responding to a fire in November, the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police recognized the firefighters with the "Saved by the Belt" award Wednesday.

"It takes three seconds to put it on, but it gave me the rest of my life," said junior firefighter **Daniel Lee**. "Seat belts save lives and everyone goes home."

State Police Trooper Andrew Dayes responded to the accident on Nov. 19.

The accident happened when one car went around another that was stopped waiting for the emergency vehicle to pass at the intersection of Graves Mill and Forest roads. The driver hit the side of the Manpower SUV, causing it to flip.

The driver of the car was charged with failure to yield. No one was seriously injured in the crash. Dayes said he responded to a similar accident where one passenger died because she wasn't wearing her seat belt and was ejected from the car. The rest only suffered minor injuries.

"This accident could have been a lot worse," Dayes said. "No human is strong enough to counter centrifugal force. I have encountered people in Bedford County that say they don't believe in seat belts. ... But they work on most situations."

Don Allen, of the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police, said the Forest fire-



fighters should serve as an example to everyone to wear seat belts every time.

"Lives were saved and serious injury was prevented," Allen said.

Phil Gordon, vice president of the fire department, was driving. He was knocked unconscious as the SUV rolled across the road and into the yard of a church. Firefighter **Kenneth Hubbard** broke a few ribs. Lee and **Capt. Matt Eggleston** were uninjured.

"We are blessed to be here today," Gordon said.

Lee and Hubbard were sitting in the back of the SUV when it flipped.

Lee had his helmet and cell phone sitting in his lap when the accident happened. He said those two things as well as other loose things in the vehicle were found several feet away.

"The only way any of us are still here is because we were wearing our seat belts," Lee said. "The only things that

stayed in the vehicle were things that were strapped in.

Eggleston remembered when they pulled out of the station, Hubbard was having trouble getting his seat belt to release.

"He finally got it to release," Eggleston said. "I'm glad he didn't give up."

Hubbard said his experiences with the fire department taught him that seat belts save lives, but the message hit home in the wreck.

"If I hadn't had my seat belt on, I wouldn't have been here," Hubbard said. "It only takes a few seconds to put it on."

In 2006, 106 firefighters nationwide lost their lives in the line of duty, Chief Monty Coleman said

"We could have added to that number," Coleman said. "All of them walked away because of those seat belts. It's what we live by - 'Everybody goes home.'"

Seven nominees were presented Saved By the Belt and Bag Awards at the 2006 Fall Recognition and Awards Ceremony of the Chesterfield County Police Department. **Charles Thomas** and **Penny Milner** (pictured here with Col. Carl Baker, Chesterfield County Chief of Police) were present to receive their recognition in person. The other 5 individuals — **John Teague**, **Denise Alexander** and **6 month old Kaylie**, and **Patricia and Jason Stocks** — were unable to attend the ceremonies. All of the recipients are residents of Chesterfield County and each was nominated by Lt. L. Smith and Lt. Doug Mooney of the Chesterfield County PD.



“Seven presentations at one event is unprecedented,” said Frank Kowaleski of the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police. “I’m delighted to see this kind of participation in the Saved by the Belt program. Presentations such as these help to send a strong and clear message to the citizens of the county that their police department cares about their safety.”

The Smart, Safe and Sober Partnership presented **Mrs. Jalana L. Barron** with a Saved by the Belt & Bag Award on Thursday, December 14, 2006, at Virginia State Police Administrative Headquarters on Midlothian Turnpike. Accompanied by her husband, Mrs. Barron was honored for her life-saving decision to buckle up while on her way to work on October 20, 2006. Her survival of the fiery traffic crash made headlines throughout the Metro Richmond region.

Mrs. Barron, 43, of Midlothian, was traveling along Route 288 when she was forced off the road by a merging tractor-trailer. Her 2006 Ford Escape traveled approximately 15 feet on the left shoulder’s guardrail and then jersey wall before plummeting over the side and landing upright in the eastbound lane of Baileys Bridge Road. The vehicle was engulfed in flames and narrowly missed hitting another vehicle headed eastbound on Baileys Bridge Road.

Mrs. Barron survived the harrowing experience with minor injuries. The driver of the tractor-trailer, Michael G. Camby of Rutherfordton, NC, was charged with felony hit-and-run.

Assisting in the presentation were Ms. Kimberly Burt, DMV; Virginia State Police Trooper J.M. Brown, the investigating officer who nominated Mrs. Barron; and Frank Kowaleski, Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police.



On November 6, 2006, VACP Law Enforcement Liaison Don Allen presented the Saved by the Belt Award to **Mr. Terence Martin** of Bland, Virginia. Mr. Martin was involved in a crash on May 13, 2006 while operating his 1999 Ford F-150 pickup truck on Interstate 77 in Bland County. Virginia State Trooper Tom Roseberry, the investigating officer, stated, “It was the worst crash I have ever investigated where someone wasn’t killed in such a severe impact. If he had not been wearing his seat belt, there is not a question in my mind, he would have been killed.”



Mr. Martin explained, “I plan to tell everyone I know, every time I have the opportunity, that the best safety device in their car is that seat belt and not to ever forget to wear it when driving, wherever they go.”

Those on hand for the presentation were (pictured L. to R.) Don Allen, VACP; Monty Mills, DMV; Lonnie Gay, Captain of the Bland County Rescue Squad; Trooper Tom Roseberry; and Bland County Sheriff Jerry Thompson.

Nation's Top Highway Safety Official Calls on Manufacturers, Retailers and Consumer Groups to Make Child Safety Seats Easier to Install

(February 8, 2007) The nation's top highway safety officer today called on manufacturers, retailers, researchers and consumer groups to help improve the use and safety of child car seats and the special anchors used to attach them to vehicles — especially in light of new evidence indicating parents are often unsure of the best way to install the life-saving devices.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administrator Nicole R. Nason, who was joined by U.S. Deputy Secretary of Transportation Maria Cino, today issued the challenge at the opening of a day-long summit with industry leaders and consumer advocates aimed at improving child car seat safety.

"Every day, five of our children are killed and another 640 are injured on our roads. Car seats, booster seats and other restraints are a proven way to keep our children safe and an inexpensive investment in their future," Deputy Secretary Cino said.

"Properly installing a car seat should not be a daunting process for parents," Administrator Nason said. "Our children are precious and parents and caregivers must have the information they need to properly install their car seats."

In December, Nason called for the summit after a new survey conducted by NHTSA found that many parents were unaware of either the existence or the importance of a new system of anchors built into newer vehicles, and specifically designed to hold and anchor car seats. The summit will focus on how to increase the correct use of these so-called Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children (LATCH) systems, which come standard in vehicles made after 2002.

Nason said one of the key goals of the meeting is to make sure parents and caregivers have clear guidance on proper car seat and LATCH use, whether from the car seat manufacturer, vehicle owner's manual or the retailer. In addition, NHTSA is looking into ways to improve its ease-of-use ratings, as well as mandatory child seat safety performance, she said.

"We want to make children as safe as possible, give the best information and make the technology available to protect children in vehicles," Administrator Nason said.

NHTSA Issues Statement Regarding Consumer Reports' Withdrawal of Its Infant Car Seat Test Report

On January 5, 2007, Consumer Reports announced that most rear-facing infant car seats in the market failed crash tests conducted by the magazine using tougher standards than the government uses. The magazine tested 12 infant seat brands that had passed federal government crash tests and found 10 that didn't provide adequate protection.

Consumer Reports tested the seats for frontal crashes at 35 mph and side crashes at 38 mph, whereas the tests conducted by NHTSA only simulate frontal crashes at 30 mph. At those higher speeds, Consumer Reports found rear-facing infant seats flew off their bases or twisted violently upon impact.

Upon hearing these results, NHTSA immediately demanded a review of Consumer Reports testing procedures and discovered an issue with the speed at which the tests were conducted. In light of this information, Consumer Reports withdrew its report pending further tests.

Statement from NHTSA Administrator Nicole Nason:

"Consumer Reports was right to withdraw its infant car seat test report and I appreciate that they have taken this corrective action. We are always eager to work with Consumer Reports and other organizations to improve child safety and ensure that consumers continue to have access to accurate and credible data. I was troubled by the report because it frightened parents and could have discouraged them from using car seats. It is absolutely essential for every parent to understand that the safest place in an automobile for an infant is in a car seat. Simply put, car seats are the best defense for a child in a crash.

"Our initial review of the Consumer Reports testing procedures showed a significant error in the manner in which it conducted and reported on its side-impact tests. The organization's data show its side-impact tests were actually conducted under conditions that would represent being struck **in excess of 70 mph, twice as fast as the group claimed**. When NHTSA tested the same child seats in conditions representing the 38.5 mph conditions claimed by Consumer Reports, the seats stayed in their bases as they should, instead of failing dramatically."

Video footage of NHTSA's side-impact tests can be found at www.nhtsa.gov

40% of parents are still using seat belts to restrain children.

*Every day, **5 of our children are killed** and another 640 are injured on our roads.*

Car accidents remain the leading cause of death for people ages 3 to 35.

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Announces Plans to Improve Vehicle Crash Tests and Five Star Rating Program

DETROIT (January 8, 2007)—The federal government would improve its automobile crash tests and strengthen its five-star vehicle safety rating system under a plan unveiled today by U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary E. Peters during a visit to the North American International Auto Show in Detroit.

Under the improvements suggested for the five-star safety rating program — known as the New Car Assessment Program (NCAP) — vehicles will be subjected to more stringent rollover, frontal and side crash tests. Secretary Peters added that the new proposal could include, for the first time, ratings for crash avoidance technologies like electronic stability control, adaptive cruise control and lane departure warning systems.

“Safety is not a static concept. Our approach to constantly improving vehi-

cle safety can't be either. Every day, we're working hard to raise the bar on auto safety” said Secretary Peters. “Our proposals not only improve overall vehicle safety, they provide better, more useful information for consumers.”

The NCAP proposal lays out short and long-term strategies to not only improve overall vehicle safety, but to provide better, more useful information to help consumers make more informed decisions when they buy cars, trucks, or SUVs. The Secretary announced plans to hold a public meeting on March 7 in Washington, D.C., to provide the public with an opportunity to provide input and ask questions.

For nearly 30 years, Secretary Peters said, NCAP has been the catalyst for encouraging major safety improvements to new car design. Consumer demand has driven more manufacturers to design

passenger vehicles that are safer than ever before. But even with those high standards, she said, more than 40,000 people still lose their lives in car crashes on America's roads each year.

“We can never become complacent about saving the lives of our loved ones and we must be willing to evolve along with the times and technology,” Secretary Peters said. “And that's exactly what the recommendations that we release today seek to do.”

Each year, NHTSA performs rollover and crash tests on new cars and trucks and assigns them with a safety rating. Five stars is the top rating. Today, 95 percent of new cars received the top ratings in crash tests.

For further information on the current NCAP program, or to view the full report, please go to www.safercar.gov.

DOT Announces 2006 Seat Belt and Motorcycle Helmet Use Statistics

(November 28, 2006) More Americans must take steps to protect themselves on America's highways to reduce rising fatality numbers, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Mary E. Peters said today while releasing a study announcing slight changes to the seat-belt and helmet-use figures from 2005 to 2006.

Citing new data from the National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS), Secretary Peters said that seat belt use in the U.S. now stands at 81 percent, down slightly from the 2005 use rate of 82 percent. She noted that in the West, belt use climbed from 85 percent to 90 percent between 2005 and 2006; and it rose from 82 to 83 percent in the South. However, in the Northeast, belt use fell to 74 percent, down from 78 percent; and in the Midwest it dropped to 77 percent from 79 percent.

“A seat belt can't work if it isn't on,” said Secretary Peters. “Whatever it takes, we all need to do a better job making sure everyone chooses to buckle up.”

The Secretary noted that the Department is working with states to promote seat belt use, providing more than \$123 million in 2006 incentive grants to states with primary seat belt laws. The DOT's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration also coordinates the national Click It or Ticket law enforcement

campaigns, which mobilize thousands of police agencies across the country to vigorously enforce state belt laws.

The Secretary said the latest new data also shows that 51 percent of motorcyclists in the U.S. now wear helmets, up from 48 percent in 2005. She noted that motorcycle helmet use rose in the West between 2005 and 2006 (from 50 to 72 percent); and in the Northeast (from 42 to 47 percent). However, the use rate fell in the Midwest (from 53 to 50 percent) and in the South (from 49 to 45 percent). (The only helmets counted in the survey were those that comply with DOT standards.)

“All across America, every single day, helmets save lives,” said Nicole R. Nason, the NHTSA administrator.

Administrator Nason said NHTSA recently began to offer federal grants to states for programs to reduce the number of motorcyclist crashes. This year, for example, the agency will provide \$6 million in grant funds to states for motorcycle safety training and motorist awareness programs. She said the agency will also create a public service announcement to promote helmet use and a consumer video for its website on how to choose a safe and well-fitting motorcycle helmet.

Detailed statistics available on www.smartsafeandsober.org.

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