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Maine Transportation

Safety Coalition

Working Together To Promote Safe Transportation In Maine

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NHTSA Data Shows Traffic Deaths Up 7.7 Percent in 2015

Preliminary data released by the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show a 7.7 percent increase in motor vehicle traffic deaths in 2015. An estimated 35,200 people died in 2015, up from the 32,675 reported fatalities in 2014.

“Every American should be able to drive, ride or walk to their destination safely, every time,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. “We are analyzing the data to determine what factors contributed to the increase in fatalities and at the same time, we are aggressively testing new safety technologies, new ways to improve driver behavior, and new ways to analyze the data we have, as we work with the entire road safety community to take this challenge head-on.”

Although the data are preliminary and requires additional analysis, the early NHTSA estimate shows 9 out of 10 regions within the United States had increased traffic deaths in 2015. The most significant increases came for pedestrians and bicyclists.

“As the economy has improved and gas prices have fallen, more Americans are driving more miles,” said NHTSA Administrator Dr. Mark Rosekind. “But that only explains part of the increase. Ninety-four percent of crashes can be tied back to a human choice or error, so we know we need to focus our efforts on improving human behavior while promoting vehicle

technology that not only protects people in crashes, but helps prevent crashes in the first place.”

In response to early estimates showing fatality increases, the agency convened a series of six regional safety summits with key stakeholders throughout February and March. As a result of those summits, the agency is working to develop new tools that could improve behavioral challenges including drunk, drugged, distracted and drowsy driving; speeding; failure to use safety features such as seat belts and child seats; and new initiatives to protect vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists.

In addition, when the final dataset is released later this summer, DOT and NHTSA will issue a call to action to safety partners, state and local elected officials, technologists, data scientists and policy experts to join the Department in searching for more definitive answers and developing creative, open data-driven solutions to improve safety and reduce deaths caused by motor vehicles.

The U.S. Department of Transportation is also pressing forward with new guidance to promote the development of automated safety technologies which could greatly decrease the number of crashes. NHTSA hosted two public meetings on automated safety technologies, in advance of guidance that will be issued later this summer. NHTSA and FHWA are also working closely on the implementation of the new safety performance measures, which require States and metropolitan areas to set targets



WEAR SAFETY BELTS



Message from the Executive Board

I hope you all had a great summer and are ready to transition to fall. There still is lots of great weather ahead before the white flakes arrive – with so many opportunities to enjoy getting out and about to enjoy our beautiful state. Columbus Day and leaf-peeping gets lots of people into their cars to take in the sights.

On the traffic safety front, the National Safety Council recently reported that traffic fatalities were up 9% for the first half of 2016, and that follows a similar increase seen in 2015. Obviously this is a concerning trend. After seeing significant improvement in the number of Maine fatalities through 2014, our numbers have increased during the most recent two years, too. Of continuing special concern are the vulnerable users – motorcyclists, pedestrians and bicyclists. Yes, we mention them often, and for good reason. These road users are no match against a car, pick-up truck or large commercial vehicle. With much good weather still ahead, this still will be an active time for all to be out on or near the roadway. Add to that, the school year has started, so more vulnerable young pedestrians and bicyclists are out and expect school buses stopping along your commuting routes.

Remember that the days are shortening, so if you are walking or biking, visibility is key – don't just consider the light conditions when you leave for your trip, but as the days shorten, make sure you have your reflective wear for those twilight and beyond hours. One final thought on visibility – it may seem light enough to you as a bicyclist or pedestrian, but being seen in twilight hours is more difficult than you may realize, so always dress for visibility and have that reflective gear on.

Paraphrasing an old National Safety Council Defensive Driving Course quote – ‘The most dangerous mile is the one immediately ahead’ is a reminder for all of us (regardless of travel mode) to focus on the travel you're in, keeping yourselves and others safe during your current journey.

Duane Brunell, MaineDOT

On behalf of the MTSC Executive Board

Chair's Corner

MTSC Safety Coalition Annual Meeting Recognitions

Past MTSC Chair, **James Tanner**, was recognized for his leadership and contributions to the work of MTSC during the June meeting. James now works with the Department of Economic and Community Development, Office of Business Development & Innovation. **Katharyn Zwicker** was also recognized for her dedicated and tireless contributions to the MTSC. Katharyn is now the Quality Management Supervisor at the Office of Aging and Disability Services.



Katharyn Zwicker and Duane Brunell



Pictured with James (left to right) are former MTSC chairs Pat Moody, Duane Brunell, Brian Lawrence, James Tanner and Alan Vitcavage.

for reducing deaths among motorized and non-motorized road users.

“The July 4 holiday is historically one of the deadliest days on U.S. roadways, so on this weekend Americans should take extra care to ensure they get to their destinations safely,” Foxx added. “Every driver should make sure all of their passengers are buckled up every time, and no driver should get behind the wheel when they’ve been drinking.”

In March, the Department of Transportation announced a key safety agreement with automakers requiring more than 99 percent of new vehicles to have automatic emergency braking standard by 2022. This safety technology could prevent thousands of crashes every year. The Department is working to require vehicle-to-vehicle communications systems on new vehicles, a technology which could help drivers avoid

or mitigate 70 to 80 percent of vehicle crashes involving unimpaired drivers. DOT is also working with researchers on technologies that could prevent drunk driving, which is responsible for close to one-third of highway deaths.

Stay connected with NHTSA: Search for open recalls with VIN look up | Download the Safercar Mobile App for Apple or Android devices | Receive recall alerts by email | Visit us on Facebook.com/NHTSA | Follow us on Twitter.com/NHTSAgov | Watch 5-Star Safety Ratings crash tests on YouTube.com/USDOTNHTSA | SaferCar.gov

NHTSA 15-16
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Save the Date: October 5 Marks National Walk to School



Save the Date: Oct. 5 marks National Walk to School Day 20th Anniversary!

This fall marks the 20th Walk to School Day celebration! Walk to School Day began with strong mayor participation - in 1997, Chicago’s Mayor Daley and Los Angeles’ Mayor Riordan walked with students to school. Since then, mayors nationwide have hit the sidewalks in October. Help make Walk to School Day successful in your community by encouraging your mayor to join the 20th Walk to School Day celebration. Your leadership can help build support for this event and inspire others to join the celebration.

For resources and incentives for your walk or bike to school event(s), please register your event with the Maine SRTS Program https://docs.google.com/a/bikemaine.org/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScTPCyD5H_kOgOkd6dQam4Ob1BdQBEjQ9unki-or0dYJJYO7A/viewform. To see highlights and photos from events across Maine, please visit the <https://mainesaferroutes.wordpress.com/>. And for some great ideas for your Walk to School Day event, visit our list of <http://www.bikemaine.org/maine-walk-bike-to-school-activities-for-2015-2016-school-year>.

Gardiner Receives Grant from Bicycle Coalition of Maine

BikeMaine host to receive \$12,300 as first annual gift to communities around the state

The City of Gardiner is proud to announce that they will be receiving a \$12,300 challenge grant from the Bicycle Coalition of Maine to support the community's ongoing bicycle and pedestrian projects, including the extension of the Cobbossee Trail. This is the first of a series of annual grants, funded by proceeds from the Coalition's week-long BikeMaine bicycle tour, that will focus on promoting bicycle and pedestrian safety and infrastructure in past BikeMaine host communities.

After an in-depth review of previous BikeMaine communities, the Coalition decided to award this year's grant to Gardiner to support the expansion of their "Cobbossee Corridor." In 2014, the City of Gardiner played host to over 300 BikeMaine riders, staff and volunteers, closing Water Street for an intimate meal showcasing the culinary expertise of area restaurants, food from local farms, and providing camping in the scenic Waterfront Park. During a City Council meeting on August 24th, the Bicycle Coalition of Maine will formally award the grant to representatives from the City of Gardiner.

"When I look back on turning points for our community, hosting BikeMaine really gave the community an opportunity to come together – to prove our pride in ourselves, and to put our best foot forward," says Patrick Wright, Gardiner Main Street Executive Director. "I've always felt that Gardiner's biggest obstacle was its own belief in itself. Hosting BikeMaine gave us an opportunity to welcome hundreds of guests from around the country – it just naturally elicited such a feeling of pride. There were so many volunteers – some of whom took a day off of work just to come and pitch in." Since then, Wright says that he's noticed a marked increase in volunteerism and goodwill throughout the community.

In the past three years, BikeMaine, a week-long bicycle tour of different parts of the state, has generated a total of over \$1 million in direct economic impact to different regions of the state through rider spending as well as the sourcing of local products and services for the ride.

Bicycle Coalition of Maine Executive Director Nancy Grant said, "From the beginning, BikeMaine was envisioned as an event that would allow us to give back to the amazing communities that welcome our riders with true Maine hospitality. Leveraging the power of bicycling to drive bike/ped safety as well as economic growth is a core part of the Coalition's mission."

Over a decade ago, the City of Gardiner developed a plan to revitalize an area adjacent to its historic downtown known as the "Cobbossee Corridor". This plan envisioned bringing people to the corridor by providing a world-class mix of the built and natural environments by encouraging mixed-use, high-quality commercial redevelopment and residential development centered around the natural beauty of the stream.

In 2009, a plan to build a ½ mile spur from the existing Kennebec River Rail Trail into the Cobbossee Corridor stalled. Though halfway through the design, the city shelved the plan due to concern over the economic conditions at the time. The trail, which is funded by an 80% match from Maine DOT through federal sources, remained stalled until earlier this year. As part of a plan to re-start the project, earlier this year, City Councilors approved a budget that included funding expected to cover most of the City's portion of the construction project – with one caveat – that the community raise additional funds to support taxpayer funded improvements. After conversations with city officials, the Bicycle Coalition of Maine hopes to inspire this needed private support by issuing a challenge grant of \$12,300 to entice others in the community to support the project.

Patrick Wright, Economic Development Coordinator
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Town of Yarmouth & Bicycle Coalition of Maine “Imagine People Here”



Town of Yarmouth and the Bicycle Coalition of

Maine “Imagine People Here” on Morton Road

August 15, 2016 - Yarmouth, ME - The Bicycle Coalition of Maine, in partnership with the Town of Yarmouth, is proud to announce the fifth “Imagine People Here” campaign installation of 2016. On Thursday, August 4th, the Town of Yarmouth painted “advisory lanes” on Morton Road. This project is another in a series of demonstration projects that are part of the Bicycle Coalition of Maine’s campaign that is installing temporary bicycle and pedestrian facilities that demonstrate how easy and cost effective it is to improve safety for people walking and on bikes.

The Yarmouth project was created in partnership with town officials, local volunteers, and with engineering guidance from Ransom Engineering. The project includes a temporary installation of “advisory bike lanes,” that will create 4-foot shoulder lanes on either side of the road. The visual “narrowing” of the roadway will encourage motor vehicles to decrease their speed, and people biking or walking will have a clearly marked area in which to use the road. Drivers will be able to move into the advisory in order to accommodate oncoming traffic, but must always yield to pedestrians and bicyclists. In common use in Europe, advisory lanes are still being studied for more widespread use in the United States.

“This is a low cost, simple way to calm traffic and provide some roadway space for vulnerable users” said Dan Ostrye, a member of the Yarmouth Bike/Ped Committee. “We have had

people concerned about the speed of traffic and the need for safer places to walk and ride bikes on this road, and this treatment seemed a perfect solution.”

“We are very excited to be working with the Town of Yarmouth to experiment with a very innovative facility that will improve the safety of both bicyclists and walkers at a very low cost,” said Jim Tassé, Assistant Director of the Bicycle Coalition of Maine.

As with all the Imagine People Here projects, the Coalition is collecting feedback from walkers, bicyclists, and drivers. The public is encouraged to share their thoughts in a short survey.

The Bicycle Coalition of Maine’s 2016 Imagine People Here Campaign has included the following projects:

- Lewiston - A “shared space” demonstration project on Canal Street, created as part of the BuildMaine Conference.
- Sanford - Buffered bicycle lane demonstration on William Oscar Emory Drive
- Bangor - Wayfinding signage, marking a two mile route connecting the waterfront to downtown
- Scarborough - Advisory lane on Eastern Road



Safety Issues



MTSC
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AAA Reminds Motorists “School’s Open - Drive Carefully”

A great burden is on the motorist to take extra precaution when driving in areas with school-age children. Many children have very little experience in dealing with traffic situations, and many will be going to school for the very first time.

“The opening of school is a hectic time for everyone,” says Pat Moody Manager of Public Affairs for AAA Northern New England. “Children are excited to be going back to school and to their friends. Parents are trying to get to work and get their children to school on time. Often, they’re distracted and may not be focused on basic traffic safety practices.” AAA’s annual “School’s Open — Drive Carefully” campaign, now in its 83rd year, alerts motorists to the special risk to school-age children from motor vehicles. During the campaign, AAA is reminding drivers that children are not small adults. Children may also make the mistake of assuming that if they can see a car the driver can see them — often motorists have a difficult time seeing children because of their small stature.

Children are active, inquisitive and impetuous, and never miss an opportunity to explore something that interests them — even if it means venturing into the street. Many children know little of pedestrian safety rules, and even those that do are likely to forget them in pursuit of a rolling ball or wind-tossed school paper. AAA safety reminders for motorists: When in school zones, watch for reduced speed limit signs that become effective when classes are in session.

School zone speed limits are in place to save lives,” says Moody “As families prepare for the upcoming school year, we encourage

parents to talk about the importance of school zone safety with their children and teen drivers, Remember the law about stopping before passing or overtaking a school bus stopped to pick up or discharge children.

Watch for youngsters riding bicycles. They may appear suddenly from a blind spot. If you are a parent, help your child map out his or her safest way to school. And remember that traffic hazards near schools multiply when children are dropped off and picked up in family cars.

Remember that school traffic controls such as stop signs, traffic signals, adult crossing guards and safety patrols are now operating. Our summer driving habits must change to look for and obey these special controls. Anticipate the actions of youngsters and be ready for anything by reducing speed in areas where children are present. Motorists should always avoid distractions while driving, but it’s particularly important in school zones and residential neighborhoods. Looking away from the roadway for just two seconds doubles the chance of being involved in a crash. Avoid using mobile phones, adjusting the radio or any other activities that might take attention away from the roadway. Never text while driving, which is against the law in Maine.

Parents play a critical role in preventing distracted driving. AAA recommends that parents teach teens about the dangers of distracted driving. Parents should talk to teens about putting away their cell phones while driving and the danger posed by talking with friends while driving. Cell phones and passengers are the top two driving distractions for teens.

MTSC: Promoting Safe Transportation in Maine

**Mark Your Calendars and Save the Date(s)
 For the Maine Transportation Safety Coalition Meeting**

Monday, October 24, 2016 ~ 9:30 AM – Noon

Central Maine Commerce Center, 45 Commerce Drive, Augusta, ME - Champlain Room