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Maine 2011 Road Death Lowest Since 1959

PORTLAND — Even as drivers are increasingly distracted by cellphones, email and texting, the number of highway deaths dipped to the lowest level in more than five decades in Maine and to an all-time low in neighboring New Hampshire in 2011, officials said. The downward drive continued in Maine, New Hampshire and several other states a year after highway deaths nationwide fell to levels not seen since 1949, with experts citing variety of factors including high gas prices, better safety equipment on cars and increased safety belt usage, among other things.

In Maine, the 136 fatalities recorded through midnight on New Year's Eve represented the lowest figure since 1959, when there were also 136 highway deaths, and the second-lowest since 119 people died on roads in 1944, when gas-rationing was in effect during World War II, said Stephen McCausland, spokesman for the Maine Department of Public Safety. Maine's records go back to 1935.

Lauren Stewart, director of the Maine Bureau of Highway Safety, said she's pleased by the downward trend as a professional, but she isn't jumping with joy. "It's important for us to celebrate the good work we've done here, but we don't want to minimize those people who died," Stewart told The Associated Press.

Declining highway deaths represent a trend that started in 2009, according to statistics compiled by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. In 2010, 32,885 people died in traffic crashes in the United States for the lowest number of fatalities since 1949, the agency said.

Typically, highway deaths drop during a tough economy as people cut discretionary spending and roll back the numbers of miles they travel.

There are other factors at play as well. In Maine, the state is using grant money to step

up traffic enforcement and the state continues to hammer away at efforts to educate motorists about the dangers of distracted and impaired driving, Stewart said. Another factor is improved safety of modern vehicles.

One factor that seems to go against the downward trend is the fact that more drivers than ever seem to be distracted by cellphones. Over Christmas weekend, Stewart said she saw several drivers texting and one driver even reading. It's also common to see people eating fast food or fiddling with their music systems.

In December, the five-member National Transportation Safety Board encouraged states to ban texting, emailing or chatting on a cellphone while driving. The board made an exception for devices which aid navigation, like devices utilizing GPS. Maine has banned texting while driving, after lawmakers concluded that a broadly worded "distracted driving" bill didn't work. New Hampshire also banned texting while driving in 2011.

NHTSA Administrator David Strickland said he's encouraged that 35 states and the District of Columbia have enacted laws banning texting while driving. The laws represent a changing attitude toward distracted driving, just as people have changed their attitudes about seat belts and drunken driving.

In Maine, the state boosted the speed limit to 75 mph on a 110-mile stretch of I-95 between Old Town and Houlton in September, but that hasn't led to an increase in crashes, McCausland said.

Maine's number of highway fatalities spiked during the last week of the year, when 11 people were killed in traffic accidents. Maine's deadliest crash of the year came on Christmas Day, when a sport utility vehicle slid into the path of a car in light snow on Route 3 in Palermo. Two brothers in the SUV and a father and son in the car died instantly; both vehicles were en route to Christmas gatherings.

WEAR SAFETY BELTS





Greetings!

It’s February – that time of the year when the enjoyment of lengthening days are tempered with blasts of cold and snow. School vacations are on their way. I am grateful that this winter hasn’t been too bad; fall seemed worse. I have a sense of optimism knowing that even a really bad end to the winter would only mean we had half a bad winter. And, in defiance of the calendar, I’m already planning my garden for this spring.

Although the weather hasn’t been harsh this winter, the learning curve for winter driving was steep and deadly. The last two weeks of December and early January were particularly bad in terms of fatal crashes caused by weather, speed, alcohol/drugs and distracted driving. At a recent meeting with participants from Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, there seemed to be consensus that a plausible contributing factor to these deadly crashes could be the lack of snow! With little or no snow, but icy roads, the snowbanks are missing. These snowbanks may in fact act like bumpers (think bowling alley lanes outfitted for a party of 5 year olds), which could actually keep vehicles on the roadway and away from hazards outside the roadway. I’m not sure it’s proven, but it makes sense.



I started with the bad news, but there was some very good news in 2011. Traffic fatalities were overall significantly lower than any year dating back to 1959! We unofficially had 136 traffic fatalities in 2011 – a 15% decrease from 2010. Maybe this Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) goal is possible? Although the full impact of our work as individuals isn’t quantifiable, I know each of us has contributed to this improvement through our work, or even our personal communication with friends and colleagues. So congratulations to you!

Finally, a sampling of safety tips for both winter and spring (positive thinking at work!). The MTSC brochure “Safety is Always in Season” gives potentially life-saving tips for spring travel. All four seasonal brochures are available at <http://themtsc.org/publications/publications.php>.

Winter

- Plan ahead – proper clothing, a prearranged route and proper maintenance of your seasonal equipment will help ensure your time outdoors will be safe and fun. Always inform someone about your travel plans.
- Share the trails – Riders of snowmobiles, other recreational vehicles, cross-country skiers and snowshoers need to be aware of and courteous to each other.



Spring

- Spring can bring heavy rains. Reduce speeds when roadways are saturated with water to avoid hydroplaning.
- Watch for frost heaves.
- Be on the lookout for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as their trusty canines.

Brian Lawrence



Maine Bureau of Highway Safety Updates



The 2011 Holiday High Visibility Impaired Driving Enforcement Campaign has just been completed. The Campaign ran from November 14, 2011 through January 2, 2012. All eight troops of the Maine State Police, five County Sheriff's

Agencies and forty-one Municipal Departments received grant funding and participated in the enforcement campaign. We are currently processing the final reports from the agencies and those figures will be included in the article for the May Newsletter.

Between August and November 2011, the Bureau conducted five workshops to provide training in The Teen Driver Awareness Program. To date, seventy facilitators have graduated from the one-day program. The majority of these facilitators are law enforcement officers from State, County and Municipal agencies. However, we have provided the training to other qualified individuals who are involved in teen driving and traffic safety. We are pleased with the response from various agencies. Currently, the program is being instructed in a number of high schools and driver education classes throughout the State. In addition, the staff from the Bureau of Highway Safety has been kept busy with requests for presentations from high schools, state agencies, conferences and private groups.

The second meeting of the Impaired Driving Task Force was held at Public Safety on December 12, 2011. This Committee was initiated to bring the various disciplines and groups from around the State together in a forum to address the laws, training, administration, enforcement and issues revolving around impaired driving. Representation on the Committee includes, Highway Safety, the Maine Criminal Justice Academy, The Bureau of Motor Vehicles, the Department of Health and Human Services Lab, Prosecutors and lead instructors in OUI Detection and Drug Recognition from State, County and Municipal law enforcement agencies. The major topics of conversation for the December meeting centered around two major issues: a discussion of a Statewide OUI Tracking System and efforts to update the Implied Consent Forms (BMV Form DI-27) to

reflect the new administrative suspension for drug impaired drivers. Matt Ruel of the Maine State Police and Director of the State Bureau of Identification, along with Amy McCollett, were present and gave the committee a comprehensive report on the inner working of SBI and how the department tracks criminal cases from arrest to final disposition. Robert O'Connell, Jr. and Susan Cole, from the Bureau of Motor Vehicles were in attendance and participated in a discussion with the Drug Recognition Experts (Officer Robert Libby, Sgt. Don Finnegan, Trooper Kyle Willette and Det. William Scull) which led to a resolution of potential problems involving the BMV Form DI-27 and legal procedures for the Drug Recognition Experts.

The next meeting of the Impaired Driving Task Force will be held at Public Safety on March 8, 2012 at 2 pm.

During the month of December, the Bureau accepted applications and resumes from those agencies and officers who are interested in participating in the Regional Impaired Driving Enforcement Project. The Bureau has selected a Team consisting of twelve law enforcement officers from State Police, Cumberland County Sheriff's Office, and the Scarborough, Falmouth, Cape Elizabeth, Gorham, Westbrook and Brunswick Police Departments. Due to the high number of alcohol/drug related crashes and fatalities within Cumberland County, this region has been chosen as the first geographic area for this pilot project. Team members were selected on a criteria which included a history and dedication to the apprehension and prosecution of impaired drivers and skills which will contribute to the success of this project. We anticipate that the increased and highly visible enforcement will begin in April 2012 and run through November of 2012. Specific target areas of enforcement will be determined by the analysis of data of high incidents of impaired driver related crashes and fatalities. The Team will conduct both saturation patrols and sobriety checkpoints in the selected locations.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Maine Bureau of Highway Safety is to save lives and reduce injuries on Maine roads and highways; through strong leadership, partnerships with other public and private organizations, innovation, facilitation, project and program support, and through the effective and efficient administration of traffic safety grant funds.

Please visit our web site at <http://www.maine.gov/dps/bhs> for more information and to view the 2012 Highway Safety Plan.

Brewer Teens Learn Dangers of Texting While Driving

By Nok-Noi Ricker, BDN Staff

BREWER, Maine — Texting while driving can kill. That was the message sent to Brewer High School students in January as part of AT&T's "It Can Wait" campaign, designed to educate young drivers about the dangers of texting while driving. Cellphone text messaging while driving in Maine became illegal at the end of September. "It's very sad to see people can die from this," a 16-year-old sophomore named Chrissy said after watching a 10-minute video titled "The last text,"

which featured four true stories about distracted driving caused by texting. Two of the stories are about people who died while texting, one was about a man who hit and killed a man on a bike while sending a text and the last one

featured a man who has permanent physical damage from a car crash in which he was a passenger. "It's worse than drunk driving because it's all the time," Cynthia McLaughlin, health and outdoor education teacher at Brewer High, said after one of the morning sessions. Most of the students in the session had cellphones and a majority said they sent or received in excess of 50 text messages daily.

"These guys are inexperienced drivers and they're texting and driving," McLaughlin said. It's a deadly combination, said presenter Crystal Canney of Canney Communications. "You're putting yourself, you're putting your passengers in danger," she told the students. "It's serious stuff."

Motor vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of death for Mainers ages 1 to 24, according to the Governors Highway Safety Association. Younger Maine drivers are more likely to be involved in crashes directly related to risk-taking behavior, including texting while behind the wheel.

People between the ages of 16 and 24 account for



only 13 percent of Maine drivers, yet they are involved in 36 percent of all auto accidents, according to the Maine Transportation Safety Coalition. They also are more likely to be involved in severe crashes that involve personal injury or death.

"This year alone in the U.S., there have been more than 425,000 crashes involving drivers using mobile phones and texting," Canney said, citing data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. As cellphone use increases, so does the number of distracted driver deaths, she said.

"It was 8 percent in 2004 and in 2008 it was 11 percent," Canney said. In 2009, 5,474 people died in the U.S. as a result of distracted driving, which accounts for about 16 percent of all traffic fatalities, she said.

Young people aren't the only ones using cellphones behind the wheel, and Canney asked the teenagers to be messengers. "Remind your parents — be an example and don't

text and drive," she said. "And don't text your friends while they're driving. Be good to them."

During the session, a 15-year-old freshman named Justin asked, "If my mom is texting and driving, do I have the right to get out of the car at a stop sign?" Another 14-year-old freshman named Brandon said, "My mom has never once gone driving without texting." Canney answered, "You should have these conversations before you get in the car."

Those texting and driving can be stopped by police and the minimum fine is \$100 in Maine, which this year joined 33 other states in banning the practice. Two computer simulators — equipped with a computer screen and a steering wheel and designed to educate teens about the dangers of texting and driving — should soon arrive in the state, Maine Bureau of Highway Safety announced in September.

Maine received one of only five Ford Motor Foundation grants awarded nationwide for the simulators. At the end of Wednesday's session at Brewer High School, many of the students got up and signed a pledge not to text and drive.

A similar session was held in the spring at Westbrook High School. Canney said educational materials, including the "The Last Text" video, will be sent to each high school in Maine and all driver education schools.

Safety Issues

From: McCausland, Stephen On Behalf Of News, DPS,
By Nok-Noi Ricker, BDN Staff

Meet the MTSC...An Interview with Joseph Howe

How long have you been involved in the MTSC?

T.Y. Lin International and I are just beginning our involvement with MTSC.

Town of Residence?

I have lived in Durham for 12 years.

Tell Us About Your Family:

I am married and have a son who is 9 and a daughter who is 7.

Employed by:

I work for T.Y. Lin International in our Falmouth office.

Your Safety Role?:

I am currently working on developing a highway safety engineer position in our office and am involved in reviewing roadside designs. I am also involved in our highway and bicycle/pedestrian projects.

T.Y. Lin International (TYLI) is a globally recognized full-service infrastructure consulting firm, with a local office in Falmouth, Maine. A core element of TYLI's practice is a commitment to transportation systems that are safe, efficient, and sustainable. Many of TYLI's designs have encompassed items such as street widening and pavement improvements, median design, sidewalk improvements and bulb-outs, traffic signal and pedestrian signal design, bicycle and multi-use paths, ADA compliance, parking, sustainability, drainage and utility design, and lighting design. TYLI works closely with local communities and agencies to develop designs that are integrated within overall local policies and safety provisions.

AAA Warns Vehicle Spare Tires May Become Thing of the Past

AAA prepares drivers for what to do when new vehicles don't include a spare tire.

ORLANDO, Fla., (January 25, 2012) – Buying a car can be a stressful experience. One thing buyers could depend upon was that the new vehicle they were about to purchase included a spare tire. That may not always be the case. To meet new government fuel efficiency standards some vehicle manufacturers are omitting heavy spare tires and equipping new vehicles with an emergency sealant and inflator kit or tires that if damaged can run reasonable distances without air.

In 2010, the Department of Transportation and Environmental Protection Agency established new corporate average fuel economy standards for vehicle model years 2012 to 2016. The new standards are set at a combined 29.7 mpg for the 2012 model year, increasing to 34.1 mpg by 2016. Achieving these standards will require many changes to the vehicles we drive. One area of focus is to reduce the weight of vehicles without compromising occupant safety. A spare tire, related tools and a jack can weigh more than 40 pounds. That may seem like a small amount but every little bit helps and unlike other weight saving changes, it doesn't add cost to the vehicle.

“Unfortunately many vehicle owners may be unaware that their vehicle has no spare tire until they experience a flat tire.” says John Nielsen, AAA National Director of Auto Buying, and Consumer Information. “Consumers should review their owner’s manual and emergency maintenance supplies they have in the vehicle and be informed about alternatives to a spare to prevent panic or a delay when encountering a flat tire.”

AAA recommends the following to ensure you are informed and prepared:

- Inspect the car and consult your owner’s manual. If the vehicle has a spare, be sure it is properly inflated and stowed. If you cannot locate a spare tire, ensure your vehicle has an alternate solution. Options include the run-flat tires that allow the car to be driven to a safe location or an emergency sealant and inflator kit.
- If you carry a sealant, AAA recommends that you check the date and replace it every five years or after its use. Sealant can become less effective with age.

As North America's largest motoring and leisure travel organization, AAA provides more than 53 million members with travel, insurance, financial and automotive-related services. Since its founding in 1902, the not-for-profit, fully tax-paying AAA has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers. AAA clubs can be visited on the Internet at AAA.com.

Provided by: Rayette Hudon, Traffic Safety Specialist, AAA

Two Maine Schools Receive National Safe Routes to School Grants

Safety Issues



Schools in Portland and Yarmouth have received \$1,000 mini-grants from the National Center for Safe Routes to School to encourage safe and increased walking and biking to school during the spring.

Ocean Avenue Elementary School (OAES) in Portland and Harrison Middle School in Yarmouth were among 26 recipients nationwide, out of 212 applicants.

At Harrison Middle School, students will use OpenStreetMaps, a free global positioning system mapping tool, to collect and share safe routes to walk and bike to school and around the community. They will conduct a survey at the start and end of the project to track changes in how students travel to school.

A local cartographer recently gave the Harrison Middle School students an introduction to mapping. Yarmouth's Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee and the school administration have supported the project.

The OAES Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) launched Walk & Wheel Days last fall and brought in the Maine Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Education Program to teach bicycle and pedestrian safety to the school's students. The school and PTO will use the mini-grant to develop Walking School Buses – groups of students walking to school under adult supervision, picking up more children along the way.

OAES students will map the safest routes from home to school. They will assess traffic concerns and infrastructure such as sidewalks, crossings and bike lanes. Maps posted on the school's website will detail the times and routes of the Walking School Buses.

The federally funded Safe Routes to School program works to improve safety for children walking and biking to school and to encourage more physical activity as a way of fighting childhood obesity. Walk

and bike to school activities also help to ease traffic congestion, improve classroom behavior, boost academic performance, improve air quality and save school districts money on busing costs.

Maine's Safe Routes to School program is a partnership of the Maine Department of Transportation, the Bicycle Coalition of Maine and communities throughout the state. The program has three regional encouragement and planning coordinators: Darcy Whittemore (saferoutes@BikeMaine.org) in the central part of the state, Sarah Cushman (sarah@sarahcushman.com) in southern Maine, and Jim Fisher (jfisher@hpcme.org) in eastern Maine. For more information, please e-mail them or call 207-623-4511.

For more information about the National Center's mini-grant program, visit www.saferoutesinfo.org/funding-portal/mini-grants.

For more information, contact:
Sarah Cushman
Southern Maine Safe Routes to School Program
sarah@sarahcushman.com



Provided by: Shoshana Hoose, Maine Bicycle Coalition

2012 Mini-Grant Application for Maine's Safe Routes to School



2012 Mini-Grant Application Now Available from Maine's Safe Routes to School Program!

The federally-funded Maine Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program - a partnership of the Maine Department of Transportation, the Bicycle Coalition of Maine and communities like yours throughout the state - works to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and encourage more students to walk and bike to school. Maine SRTS is excited to announce the **2012 Mini-Grant Program for school initiatives that go the extra step to build stronger walk and bike to school programs.**

These grants are intended to provide communities with additional resources to help you succeed in getting more students safely walking and bicycling to school and around town. Thanks to feedback everyone provided in the Maine Safe Routes Program Survey in December, we've expanded the breadth of possible projects. This year, schools or community groups like yours are eligible to apply if your proposed project involves:

Providing at least one **Safe Walking and/or Bicycling Experience** for local students (such as, a walk or bike field trip or Walk & Bike to School events) **AND**

Engaging the school and/or community in at least one **Other (Different) Safe Routes to School Activity** (such as, mapping safe routes to school or starting a Student Safety Patrol).

Please see the application for examples and guidance and feel free to be in touch with Maine Safe Routes staff to think through your project ideas.

Also new this year, communities have the option to apply for:

- **up to \$250 to assist with Spring 2012 activities,**
- **OR up to \$500 if you engage in activities during both Spring & Fall 2012.**

The Safe Routes to School Program is committed to working with schools and communities to boost the number of students safely walking and bicycling to Maine schools year-round. SRTS will select up to 10 recipients to receive awards of up to \$500 each.

Application deadline is March 12, 2012.

The application and examples for proposing projects can be found at:
http://www.bikemaine.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Updated_ME-SRTS_Mini-Grant_Spring_2012_Announcement_Application-_020612.doc

We look forward to having you apply!

The Maine Safe Routes Team

Safety Issues

National Report Shows Big Increase in Maine Bicycle Commuting

Augusta – The number of Mainers who commute to work by bicycle increased by 120 percent between 1990 and 2009, according to a report released today by the Alliance for Biking & Walking. By comparison, “Bicycling and Walking in the U.S.: 2012 Benchmarking Report” shows that the country as a whole had a 64 percent increase in bicycle commuters during that time.



While 12 percent of all trips in the U.S. are by bike and foot, the report notes that only 1.6 percent of federal transportation dollars go to biking and walking.

“More than a quarter of all Maine adults are obese, causing health problems, lost productivity and other costs that affect all of us,” said Nancy Grant, the Bicycle Coalition of Maine’s executive director. “By investing more federal dollars in biking and walking, we can help reduce injuries and death, cut health care costs and create more vibrant communities.”

The report also shows:

- Maine ranks 10th nationally in the number of people who bike and walk to work.
- Maine has a higher percentage of commuters who walk to work (4.1 percent) than the national average (2.9 percent). But the number of pedestrian commuters in Maine declined 14 percent between 1990 and 2009.
- In 2009, Maine had 3,202 people – or 0.5 percent of all commuters - who biked to work. That percentage is the same as the national average.
- In Maine, 6.6 percent of traffic fatalities are pedestrians (compared to 11.7 nationally) and 1 percent of traffic fatalities are bicyclists (compared to 1.8 percent nationally). Maine’s rural nature probably contributes to the lower number of fatalities. But while overall traffic fatalities are decreasing, pedestrian deaths in Maine have not dropped.
- Maine has the most effective bicycle-pedestrian advocacy group in the country, the Bicycle Coalition of Maine, based on factors such as funding, staffing and membership levels per capita.

The Benchmarking Report comes as Congress takes up a federal transportation bill that will decide how tens of billions of tax dollars will be spent over coming years. The Benchmarking Report reveals that in nearly every city and state, pedestrians and bicyclists are disproportionately at risk of being killed. Nationally, 14 percent of traffic fatalities are bicyclists and pedestrians, though they account for only 12 percent of all U.S. trips.

The report compiles persuasive evidence that bicycle and pedestrian projects create more jobs than highway projects, and provide at least three dollars of benefit for every dollar invested.

“The data points to one conclusion - investing in biking and walking projects creates jobs, leads to more people biking and walking and improves safety and public health,” says Jeffrey Miller, the Alliance’s president and chief executive officer.

“Bicycling and Walking in the United States: 2012 Benchmarking Report” was funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and made possible through additional support from AARP and Planet Bike. The report may be viewed at <http://www.PeoplePoweredMovement.org/benchmarking>.

For more information, contact:
Nancy Grant, Executive Director, Bicycle Coalition of Maine
nancy@BikeMaine.org
(work) 207-623-4511 •(cell) 207-400-6558
www.BikeMaine.org •www.facebook.com/bicyclecoalitionmaine

Jeffrey Miller, President/CEO
Alliance for Biking & Walking
jeff@PeoplePoweredMovement.org
(work) 202-445-4415
www.PeoplePoweredMovement.org

The Bicycle Coalition of Maine has been working since 1992 to make Maine a better place to bicycle. The coalition advocates for Maine cyclists at the Legislature and in Washington, D.C., teaches bicycle and pedestrian safety to thousands of Maine schoolchildren each year, partners with state agencies on a Share the Road media campaign and serves as a resource on local bicycling issues.

Alliance for Biking & Walking is the North American coalition of nearly 200 grassroots biking and walking advocacy organizations. The alliance works to strengthen state and local organizations through research, sharing best practices, training, resource, and grants.

Updates from National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

DOT, NHTSA Unveil New Website to Engage Teens on Distracted Driving:

The new “OMG” public service announcements are not the only thing we’ve been working on to raise awareness about the dangers of distracted driving. And that’s why we created Distraction.gov/teens. The site is designed to inform teens about the hazards and different types of distracted driving, involve them in signing a pledge to not drive distracted, and inspire action when they see someone else engaging in this risky behavior.

Analysis of Alcohol-Impaired Young Drivers in Fatal Crashes : This report examines the relationship between the blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) of young drivers 16 to 20 years old and a comparison group (drivers 21 to 34) involved in fatal crashes and the following factors: restraint use, previous driving while intoxicated (DWI) conviction, driver license status, number of vehicles involved in the crash, speed limit, vehicle type, number of vehicle occupants, driver gender, time of day, day of week, holiday period, season, rural/urban status, and region of the country. <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811525.pdf>

Seat Belt Use in 2011 - Overall Results Seat belt use in 2011 was estimated at 84 percent, statistically unchanged from 85 percent in 2010. This result is from the National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS), which is the only survey that provides nationwide probability-based observed data on seat belt use in the United States. <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811544.pdf>

Documenting How States Recently upgraded to Primary Seat Belt Laws: States with primary seat belt enforcement laws consistently have higher observed daytime belt use rates than secondary law States. Secondary belt law States, on the other hand, consistently have more occupant fatalities who were not restrained than primary law States. Since the year 2000, 14 States upgraded their seat belt laws to primary enforcement status. This study documented the roles, strategies, resources, and arguments these States used in efforts to pass primary belt laws. <http://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/pdf/811524.pdf>

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention Motor Vehicle Safety

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among those age 5-34 in the U.S. More than 2.3 million adult drivers and passengers were treated in emergency departments as the result of being injured in motor vehicle crashes in 2009. The economic impact is also notable: the lifetime costs of crash-related deaths and injuries among drivers and passengers were \$70 billion in 2005.

CDC’s research and prevention efforts target this serious public health problem. We focus on improving car and booster seat and seat belt use and reducing impaired driving, and helping groups at risk: child passengers, teen drivers, and older adult drivers. CDC also works to prevent pedestrian and bicycle injuries.

Based on the magnitude of the health problem, and our ability to make significant progress in improving outcomes, Motor Vehicle Injury Prevention is a CDC Winnable Battle. For more information, tips, and tools to address motor vehicle safety – go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/>



Bureau of Highway Safety Child Passenger Safety Program Updates



The Bureau of Highway Safety Child Passenger Safety Program (CPS) is undergoing significant changes. The Bureau developed a CPS Reference Manual for use by

technicians currently partnered with the Bureau and potential future partners. The Manual offers CPS program definitions, new forms, and reference material.

The Bureau is addressing the lack of formal site contract agreements and has developed procedural language suggested by the Attorney General's Office and Office of Risk Management to include as a rider in contract agreements.

The Bureau reinstated a CPS Steering Committee (formally the CPS Advisory Council) with a two-hour quarterly meeting format. The Steering Committee will kickoff in March 2012.

The Bureau has established separate monthly working groups to continue as needed to discuss and plan for various aspects of CPS. The work groups are developing a Bureau of Highway Safety Technician Mentoring Program, a Booster Seat Curriculum, planning a 2013 State of Maine CPS Conference, and discussing and planning strategies for better public outreach to educate citizens about CPS.

The Child Passenger Safety Program will take part in the Maine Chiefs of Police Association 2012 spring educational road

show to reach law enforcement officials state-wide. The Bureau will educate law enforcement officers to identify restraint misuse among the population with whom they come in contact. Other trainings focusing on CPS certification are anticipated for late spring, in Houlton and Farmington.

The Bureau discontinued Instructor Agreements indefinitely; certified technicians/instructors are to follow recertification guidelines. The pay structure is revised for all CPS activities. The Bureau mailed letters to all monthly seat check sites explaining the discontinuation of financial support and the redirection of funding to roving Special Community Car Seat Check Events statewide. There will be two events in northern Maine or Aroostook County, two in eastern Maine or Washington County, two in western and/or central Maine, and two in southern and or central Maine annually. Additional funding will be provided for special community level events.

The Bureau developed language for mock scenario seat sign-offs with best case scenario expectations for a roving instructor, selected and paid by the Bureau, to travel to technicians needing seat sign-offs before expiring.

Research is currently underway to establish additional distribution and inspection locations across the State of Maine. Additional efforts include developing a car-bed loan program with State of Maine hospitals for underweight babies.



NTSB Upgrades Cell Phone Use Recommendations

The National Transportation Safety Board Upgrades its Commercial Vehicle Driver Cell Phone Use Recommendations to Include a Hands-Free Ban

In response to a fatal 2010 crash involving a semitruck and a 15-passenger van, the NTSB has upgraded its driver distraction recommendation for those with commercial driver's licenses to include a total ban of cell phone use - including both handheld and hands-free device use - while driving.

On October 12, the NTSB released its final analysis of the crash, which happened at 5:14 a.m. on March 26, 2010 in Munfordville, Kentucky. The driver of a truck-tractor semitrailer combination unit was on his cell phone and crossed a 60-foot wide median. The truck first struck and overrode a cable barrier system before it collided with the van. Eleven died including the truck driver, whose phone records indicated he sent or received 69 text messages and phone calls in the 24 hours leading up to the crash. The 45-year-old driver made four phone calls in the final minutes before the crash, and made the last at approximately 5:14 a.m. to coincide with the time the truck left its lane.

The NTSB sent the analysis to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration with its recommendation. "Distracted driving is becoming increasingly prevalent, exacerbating the danger we encounter daily on our roadways," NTSB Chairman Deborah A.P. Hersman said. "It can be especially lethal when the distracted driver is at the wheel of a vehicle that weighs 40 tons and travels at highway speeds."

The report also recommends that all 50 states adopt a total cell phone ban for all commercial driver's license holders while operating commercial vehicles. The NTSB cannot enforce laws, but the FMCSA can set rules that all commercial truck and bus operators must follow. A texting law already is in place.

View the NTSB's full report

http://www.nts.gov/news/events/2011/munfordville_ky/index.html

Maine State Department Forum on Teen Driving Safety

Written by Mike DeSumma

BANGOR, Maine (NEWS CENTER) — The Maine State Department has been turning to the public in trying to find better ways to teach young drivers about the dangers of distracted driving. Secretary of State Charlie Summers has been holding a series of forums across the state. One held in Bangor recently drew a good-size crowd to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles at the Airport Mall.

In the last year, 50 fatal car crashes in Maine involved drivers under the age of 24. Speed and alcohol use contributed to some of the accidents.

Several people in attendance at the meeting said that they feel teens are being licensed to drive without enough training behind the wheel. Currently young adults are required to complete at least 35 hours of driving experience and 5 hours of driving after dark.

Secretary Summers says that some parents want to see those numbers doubled.

"We're really trying to get the input of parents...of aunts and uncles...people who have a vested interest in this system and try to improve Maine's curriculum and they're doing a great job right now." he said, "We want to make it better so Maine has the best curriculum in the country."

Secretary Summers has formed a state technical review panel to take a look at the procedures teen drivers in Maine go through. That board will be considering ideas taken from the forums in the next few months.

Source: WCSH6, <http://www.wcsh6.com/news/article/186236/2/Maine-State-Department-holds>

AAA Foundation Challenges Motorists to Adopt Responsible Driving Habits

In the News

Make the Resolution to be a Safe Driver

Washington, D.C. – A recent national survey by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety confirms that Americans desire a greater level of safety than they now experience on our roads and are open to more government action to make it happen. Yet, many are unwilling to change potentially deadly driving behaviors and candidly admit they are part of the problem. That is why AAA and the Foundation are challenging motorists to examine their driving habits and make a resolution to drive safer in 2012 and beyond.

The Department of Transportation recently released updated fatality and injury data which indicate that 32,885 lives were lost in automobile crashes in 2010, fewer deaths on record than any time for the past 60 years.

“Even one death on our roads is unacceptable,” says AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety President and CEO Peter Kissinger. “Something is terribly amiss in our traffic safety culture when, in the safest year since 1949, on average there is still one needless death every 16 minutes in motor vehicle crashes. To reach zero deaths each driver must take a moment to assess his driving habits and ask, when it comes to safe driving, am I part of the problem or part of the solution?”

For the fourth consecutive year, the Foundation’s Traffic Safety Culture Index finds that most drivers (86 percent) view it as unacceptable to drive without wearing a seatbelt, yet nearly one in four admit that they have done so in the past 30 days. Additionally, a substantial number of drivers find it unacceptable to drive 10 mph over the speed limit on residential streets and admit to having done so in the past month. Such findings indicate that a false comfort exists among many drivers who believe ‘it’s the other guy behind the wheel’ yet admit to regularly engaging in potentially deadly behaviors like texting, driving while drunk or drowsy, excessive speeding, and red light running. “This ‘do as I say, not as I do’ attitude that persists among drivers needs to change before we can experience a traffic safety culture where safe driving is the norm,” explains Kissinger.

The following is a snapshot of the key findings from the 2011 Traffic Safety Culture Index.

Drinking and driving

More than three in four drivers (76 percent) say that people driving after drinking alcohol are a very serious

threat to their personal safety and nearly all (97 percent) consider it to be unacceptable. However, over 14 percent of drivers admit to driving when they thought their alcohol level was close to or possibly over the legal limit at least once in the past year, and of these, more than one in five (21 percent) have done so in the past month.

Cell phone use and texting

Distracted driving, specifically cell phone use and texting while driving, is widespread. Ninety-four percent of drivers consider texting while driving a serious threat; however, more than one third of drivers (35 percent) admit to reading a text or email while driving in the past 30 days and more than a quarter of drivers (26 percent) admit to sending a message while driving in the past month.

Additionally, more than two thirds of drivers (68 percent) report talking on their cell phone while driving in the past month, and nearly one in three (31 percent) say they do so fairly often or regularly.

Speeding and Red Light Running

Speeding is widespread on highways and residential roads. Seventy-four percent of drivers consider it unacceptable for a driver to drive more than 15 mph over the speed limit on a freeway, yet more than half of drivers (52 percent) admit to having done so in the past month.

Virtually all drivers (94 percent) consider it to be unacceptable for a driver to drive 15 mph over the speed limit on a residential street, yet more than one in four drivers (26 percent) admit to having done so within the past 30 days.

Nearly all drivers (94 percent) view it as unacceptable to drive through a traffic light that has already turned red if they could have stopped safely; however, more than one in three drivers (37 percent) admit doing this in the past month.

Drowsy driving

Most drivers view drowsy driving as a serious threat to their safety and a completely unacceptable behavior. Virtually all drivers (96 percent) consider it unacceptable for someone to drive when they are so sleepy they can hardly keep their eyes open; however, nearly one third of drivers (32 percent) admit to having done so during the past month.

Seatbelts

Nearly one in four drivers (23 percent) admit that they have driven without wearing their seatbelt in the past 30 days, and nearly one in five (19 percent) say they have done this more than once.

“We are moving in the right direction when it comes to safety on our roads but we need to do much more. Changing driver behaviors is not rocket science ... it’s harder. Take the first step and make a personal goal to be a safe driver in 2012,” concluded Kissinger.

U.S. Department of Transportation Addresses Distracted Driving

WASHINGTON – U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood today released the latest video in the U.S. Department of Transportation’s “Faces of Distracted Driving” series, featuring the story of Brittanie Montgomery, from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

WATCH: “Brittanie Montgomery, 19” – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUWs1jGcpMo>

At 19 years old, Brittanie Montgomery was a member of the Hornets Honeybees dance team and studied childhood development as a sophomore at the University of Central Oklahoma. On December 21, 2006, she was killed when she lost control of her vehicle, crossed four lanes of traffic, and was struck by an oncoming car. She was talking on her cell phone with a friend at the time of the crash.

“Brittanie Montgomery was a talented young woman who was beloved by her family and community. Her story proves that even a single phone call from behind the wheel can have devastating consequences,” said Secretary LaHood. “I hope all drivers will remember to keep their eyes on the road, their hands on the wheel, and their cell phones in the glove compartment.”

“Everyone who had a chance to meet Brittanie knew about her dreams for the future and knew she’d accomplish every one of them. But just one phone call ended her life,” said her mother, Gina Harris. “I hope that sharing my daughter’s story will help open drivers’ eyes to the dangers of cell phone use behind the wheel.”

“Faces of Distracted Driving” is a video series that raises awareness about the potentially tragic consequences of texting and cell phone use while driving by sharing the stories of families who have been affected by this deadly epidemic. In 2010, over 3,000 people died in crashes related to distracted driving. The series is part of Secretary LaHood’s ongoing efforts to raise greater awareness about the dangers of distracted driving.

WATCH: “Faces of Distracted Driving” – www.distraction.gov/faces

The U.S. Department of Transportation encourages anyone who would like to share their distracted driving experiences to email: faces@distraction.gov.

To learn more about USDOT’s efforts to stop distracted driving, please visit www.distraction.gov.



Safety Issues



MTSC
 PO Box 818
 Augusta, ME 04332-0818

AAAM Announces 56th Annual Conference



**Association for the Advancement
 of Automotive Medicine**

847-844-3880
 info@aaam.org

AAAM

Engineers, Physicians, and Researchers working together to decrease road traffic injuries across the globe



The Association for the Advancement of Automotive Medicine (AAAM) will be holding their 56th Annual Conference this year in Seattle, Washington, October 14-17, 2012.

The AAAM is an International organization dedicated to the prevention of road traffic injuries. The annual conference is an opportunity for researchers and practitioners to share their research knowledge with participants from around the world. Participants include professionals and students from the diverse fields of behavioral science, clinical medicine, engineering, epidemiology, public policy, and others. The multidisciplinary, multinational group assures stimulating discussion and debate. I urge you to consider submitting an abstract and attending the conference. AAAM is a non-profit organization with a wonderful group of volunteer members, and I also encourage you to join AAAM.

National Safety Council's Defensive Driving

The most compelling program for keeping drivers safe on the road!

National Safety Council Defensive Driving Courses are the most effective training for changing driver behaviors to prevent traffic crashes, injuries and deaths.

Attendees Will Learn:

Why choosing safe, responsible, and lawful driving behaviors and habits makes personal and financial sense.

How to drive defensively in unpredictable conditions.

How driver attitude and behavior can help prevent collisions and poor decision-making.

Small group discussions in addition to case studies, Defensive Driver Self-Assessment Risk Survey (a one of a kind resource to help participants take action against driving-related injuries and deaths), critical discussions on distracted driving, as well as, the dangers of cell phone use! New and updated videos with real-life driver situations.

Augusta classes:

Buker Community Center

June 2nd, October 6th

Scarborough classes:

Safety & Health Council

April 7th, August 4th, December 8th

Email melissaw@shenne.org to register or if you have questions....



MTSC: Promoting Safe Transportation in Maine

Mark your calendars now ... and plan to attend!

What: Maine Transportation Safety Coalition meetings

When: 1st Thursday of each month ~ March 1, 2012
 (Portland)

Where: Bureau of Highway Safety, Augusta

Time: 9:30am-12:00pm

Directions are sent with the agenda.

Please contact Ian Hunt (phone: 624-3634 or by email: ian.hunt@maine.gov) if you plan to attend.