



Badges, Buckles, Belts & Beyond

Published Quarterly for Virginia's Transportation Safety Community by the Smart, Safe & Sober Partnership

Va. Association of Chiefs of Police • Va. Sheriffs' Association • Va. State Police • Va. Dept. of Motor Vehicles • DRIVE SMART Virginia

Spring/Summer 2005 Safety Memo No. 18

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

Virginia's 2004 Checkpoint Campaign: A Success!

"Combine the campaign's resulting drunk driving arrests with Virginia residents' increased support for and knowledge of the use of sobriety checkpoints in the Commonwealth and all signs point toward success regarding Virginia's 2004 Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign," assessed Kurt Erickson, President of the Virginia-based Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP). WRAP is the non-profit organization serving as the project manager for the public education component of the state's third-annual sobriety checkpoint campaign.

Virginia's most recent Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign, which concluded on January 4, 2005, netted the following public awareness numbers:

- awareness of local sobriety checkpoints (up 14%);
- perception that law enforcement was "cracking down" on impaired drivers (up 12%);
- exposure to information on law enforcement's anti-DUI efforts (up 10%);
- and awareness of Virginia's new DUI

See **Strikeforce**, page 2

Click It or Ticket: Snapshots from the Street

by **Mary Ann Rayment**

DMV Program Manager / Occupant Protection Coordinator

The 2005 CIOT Mobilization is now over, and I know that when the final numbers are counted, we will have another huge success to celebrate. Keep the stories and tickets coming in! We know that each ticket represents more than a number — it's a person possibly saved because you cared. I look forward to sharing the results with you when the count is final. Until then, here's a recap of our 2005 mobilization efforts.

Pre-Enforcement

As we start at "day one" with the *Click It or Ticket* enforcement wave, we have some exciting updates to share:

- The **Surry County Sheriff's Office** has put out CIOT signs and begun enforcement — we got a call from a Surry Citizen giving them major kudos!
- The **Gate City Police Department** is really going to give everyone a run for their money! Early on they have conducted one checking detail and had excellent results, from getting suspended and intoxicated drivers off the road to writing some seat belt tickets. They are working with State Police on some other

checks and have another planned for May 28th — we'll be anxiously awaiting the news on that! They are partnering with State Police, the Sheriff's Office, and ABC on enforcement details. They also have received a huge front-page article in the local paper, put posters all over town, and "decorated" the front of the police department.

- **Frederick County** law enforcement already has scored 2 newspaper articles! They also have recorded 2 PSA's that are being aired on WINC (rock), WUSQ (country), and FOX radio along with several of their sister stations. Frederick County's *Click It or Ticket* message already has been heard more than a dozen times.
- **Alleghany County** has placed public service announcements on both local radio stations in their area and is waiting for a newspaper article to hit the street.

Enforcement Wave

The Memorial Day holiday job you all did was AWESOME! The reports received are incredible!

- **Petersburg PD** was a "carnival" of blue lights, **Sussex County** was hitting

See **CIOT**, page 3

laws (up 19%).

Virginia's 21-35 year old, male drivers were the target audience of this statewide, public education campaign. They are statistically most at risk for drunk driving, have the highest incidence of intoxication in all fatal traffic crashes and are uninfluenced by run-of-the-mill public awareness campaigns.

Virginia's 2004 Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign — part of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) larger effort involving five mid-Atlantic states plus the District of Columbia — served as an historic, statewide law enforcement effort to effectively detect and arrest impaired drivers in the Commonwealth. Virginia officials agreed to conduct at least one sobriety checkpoint every single week between July 4, 2004 and January 4, 2005 as part of the Checkpoint Strikeforce initiative.

Virginia distinguished its pro-safety effort with a landmark, multi-faceted, public education and awareness effort funded by a Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles grant.

Statewide, independent, post-campaign research on Virginia's 2004 Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign indicated that:

- nearly three-fourths (74%) of 21 to 35 year old Virginians were aware of sobriety checkpoints being used in their local area — a double digit (14%) increase during the length of the campaign;
- more than half (53%) of 21 to 35 year old Virginians thought that police had increased their efforts to “crack down” on impaired drivers — a double-digit (12%) increase during the length of the campaign — with over half (54%) of this same target audience reporting that it is either “very or somewhat likely” that someone would be stopped for drinking and driving;
- more than half (52%) of 21 to 35 year old Virginians heard, read or saw information on increased law enforcement regarding drinking and driving — a double-digit (10%) increase during the length of the campaign;



National Transportation Safety Board's Ellen Engleman Conners (Chairman) and Deborah A.P. Hersman (Board member) [center, l to r] present NTSB honors to Virginia Delegates (l to r) David B. Albo, Rob B. Bell and Robert F. McDonnell at the June 29, 2004 news conference launch of Virginia's 2004 Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign.

- nearly half (48%) of 21 to 35 year old Virginians recognized the campaign Checkpoint Strikeforce by name — a nine percent increase during the length of the campaign;
- and the largest increase in the awareness of Virginia's new DUI laws was reported by the Commonwealth's 21 to 35 year olds with more than half (51%) reporting that they were either “very or somewhat” aware of Virginia's new drunk driving laws — a double-digit (19%) increase during the length of the campaign — with nearly half (45%) of this same target audience reporting that these same new laws have had either a “significant or some effect” on drunk driving.

The independent polling firm conducting both the 2004 Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign pre-and post-polls, stated that “there was a very solid...increase in the recognition of the increased efforts to deter impaired driving. This suggests a careful, pervasive education effort, and we think it is the single best indication of the success of your efforts.”

In addition to paid media coverage, Virginia's Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign garnered impressive earned media coverage including: a cumulative, local print media circulation of nearly 10 million; a national circulation reaching over 4.5 million (via

a picked-up Associated Press story); and 82 television and radio placements in Virginia and the Washington-metropolitan area.

Virginia officially launched its 2004 Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign at a special event news conference on June 29, 2004 at the Chesterfield General District Courthouse. Speakers that day included Virginia's Secretary of Public Safety John W. Marshall; National Transportation Safety Board Chairman Ellen Engleman Conners; Virginia House of Delegates' Courts of Justice Committee Chairman, the Honorable Robert F. McDonnell; Virginia State Police's Director of Field Operations, Lt. Colonel Gene Stockton; Chesterfield County Sheriff Clarence Williams; and WRAP's President, Kurt Erickson. The courtroom setting offered attending media a visual depiction of what a DUI defendant in Virginia experiences — from the holding cell to the defendant table to the witness stand.

“In a state where more people are annually convicted of drunk driving than the entire populations of Falls Church and Williamsburg combined. Virginia's Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign is putting the brakes on this country's most frequently committed violent crimes, drunk driving,” said Erickson.

the streets hard, **Prince George County PD** had the CIOT message on a huge message sign, and **Waverly PD** was out there running radar from some great spots. They also had posters and signs all over the place.

- **Southampton County** had signs in and out of the county and several cars on the road.

Route 460 Blitz Reports

- I got a call from a local reporter wanting to know what was going on because the **Amherst County Sheriff's Office** was so active... they wrote 227 summonses! They also provided a child safety seat check during the Blitz — 20 safety seats were checked, but only 2 were correctly installed. They were able to fix them all and replaced one of them, free of charge. Jenny Willow from the ACSO also wrote and got great placement of a terrific news article that ran in the Amherst New Era-Progress on May 26th.
- **Giles County SO, Glen Lyn PD, Rich Creek PD, Narrows PD, Pearisburg PD** and **Pembroke PD** hit 460 hard making numerous traffic stops. Twenty-one stops were made and 11 summonses were given out — the others received a strong warning for their actions. This is the first time they have participated in the Route 460 Blitz and, hopefully, not the last as they did a great job!

In other news:

- **Marion PD** had no sooner put up their CIOT signs than a motorist was reported driving reckless. The Marion officers picked up the motorist when they got the call, except the motorist decided he didn't want to stop. He then took off, running speeds of around 100 miles per hour. The officers held back, since this was clearly a dangerous situation, and then the motorist crashed into a tree! He was arrested for driving a stolen vehicle from West Virginia, felony elude, driving after illegally consuming alcohol, and driving under a revoked license. He also was wanted on two outstanding felony warrants. Marion PD had checkpoints over the holiday in partnership with Smyth County SO that netted a possession of methamphetamine violation, among other things.
- **Smyth County SO** has been very busy as well, running checkpoints and saturation patrols. One of the highlights that they have shared was a traffic stop by one of the deputies that turned up 1.59 ounces of cocaine and \$2,700.00 in cash.
- **Henrico County PD** partnered with **Hanover County SO** and **State Police** and had a really productive night that netted 49 arrests. Henrico also conducted a red light running enforcement initiative that netted 50 more violators.

As we come to a close of the enforcement wave:

- **Scott County SO** has been all over the county! They report that they already have had 12 checkpoints and have 5 more scheduled before the end of the mobili-

zation on June 5th! They have written more than 50 summonses, which have included DUI and felony drug arrests. They also report that one of the deputies stopped a man for a taillight being out. When he got up to the vehicle, he also asked the motorist why he was not wearing his seat belt. The motorist replied, "I know... I've been listening to the *"Click It or Ticket* (ads) on the radio all day long." When the deputy went back to the vehicle to have him sign the summons, the motorist actually THANKED him!

- **Waynesboro PD** has some really striking numbers to report so far. When Sgt. Jenkins compared last May to this May, he found a huge difference. In 2004, 374 citations were written for the month of May. So far in 2005, Waynesboro PD has issued 660 citations — 136 of them for seat belts and 28 for child safety seats. They have been all over the newspaper and TV29 in Charlottesville.
- **Albemarle County PD** continues to push the message. Aside from the really good numbers they pulled at the 460 Blitz, they have received some great press, distributed CIOT posters and static-cling stickers to the high schools, and have several posters around the public entrances at the new county office building. Keeping the message in front of folks is so important, and Albemarle County PD has done a great job of just that.
- **Richmond PD** took an interesting approach with young drivers. Each Richmond high school driver education class was treated to a program on crashes and the consequences of wearing or not wearing a seat belt.
- **New Kent County SO** has been out doing enforcement and checking details. They also have their message trailer out, displaying the "Click It or Ticket — Buckle Up" slogan. New Kent reports that about 40,000 motorists have seen that message.
- **Norfolk PD** wrote 136 summonses during the Memorial Day holiday alone. Coupled with the fact that the city had a huge festival, back-to-back baseball games, and a major concert at the same time, it is amazing that the PD was able to hit the street so hard.
- **Ft. Meyer Army Post** shares with us that they have been busy. They have seriously increased their seat belt compliance rate since they began the mobilization, and are hoping it goes up more before all is said and done.
- **Gate City PD** continues its aggressive enforcement. They have partnered successfully with State Police, Scott County SO, and ABC on checking details and saturation patrols. In one case, Gate City assisted Weber City with a situation in which three people shoplifted from a store. When police responded, the suspects committed a felony hit and run while leaving the parking lot, crashed their vehicle, and then fled on foot. All three were under the influence. They were charged with failure to possess an operator's license, refusal of a breath test, felony hit and run, two shoplifting charges, obstruction of justice, felony unauthorized use of a vehicle and one fugitive from justice.

Post police help to “Click it or Ticket”

by Spc. Wes Landrum
Pentagram Staff Writer

(May 6, 2005) “Click It or Ticket,” that’s the choice local police forces will be giving motorists over the coming weeks.

Beginning May 23 until June 5, post military police officials are encouraging motorists to buckle up. But Lt. Lori Feeley, community traffic officer said, just because the program runs for two weeks, motorists should not be quick to drive without their seat belts.

“May 23 to June 5 is the timeframe for the mobilization to begin and end,” she said. “That doesn’t mean we aren’t going to be performing belt checks prior to that.”

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said between 1975 and 2000, safety belts prevented 135,000 people from losing their lives. They also said seat belts also prevented 3.8 million injuries, saving nearly \$585 billion in medical and other costs. In 2003, 59% of all 18 to 34-year-old passengers who were killed in crashes were not wearing seat belts. For male passengers, between ages 18 and 34, the death rate went up as 62% of occupants killed in crashes weren’t wearing seat belts compared to 52% of females in that same age group.

“Because we’ve seen firsthand the severe injury and death that often result from not wearing a safety belt, we will be showing a zero tolerance for anyone not buckled up,” Feeley said. “Unless you want to risk a ticket — or worse, your life — remember to wear your belt.”

Feeley said the goal of the “Click It or Ticket” mobilization is to encourage manda-

tory seat belt use on federal installations, protect community members and reduce fatalities. She said, in 2003, 73% of car passengers involved in a fatal crash who wore their seat belts survived. However, only 42% of those who were not restrained survived.

Feeley said there are two types of seat belt laws, primary and secondary. Under primary law, law enforcement officers can write tickets if they simply observe motorists not wearing a seat belt. Under the secondary law, an officer can’t ticket a motorist for a seat belt infraction unless the motorist has been stopped for another infraction. In March, 21 states had primary laws — Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia were included on that list.

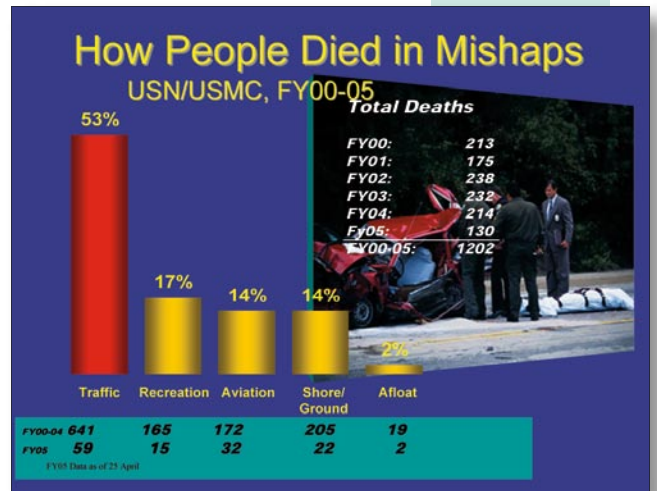
“Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia require all seat belts to be worn when driving on their roads,” Feeley said. “Furthermore, on post, all occupants in a vehicle must have their seat belts on when driving on the installation. That includes front-seat passengers and back-seat passengers,” she continued.

Safety Administration officials said seat belt use has increased in the last few years. However, they said, more must be done to make motorists aware. Over the past several years, the highway safety administration has helped law enforcement jurisdictions start the “Click It or Ticket” campaign program nationwide. They would help law agencies conduct an intense, highly publicized campaign with heavy emphasis on seat belt laws.

Feeley said the campaign is an effective tool in increasing



FILE PHOTO



The number one cause of death to US Naval and Marine Corps personnel over the last 10 years is traffic incidents.

seat belt use rates. Seat belt use in the United States rose to a record high 80% last year compared to only 54% 10 years ago, she added.

“The combination of active law enforcement, coupled with paid advertising and the support of government agencies, local schools, community organizations and others, continues to be an extremely effective means for increasing safety belt use — and saving lives — across the country,” Feeley said. “We want everyone on the road to remember to buckle up — every trip, every time.”



Time to “Click It or Ticket”

by Dan Steber

Naval Safety Center Traffic Safety Division Public Affairs

(May 6, 2005) NORFOLK, Va. (NNS) - The Naval Safety Center has partnered once again with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) on their national “Click It or Ticket” campaign.

Starting one week before and running one week after the Memorial Day holiday, from May 23 to June 5, thousands of law-enforcement agencies in communities and at selected military installations across the country will actively be enforcing DoD and state seatbelt laws.

“This program is an essential step to get our people to wear seatbelts,” said Mary Brigham, senior traffic-safety specialist at the Naval Safety Center.

During last year’s campaign, dramatic results occurred at every base involved with the program. At Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base (NAB), Va., for example, seatbelt use increased from 89 percent to 98 percent.

“The success stories at NAB Little Creek, Naval Station Norfolk, and 13 other bases in the Mid-Atlantic Region were a benefit to the Navy, Marine Corps and our communities,” said Bonnie Revell, traffic-safety specialist at the Naval Safety Center. “Our numbers helped Virginia to reach the highest level of seatbelt use ever recorded in the state. We hope to expand the effort this year to improve on last year’s efforts and to save lives.”

The “Click It or Ticket” mobilization effort involves four stages: a media campaign, where people are told about the upcoming campaign and increased law-enforcement efforts; an observation period, where violators are



NHTSA Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator Beth Baker; Admiral Brooks, Naval Safety Center; and Nancy Rodrigues, DRIVE SMART Virginia, briefed the troops in Norfolk last October.

counted but not ticketed; an enforcement period, where all violators are ticketed; and a final review period, where behavior is observed to make sure the effort has been successful.

These efforts, coupled with NHTSA’s paid advertising and the support of government agencies, traffic safety organizations, local advocates and others, will again give the Navy the opportunity to increase seatbelt use and protect Sailors and families from private motor vehicle mishaps.

Traffic Safety Training in the Military Community

In the fall and winter of 2004, the VACP, DRIVE SMART Virginia, and the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles joined with the military to educate its members about *Click It or Ticket (CIOT)*. In October, Bob Wall from the VACP joined the Norfolk Naval Safety Center to talk about the CIOT Campaign and the Law Enforcement Challenge program. Program materials were handed out for use on the bases, as were Challenge applications.

During the College ABC Alcohol Conference last November, VACP staff was invited to the USS Roosevelt Aircraft Carrier that was in dry dock at the US Naval Yard in Portsmouth, VA. It was reported that during the previous week, three sailors had been arrested for DUI — one of them twice in one month. Don Allen and Bob Wall joined the Portsmouth PD to present some “remedial” training in DUI enforcement.



**Congratulations to
Naval Amphibious Base-
Little Creek for winning
1st place (Military)
in the Virginia Law
Enforcement Challenge
AND
3rd place (Military)
in the National Law
Enforcement Challenge!!**

See page 6 for the full results of the Law Enforcement Challenge

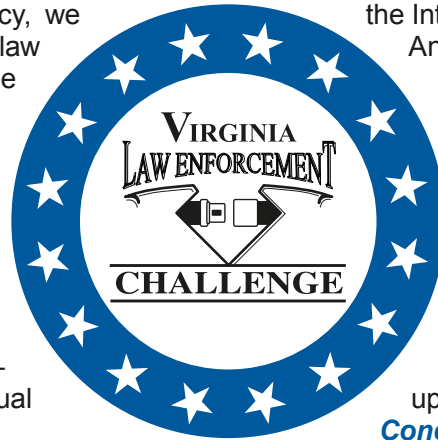
2004 Law Enforcement Challenge Winners

The Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police (VACP) is pleased to present the **2004 Virginia Law Enforcement Challenge Award Winners!**

The Association is proud to be an integral part of Virginia's traffic safety initiatives, particularly through its partnership role in the Virginia Smart, Safe and Sober Program. A major part of our efforts in Virginia has been the Law Enforcement Challenge, now in its 16th year in the state. We believe that this program promotes professionalism in traffic safety enforcement and encourages agencies to share best practices and programs with each other.

As the coordinating Challenge agency, we have worked very hard to ensure that law enforcement agencies throughout the Commonwealth have all of the tools available to them to make our roadways safer and we congratulate all of the Virginia winners. We are proud of your accomplishments and efforts to save lives.

The Virginia Challenge awards will be presented at the Law Enforcement Challenge Luncheon on Monday, August 8, 2005 at the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police Annual Conference in Portsmouth, VA.



The IACP has also announced the **2004 National Law Enforcement Challenge winners**, and Virginia agencies brought home more awards than any other state in the 2004 competition! Capturing 18 awards this year, Virginia agencies are leading the way in outstanding highway safety programs nationwide. Our congratulations go out to all the agencies that won state and national awards.

The National Challenge awards will be presented at the Highway Safety Awards Ceremony on Tuesday, September 27, 2005 from 5:00–7:00 p.m. at the International Association of Chiefs of Police Annual Conference in Miami, FL.

The VACP will begin preparing for next year's Challenge soon and wants to remind everyone to keep track of your 2005 activities for next year's entry *now*. The VACP will continue to offer more "How-To" workshops in the fall and winter to assist you in preparing your applications for 2005 (*dates TBD*). So, keep up the good work, collect and document your data starting now for the upcoming challenge competition.

Congratulations again for a job well done!

| Municipal Categories | | |
|--|--------------|---|
| <i>Municipal 1: 1-10 Officers</i> | <i>Place</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
| West Point Police Department | 1 | |
| Pearisburg Police Department | 2 | |
| <i>Municipal 2: 11-25 Officers</i> | <i>Place</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
| Smithfield Police Department | 1 | |
| Vinton Police Department | 2 | |
| <i>Municipal 3: 26-50 Officers</i> | <i>Place</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
| Christiansburg Police Department | 1 | <i>National Challenge: 2nd place, Municipal 3 (26-50)</i> |
| Waynesboro Police Department | 2 | |
| Culpeper Police Department | 3 | |
| <i>Municipal 4: 51-75 Officers</i> | <i>Place</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
| Fairfax City Police Department | 1 | <i>Bicycle/Pedestrian Safety Award; National Challenge: 2nd place, Municipal 4 (51-100)</i> |
| James City County Police Department | 2 | |
| Herndon Police Department | 3 | |
| <i>Municipal 5: 76-125 Officers</i> | <i>Place</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
| Roanoke County Police Department | 1 | <i>Underage Alcohol Prevention Award; National Challenge: 1st place, Municipal 5 (101-250)</i> |
| Lynchburg Police Department | 2 | |
| Harrisonburg Police Department | 3 | <i>Commercial Vehicle Safety Award (State & National)</i> |
| <i>Municipal 6: 126-300 Officers</i> | <i>Place</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
| Hampton Division of Police | 1 | <i>National Challenge: 3rd place, Municipal 6 (251-500)</i> |
| Portsmouth Police Department | 2 | |
| Roanoke Police Department | 3 | |

| <i>Municipal 7: 301-500 Officers</i> | <i>Place</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
|--|--------------|--|
| Prince William County Police Department | 1 | Child Passenger Safety Award (State & National); National Challenge: 2nd place, Municipal 6 (251-500) |
| Chesapeake Police Department | 2 | |
| Newport News Police Department | 3 | |
| Arlington County Police Department | -- | Impaired Driving Award |
| <i>Municipal 8: 501-750 Officers</i> | <i>Place</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
| Henrico County Division of Police | 1 | National Challenge: 2nd place, Municipal 6 (501-1,000) |
| Virginia Beach Police Department | 2 | |
| <i>Municipal 9: 751+ Officers</i> | <i>Place</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
| Fairfax County Police Department | 1 | National Challenge: 2nd place, Municipal 8 (1,001-2,000) |

| Sheriff's Offices | | |
|---|--------------|--|
| <i>Sheriff 1: 1-10 Deputies</i> | <i>Place</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
| no entries in this category | -- | |
| <i>Sheriff 2: 11-25 Deputies</i> | <i>Place</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
| King William County Sheriff's Office | 1 | Child Passenger Safety Award; National Challenge: 2nd place, Sheriff 2 (11-25) |
| <i>Sheriff 3: 26-50 Deputies</i> | <i>Place</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
| New Kent County Sheriff's Office | 1 | Occupant Protection Award |
| Wythe County Sheriff's Office | 2 | National Challenge: 2nd place, Sheriff 3 (26-50) |
| <i>Sheriff 4: 51-75 Deputies</i> | <i>Place</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
| no entries in this category | -- | |
| <i>Sheriff 5: 76-125 Deputies</i> | <i>Place</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
| Stafford County Sheriff's Office | 1 | Speed Awareness Award; National Challenge: 1st place, Sheriff 5 (101-250); National Sheriff's Association Overall National Winner |
| Montgomery County Sheriff's Office | 2 | National Challenge: 2nd place, Sheriff 5 (101-250) |
| Frederick County Sheriff's Office | 3 | |
| <i>Sheriff 6: 126-300 Deputies</i> | <i>Place</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
| Rockingham County Sheriff's Office | 1 | National Challenge: 3rd place, Sheriff 5 (101-250) |
| Hanover County Sheriff's Office | 2 | |

| University Police | | |
|---|--------------|--|
| <i>Department</i> | <i>Place</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
| Virginia Tech Police Department | 1 | National Challenge: 1st place, Universities |
| University of Richmond Police Department | 2 | |
| Virginia Commonwealth Univ. Police Dept. | 3 | |

| Military | | |
|---|--------------|--|
| <i>Department</i> | <i>Place</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
| Naval Amphibious Base-Little Creek | 1 | National Challenge: 3rd place, Military |

| National Challenge Only | |
|---|--|
| Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police | National Challenge: 1st place, State Associations |
| Virginia State Police | National Challenge: 2nd place, State Police 4 (1,001-3,000) |

For a complete list of National Challenge winners, visit www.smartsafeandsober.org/programs/LEC/.



Thank you, Nancy!

After nine years as head of DRIVE SMART® Virginia, Rodrigues embarks on new career

by Dana Schrad
VACP Executive Director

The end of March marked a new beginning for Nancy Rodrigues as she stepped down after nine years as the executive director of DRIVE SMART® Virginia. Nancy accepted an appointment as a senior executive with Goldman & Associates, a Norfolk-based public and government relations firm, where she will continue to work on a variety of public policy and service projects.

Nancy became the Executive Director of DRIVE SMART® Virginia, a private-public partnership dedicated to reducing traffic fatalities and injuries on Virginia's roadways, in May of 1996. Several major Virginia auto insurance carriers founded the organization in 1995 as a partnership dedicated to improving traffic safety

through education, enforcement, engineering and policy development. With Nancy at the helm, DRIVE SMART® Virginia entered into a private-public partnership with the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police, the Department of State Police, the Department of Motor Vehicles, and the Virginia Sheriffs' Association to create the Smart, Safe and Sober statewide traffic safety program.

Nancy's hard work and dedication has gained generous in-kind and monetary donations from corporations as well as private contributions from individuals. One of Nancy's greatest accomplishments during her tenure was overseeing the creation and growth of the DRIVE SMART® Virginia Endowment Fund.

Nancy is the recipient of numerous awards including the highest honor given by the International Association of Business Communicators—the Gold Quill Award. In 1998, she received the "Public Service" award from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for her work with DRIVE SMART® Virginia. In 2004, Nancy received the Sparkplug Award from the Virginia Association of Driver Education and Traffic Safety, and in 2005 she received a special award of merit from the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police.

Through her leadership, many diverse and multifaceted traffic safety programs have been developed and promoted. One such program began in 1997 when the General Assembly

passed legislation allowing the sale of specialty license plates bearing the legend DRIVE SMART. Funds generated from the sales of the license plate help to sustain the continuing work of the organization.

Nancy's dedication to the mission of traffic safety is unparalleled. Work zone safety, seat belts, child safety seats, impaired driving, speeding, red light running, motor carrier safety and many more traffic safety issues have been addressed by Nancy during her years at DRIVE SMART. Every legislator in Richmond knows that if there is a traffic safety issue to be heard they will soon get a visit from Nancy at the General Assembly. Although she has moved on to Goldman & Associates, Nancy remains devoted to traffic safety and continues to work diligently to keep Virginia roadways safe for its citizens and guests.



Nancy was honored with the "Trooper" statue by the Virginia State Police at her farewell party at the end of March.



VACP President Phil Broadfoot presented Nancy with an award of merit at the VACP Mid-Year Conference in March.

Safety by the truckload

A state campaign reminds truckers to wear seat belts; survey says compliance lower

by **Chip Jones**

Richmond Times-Dispatch *Staff Writer*

(May 25, 2005) After driving big rigs for more than 50 years, Finis "Sarge" Garrett can't understand why some truckers don't fasten their safety belts.

Taking that precaution can help a driver maintain control of a truck in the event of a mishap, said Garrett, a veteran commercial driver from Chester. "If I hit the shoulder or side of the road, maybe I can do something about it."

A weeklong survey conducted in April along Interstate 95 between Petersburg and Fredericksburg found that fewer than 59 percent of commercial truckers were wearing safety belts, compared with a nearly 80 percent rate for motorists.

DRIVE SMART Virginia, a public-private traffic safety group, recently pointed out the disparity as part of a new public awareness campaign for truckers.

The three-week effort — financed by a \$199,196 federal grant — is targeting the Petersburg-Richmond-Fredericksburg highway corridor.

"A lot of truckers have an unreal sense of safety due to the size of their rigs," Col. W. Steven Flaherty, state police superintendent, said in a statement. "What they don't realize is that they are just as likely to get injured, or worse, as people driving regular vehicles."

Nationally, 309 truck drivers died in crashes while not wearing safety belts in 2003, according to DRIVE SMART. No comparable figures were available for the state.

The latest truck safety effort coincides with the annual

"Click It or Ticket" campaign that urges all drivers — truckers and four-wheelers alike — to buckle up or face a \$25 fine.

DRIVE SMART is advertising on radio, CB radios and on a rolling billboard on a tractor-trailer cruising up and down the interstate.

"You're not going to see much on TV because the primary audience is truck drivers," said Suzanne Ellyson, assistant director of DRIVE SMART.

Police enforcement efforts are expected to tighten before the program ends June 5, she said.

"It's having a pretty good effect," said Bobby White, manager of the Carson weigh station south of Petersburg. "You can see a lot of improvement," he said, as drivers remember to buckle up.

The recorded message by a woman urging compliance with the law has sparked some colorful comments, he said. "Nothing they say would be printable," White said. "They're not mad about it. They're just having a lot of fun."

REMINDER: The Virginia and National Law Enforcement Challenge Awards now have a Commercial Vehicle Safety Award. We encourage everyone involved with commercial vehicle safety issues to enter and show us what you have been doing to make truckers safe.

ALSO, CONGRATULATIONS to the **Harrisonburg PD** for winning the 2004 Virginia Challenge Commercial Vehicle Safety Award and the 2004 National IACP Challenge Commercial Vehicle Safety Award!!

Governor Warner Names New Virginia Secretary of Transportation

(March 24, 2005) RICHMOND — Governor Mark R. Warner announced today that he has elevated Deputy Secretary of Transportation Pierce Homer to serve as Virginia's Secretary of Transportation. Homer succeeds Secretary Whittington "Whitt" Clement, who earlier announced his plan to resign at the end of this month to return to the practice of law.

Prior to joining the Warner Administration in January 2002, Homer served as deputy county executive in Prince William County.

"Whitt Clement has been a strong partner as we have worked to restore fiscal discipline to our transportation program and improve the performance at VDOT, and I wish him well as he returns to the practice of law," Governor Warner said. "Whitt and Pierce have worked as a team to help find innovative solutions to

Virginia's transportation challenges, including enhanced rail and mass transit options, airport improvements, and the use of public-private partnerships to build some critical highway projects. Pierce Homer is a creative thinker and a consensus builder — attributes that have become basically a job requirement in this role."

"Pierce Homer has worked hard on these challenges for three years as my Deputy Secretary, and I have full confidence he will tackle this expanded role without any disruption to our transportation program," Secretary Clement said. "He was instrumental in winning legislative support this year for the Governor's transportation initiative, which provides historic levels of one-time funding to jump-start promising public-private partnerships, promote greater use of rail and transit, encourage local oversight of road projects

and permanently eliminate deficits on completed projects in Virginia's six-year transportation program."

The Secretariat of Transportation has oversight of developing and implementing Virginia's transportation program, including management and budgetary responsibilities for the Departments of Transportation, Motor Vehicles, Aviation, and Rail and Public Transportation as well as for the Motor Vehicle Dealer Board and the Virginia Port Authority. These six agencies employ over 12,000 people with an annual budget in excess of \$3.3 billion. In addition, the Secretary of Transportation serves as Chairman of the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

Mr. Homer earned his B.A. from Haverford College in Haverford, Pennsylvania, and his Masters of Public Affairs from the University of Texas at Austin.

Not Wearing Seat Belts Can be Deadly for Police Officers

Study finds cruiser crashes kill more officers than felons

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Suggested New Year's resolution for police officers: "I will wear my seat belt."

Results of a study published in the January issue of the Journal of Trauma show that unbelted officers are 2.6 times more likely to die if their patrol car crashes than officers who use a seat belt.

"More police officers died from traffic accidents in 2003 than from gunshot wounds," said Dietrich Jehle, M.D., associate professor of emergency medicine at the University at Buffalo School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and lead author on the study.

"The fact that traffic-related crash fatalities now are greater than the number of officers killed by felons suggests this issue needs to be revisited on a national scale," he said.

The researchers found that rushing to a crime scene was not the major reason for not buckling up, as might be expected. The findings showed that 60 percent of fatal crashes occurred when police were responding to non-emergency calls. Seat belt use was slightly lower for these calls.

The research was conducted at

the UB Center for Transportation Injury Research (CenTIR), which maintains research sites at the Cal-span UB Research Center in suburban Buffalo and at the UB-affiliated Erie County Medical Center, where Jehle is CenTIR site director.

The researchers analyzed all automobile crashes between 1997 and 2001 involving a fatality in a "marked" police vehicle. The data were collected by the national Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS). Only occupants in the police vehicle involved in the crash and only crashes in which information on seat belt use was available were included in the analysis.

There were 516 occupants of police cars that met the study criteria. Of those, 106 died. Twenty percent of all occupants, or 104 people, were not belted during the crash. Results showed that 40.4 percent of the unbelted occupants died, compared to 15.5 percent of those wearing seat belts.

The statistics did not differentiate between police and civilian deaths. However, 96 percent of the patrol car occupants were in the front seat (driver or right front), Jehle said, noting it is unusual for anyone but an

officer to ride in the front seat.

"Civilians are often ticketed for not wearing their seat belts, but paradoxically, police officers are exempt from this law because of the amount of additional gear they have to wear," Jehle noted.

"The thought is that seat belts can get tangled up in the gear. Plus, officers get in and out of their cars many times a day, which makes buckling up an inconvenience. Even police departments that have seat belt rules often don't enforce them vigorously," he said.

One way to make wearing seat belts more acceptable to officers would be to improve the technology, said Jehle. "Belts could be engineered to release as soon as the door opens or when the car is shifted into 'park.'"

Also contributing to this research were David G. Wagner, a UB medical student, James Mayrose, Ph.D., UB research assistant professor of emergency medicine and mechanical and aerospace engineering, and Usman Hashmi, a UB premedical student.

The research was supported in part by a grant from the Federal Highway Administration.

CONFERENCES

2005 Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police (VACP) Annual Conference
August 7-10, 2005

Renaissance Hotel — Portsmouth, VA

To register, go to: www.vachiefs.org

(The VA Law Enforcement Challenge Awards Luncheon will be Monday, August 8th.)

2005 Governor's Highway Safety Association (GHSA) Annual Meeting
August 28-31, 2005

Norfolk Marriott Hotel — Norfolk, VA

Topic: "Navigating the Crash Course"

To register, go to: www.ghsa.org

54th Virginia Transportation Conference
October 26-28, 2005

Hotel Roanoke — Roanoke, VA

Topic: "Virginia Transportation: At the Crossroads Investing in Mobility and Accessibility"

To register, go to: www.vatransconf.org

19th Annual National Liquor Law Enforcement Association (NLLEA) Conference
September 7-10, 2005

Sheraton Premiere — Tysons Corner, VA

The first day will be a preconference symposium focused on dealing with intoxicated persons and geared specifically to local law enforcement, with some emphasis in working the cases through the disciplinary process for licensed establishments. There will be training on case preparation/presentation and the procedures to get noncompliant licensees before the Virginia ABC Board for disciplinary action.

To register, go to: www.nllea.org/Conferences.htm

2005 Annual Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) Meeting & WRAPPY Awards
October 20, 2005 — 11:30 am – 2:00 pm
Maggiano's Little Italy — Washington, DC

For more information, go to: www.wrap.org



On March 4th, VACP Traffic Safety Specialist Don Allen completed instruction of a four-day, thirty-two hour Technician CPS Class at the Roanoke Police Academy. Eleven police officers from the Roanoke Valley were in attendance and each participated in a checkpoint set up at the Hollins Fire Station on Friday, March 4th. Five child seats were inspected by the members of the class, and all five were found to be installed incorrectly.

As a result of this class, eleven more police officers are now available to assist the parents and caregivers of children with the proper installation of child safety seats in the western region. Additionally, each officer is now certified to teach the sixteen-hour Operation Kids Class to members of their agencies.

NHTSA Releases “Ease-of-Use” Ratings for Child Safety Seats for 2005

Child safety seats are easier to use according to an annual National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) survey released today. NHTSA rated 92 child safety seats from 14 different manufacturers for 2005.

Clearer labels and instructions accounted for most of the improvements. Improved ratings were also scored for ease of installation, and whether the seats had to be assembled after purchase, or came pre-assembled and ready for use.

“NHTSA’s ‘ease-of-use’ rating program provides parents and caregivers with valuable information that they can use for comparison shopping when buying child safety and booster seats,” said NHTSA Administrator Jeffrey Runge, MD. “The program also serves as a powerful incentive to manufacturers to produce safe and effective seats that are simple to use”.

NHTSA began rating child restraint systems, which include booster seats, in 2003 — using a grading system of “A,” “B,” or “C” to denote how easy it is to use the safety seats. A copy of the 2005 “ease-of-use” ratings can be found at: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/CPS/CSSRating/Index.cfm>

Highlights from the 2005 ratings of selected safety seats are as follows:

- A total of 144 ratings were awarded in 2005, covering all the multiple use modes for convertible and combination seats available in the 92 safety seats selected. This was an increase from 2004, where only 67 seats were selected with a total of 106 individual ratings. The 2005 ratings represent approxi-

mately 90 percent of safety seats currently available to consumers.

- In order for a seat to qualify for an overall “A,” it must receive an “A” rating in every possible mode. Out of the 92 seats rated, 74 received an “A” overall, 13 received a “B” overall, and 5 had mixed scores of either an “A” or “B” for each of its modes.
- As in 2004, there were no safety seats that received an overall “C” rating; however, there were several “C” scores in some individual categories.
- Three seats that were re-tested from 2004 improved their overall scores from a “B” to an “A.” These seats were the Britax Husky, Britax Roundabout, and Cosco Protek.

In addition to the overall rating, NHTSA also uses the letter grading system to denote how well the child safety seats perform in five individual categories:

- Whether the seat is pre-assembled or requires assembly after purchase.
- Clarity of the labeling attached to the seat.
- Clarity of written instructions regarding the seat’s proper use.
- Ease of securing a child in the seat.
- Whether the seat has features that make it easier to install in a vehicle.

A new system that makes child safety seat installation easier, called LATCH (Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children), is required for most vehicles manufactured after September 1, 2002.

Driving is a full-time job...

During the Virginia Association of REALTORS® (VAR) Legislative Conference in February, a new safe driving campaign was kicked off in partnership with VAR and the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police. The joint campaign, the first of its kind that we know of in the country, will center around educational components including a poster designed for display in offices and lobbies; an educational brochure for distribution to REALTORS®; and a tip sheet to post on bulletin boards and to provide content for sales meetings. These materials have been made available to all broker offices and on the VAR website at www.VARealtor.com.

Titled “Driving is a full-time job... REALTORS® — make the right moves!”, the campaign acknowledges that:

- A car is a REALTOR®'s mobile office.
- REALTORS® are busy people who multitask to get the job done.
- Distracted driving has been identified as a leading factor in vehicle crashes.
- Managing and reducing distractions make REALTORS® safer drivers.
- Safety is critical to professionalism.

What is driver distraction? These days, it can be many things, from cell phones and passenger conversations, exterior distractions, navigating or map and street sign reading, eating, drinking, or primping, neighborhood scanning, and even fatigue or eyestrain.

The goal of the “REALTORS® — make the right moves!” program is to educate REALTORS® about reducing driver distraction. After all, REALTORS® who are safe drivers make a good impression on their clients!

REALTOR® Participation

Along with encouraging their passengers to buckle up, each REALTOR® can:

- Make sure the poster and tip sheet are displayed in their office where fellow REALTORS® and clients can see them;
- Discuss the information in staff meetings; and,
- Use the information in orientations for new REALTORS® and staff.
- Ask your local law enforcement agency for information and technical assistance—even presentations to your office on safety issues!

Tips for all to remember

Driving safely can be challenging enough even when full attention is given to the road and its potential hazards. It only takes a second for a crash to happen. Distractions occur when drivers concentrate on something other than operating their vehicles—the tips below are good reminders of distractions you should avoid while driving:

- Make adjustments to vehicle controls—such as radios, air conditioning, or mirrors—before beginning to drive or after the car is no longer in motion.
- Don't reach down or behind the driver's seat, pick up items from the floor, open the glove compartment, clean the inside windows, or perform personal grooming while driving.
- If you must eat while you drive, get something that's not messy and that you can hold in one hand. Set your food up next to you before you take off and make sure you use a drink cup holder.
- If you must use a cell phone, do not answer or dial the phone when driving in hazardous conditions. Look into getting a hands-free system, and become familiar with how to use your phone. The best thing to do is pull off to the side of the road (if it is safe), or into a parking lot, while using your cell phone.
- Know where you are going before you start your vehicle, look up the location and alternate routes before you leave.
- Don't forget that other drivers are distracted too! Caution your passengers to take extra care when entering and exiting your vehicle in high traffic areas, and opt for parking spots that take you and your passengers away from high volume traffic.

The safe driving campaign is funded by a donation from the Northern Virginia Association of REALTORS® in memory of Sandy Tedder, a Northern Virginia REALTOR® who was struck and killed by a vehicle while removing an Open House directional sign in December 2003.



100-car Naturalistic Driving Study tracks drivers for a year

Cell phones biggest cause of distraction, Virginia Tech researchers say

(June 10, 2005) BLACKSBURG — With the primary purpose of collecting pre-crash naturalistic driving data, over 100 individuals volunteered to drive their own (or leased) vehicles with specialized instrumentation for 12-13 months in the Northern Virginia/metropolitan DC area. The 100-Car Naturalistic Driving Study was recently completed by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI) and sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Virginia Tech, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), and Virginia Transportation Research Council (VTRC).

The 100-Car Study was the first instrumented vehicle study undertaken with the primary purpose of collecting pre-crash naturalistic driving data. Drivers used these vehicles in their normal daily routines, were given no special instructions, no experimenter was present and the data collection instrumentation was unobtrusive.

Vehicle instrumentation gathered information through five channels of digital compressed video and many sensors that recorded vehicle state and kinematic information. Data collection resulted in approximately 2,000,000 vehicle miles of driving, more than 42,000 hours of data with 241 primary and secondary driver participants.

The data collection effort for this study resulted in the following data set:

- 15 police-reported and 67 non-police reported crashes. Crashes were defined as any physical contact between the subject vehicle and another vehicle, pedestrian, or object, including low impact events, such as striking curbs and parking blocks.
- 761 near-crashes (situations requiring a rapid, severe evasive maneuver to avoid a crash).
- 8,295 incidents (situations requiring an evasive maneuver occurring at less magnitude than a near-crash).
- Nearly 80 percent of all crashes and 65 percent of all near-crashes involved driver inattention, just prior (within 3 seconds) to the onset of the conflict.
- In addition, the study showed that total crash involvement may be over five times higher than police reported crashes.

From the data, an “event” database was created, similar to the classification structure of an epidemiological crash database, but with video and electronic driver and vehicle performance data appended to it. Since drivers rapidly disregarded the presence of vehicle instrumentation, the event database contains many extreme cases of driving behavior and performance, including, but not limited to, severe fatigue, impairment, judgment error, risk taking, willingness to engage in secondary tasks, aggressive driving and traffic violations.

Inattention to the forward roadway was found as the primary contributing factor in most crashes with 93 percent of the rear-end-striking crashes involved driver inattention. Driver inattention includes such things as drivers eating, writing, conversing with a passenger or looking

away from the forward roadway at rear-view mirrors, objects in the vehicle or objects outside.

When drivers are in traffic, data indicated that drivers generally have sufficient awareness and ability to perform evasive maneuvers when responding to typical traffic conditions. Drivers have difficulty responding appropriately when other vehicles perform unexpected or unanticipated maneuvers, such as suddenly stopping or changing lanes.

The rate of inattention-related crashes and near-crashes decreased dramatically with age, with the rate being as much as four times higher for the 18- to 20-year-old drivers relative to some of the older driver groups (i.e., 35 years and older). Drivers younger than 18 years old were not tested.

The use of hand-held wireless devices was associated with the highest frequency of secondary task distraction-related events, and was among the highest frequencies for crashes.

Fatigue contributed to crashes at much higher rates than was previously thought. Fatigue was a contributing factor in 12 percent of all crashes and 10 percent of all near-crashes, while most current database estimates place fatigue-related crashes at approximately two to four percent of total crashes.

“This study and its results represent a new and unique approach to understanding driver behavior,” says Gary R. Allen, director of the Virginia Transportation Research Council, a partnership of VDOT and the University of Virginia. “The research programs in Virginia and at Virginia Tech are leading the way to safer travel, and this study lays the foundation for a more extensive awareness of addressing the human factors involved with driving.” Dr. Allen is also VDOT’s chief of technology, research & innovation.

Data from crashes and near-crashes may provide additional insight into effective defensive driving techniques, as well as insight into the effective design of crash countermeasures for these driving situations. Furthermore, the data provides much greater external validity relative to the larger context of driving than do empirical methods such as test tracks or simulators.

The 100-Car Study marks the first time that detailed information on a large number of crash and near-crash events has been collected and it fills a void in existing driving safety research methods. The 100-Car Study results are important because near-crashes occur 15 times more often than crashes and every near-crash event demonstrates a driver successfully performing an evasive maneuver.

“The goal is to save lives and this 100-Car Study is really a first step. Our data sources up to this point were pretty limited. If you don’t have good information about why crashes occur and why fatalities occur, you can’t really solve the problem,” said VTTI Director Dr. Tom Dingus.

A Fact Sheet about the study is available —
<http://www.vtnews.vt.edu/story.php?itemno=834>

The Dumbest Drivers Live Here

Beware the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states! The nation's dumbest drivers live there if the GMAC Insurance National Driver's Test is right. The startling results: Nearly 20 million Americans — that would be one in 10 drivers — would fail their state driver's test if they had to take it today.

In addition to surveying them about their general driving habits, GMAC gave its 20-question test to more than 5,000 licensed drivers between the ages of 16 and 65. Those who live in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states did the worst with 20 percent failing the test.

And of these states, Rhode Island scored the lowest with an average test score of 77 percent, just barely above a failing grade of 70 percent. Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, and the District of Columbia were just ahead of Rhode Island with the lowest scores in the nation.

On the other hand, the most knowledgeable drivers live in Oregon with an average score of 89 percent, followed by Washington, Iowa, Idaho, and Wyoming.

And that's not even the scariest part of the survey. The results also suggest that many Americans find standard driving practices troublesome, including merging, failure to yield when making left turns, and road-sign interpretation. In addition, many may not take such important topics as drinking and driving seriously enough. Twenty-nine percent of drivers (57 million) who drink admitted they would knowingly drive while over the legal limit "if they felt okay."

General driving safety knowledge:

Where Americans are most lacking is...

- Drivers 18 to 24 years old are most likely to fail a written driving test (78 percent passing rate); drivers 50 to 64 years are most likely to pass (85 percent passing rate).

- Drivers in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic are the least knowledgeable; one in five were unable to pass the written drivers test.
- Drivers in the Pacific Northwest and Great Lakes are the most knowledgeable with a failure rate of just 1 to 3 percent.
- At least one out of five drivers do not know that a pedestrian has the right of way at a marked or unmarked crosswalk. This is of special concern considering that drivers in urban areas are among the least knowledgeable in the nation.

Zoom, zoom, zoom!

- One out of three drivers claim to speed up to make a yellow light even when pedestrians are in the crosswalk.
- One out of four drivers would roll through a stop sign rather than come to a complete stop.
- Drivers in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic are the most likely to speed.
- Nebraska's drivers are the least likely to exceed the speed limit.

More bad driving habits

- Half of Americans report that they do not know how to merge into heavy traffic.
- 60 percent of Americans say that they change lanes on a highway without using their turn signal.
- One-third of Americans have packed their car so tightly that their vision was obstructed.
- 17 percent of Americans have driven without a rear view or driver's side mirror.

Hey, be careful out there!

WHAT'S YOUR DRIVING IQ?

How much do you know about distracted driving and crashes? Take our quiz:

- 1 According to NHTSA, distracted driving is a contributing factor in one out of every four motor vehicle crashes.

A: True B: False

- 2 Motor vehicle crashes are the third leading cause of death for 15 - 20 year olds.

A: True B: False

- 3 In 2003, _____ driver's age 15-20 years old were involved in fatal crashes in the United States.*

A: 1,582 C: 7,884
B: 3,179 D: 10,350

- 4 Distracted driving occurs anytime motorists take their concentration away from the road or oncoming traffic hazards.

A: True B: False

- 5 DistractedDriving.org can help _____ spread the word about the dangers of distracted driving.

A: students
B: partners
C: parents
D: all of the above

Answers: A, B, C, A, D

Safety Belt Enforcement IS Law Enforcement

Excerpts from NHTSA Mid-Atlantic Region Occupant Protection Summit

Hershey, Pennsylvania — April, 2005

NHTSA Headquarters Regional Operations Staff started off the summit with some very interesting facts and several questions. They started by sharing the good and the bad news of our safety belt enforcement efforts. But even amidst the good news, they highlighted that there is more that needs to be done. The following outlines this presentation.

Three questions were asked:

1. How well are we doing in traffic safety in the Mid-Atlantic States? Specifically, where are we doing pretty well, and where do we have to do better?
2. What's making the difference? Where we are doing well, how are we doing it? Where do we need to do better, what exactly do we have to do to get better?
3. And finally, why is traffic law enforcement good law enforcement? How is it that writing safety belt tickets, citing speeders and arresting drunk drivers furthers the basic law enforcement mission of protecting and serving the public?

So first, how are we doing, overall?

Overall, we're doing pretty well.

In 2003, the most recent year for which we have complete statistics, we reached the lowest traffic fatality rate in this nation's history — just under one and one-half deaths for every 100 million miles of vehicle travel. Way back in 1966, when the U.S. DOT was formed, our national traffic fatality rate was five and one-half deaths for every 100 million vehicle miles. In other words, on any given car trip, an American four decades ago was nearly four times more likely to be killed in a crash than we are today. Can you think of any other routine activity that is four times safer now than it was in the mid-sixties?

It's a very good thing that we have reduced the traffic fatality rate by this huge amount, because we Americans do a lot of driving. Every day of the year, the 292 million or so people in this country collectively drive nearly eight billion miles. That's BILLION, with a "B." That is more than a daily round trip from Earth to Pluto and back.

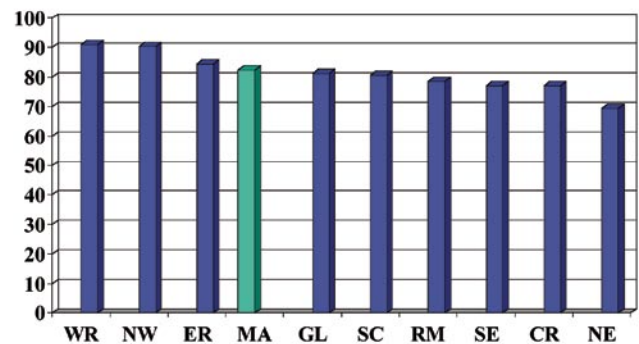
If we were still killing people at the same rate as in 1966, last year over 160,000 Americans would have died in crashes. Instead, approximately 43,000 died. That's still way too many, but it is much better than it would have been, if we had not improved as much as we have. The real good news is that we are doing even better in the Mid-Atlantic States than the nation is as a whole.

As mentioned, the national death rate dipped just below one and one-half fatalities for every 100 million miles in 2003. Our goal is to get to no more than one death per 100 million miles by 2008. To do that, we have to hope that, when the final numbers for 2004 come in, we'll find

that the national fatality rate dropped below 1.4 deaths.

Guess what? The Mid-Atlantic region got there in 2003. You have made motor vehicle travel safer here than in the rest of the country as a whole! You pushed safety belt use in our five states and D.C. up above the national average. It took a while to get there — for several years we lagged behind. It took a lot of hard work, by a lot of officers, troopers and deputies. But thanks to that work, we're once again out front, and we have absolutely no intention of slipping back.

2004 Belt Use by Region



We're moving ahead compared to other regions, too. As you know, NHTSA breaks the country up into ten regions. We used to call them by numbers, but now we use names. Our name is the Mid-Atlantic Region. Others are called New England, Great Lakes, Rocky Mountain, and so on.

The last time this region's Occupant Protection Law Enforcement Summit was held in Hershey was four years ago. Back then, our region was in 6th place among all regions, with a safety belt use rate of just over 72 percent. Now we are ten points higher, and in 4th place. We have the Eastern Region — New Jersey, New York and Puerto Rico — in our sights, and we can catch them this year.

Here's something even more impressive: We are leading the league when it comes to converting non-belt users to users.

Last year, because of the tremendous effort you put into the "Click It or Ticket" mobilization, you convinced one out of every six people who weren't buckling up to start buckling up. No other region came close to that achievement. And folks, these are lifesaving conversions. So to answer the question, how are we doing? Or really, how are YOU doing? You're doing very well, and in fact you've been doing better and better each year. ...

To read the rest of this report from the OP Summit, go to <http://www.smartsafeandsober.org/resources>.

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On the web — <http://www.smartsafeandsober.org>

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