2015 National Law Enforcement Challenge

Occupant Protection

Problem Identification

The Hanover County Sheriff's Office recognizes the importance of occupant protection. Each year, hundred of citizens in the Commonwealth of Virginia are seriously or fatally injured in motor vehicle crashes. Many of these life changing injuries and deaths could have been avoided through the use of occupant protection devices. In an effort to reduce the number of injuries and/or fatalities, educational programs and uniform enforcement methods concerning occupant protection devices within the county should be applied by all officers. Each year, the Hanover County Sheriff's Office conducts an occupant protection survey in order to gauge the use of occupant protection devices and to measure the success of educational awareness and enforcement efforts.

Policy

The Hanover County Sheriff's Office Traffic Law Enforcement AO 62-1 and Operation of Police Vehicles AO 42-1 policies are attached for review. AO 62-1 encompasses the entirety of the Hanover County Sheriff's Office traffic law enforcement policy. AO 42-1 encompasses the entirety of safe police vehicle operation, but specifically states, "Occupant safety restraining devices (seat belts) shall be worn by all occupants during vehicle operation." The attached policies have been reduced to the applicable sections for Occupant Protection.

Occupant Protection

Planning

Virginia's Strategic Safety Highway Plan calls for emphasis in the following areas of occupant protection:

1. Educate the public on the importance of using safety belts
2. Conduct high-visibility safety belt enforcement campaigns
3. Improve child occupant protection through education, outreach and enforcement

The operational plan for the Hanover County Sheriff's Office is a multi-layered approach that touches on each of the points of emphasis. Throughout the year, the Sheriff's Office participated in various activities designed to promote the awareness of occupant protection along with enforcement efforts designed to demonstrate our commitment to achieve the goal of 100% seat belt usage. The educational campaign includes the announcement of our participation in the Click-It or Ticket campaign. This announcement is accompanied by our year long occupant protection initiatives. These initiatives will be explained in the Public Information and Education section. In order to gauge the effectiveness of our educational and enforcement efforts, a pre-survey of occupant compliance was completed before our enforcement efforts began. After the enforcement efforts were completed, a post-survey was conducted. The results of both surveys will be examined in the Outcomes section.

Occupant Protection

Public Information and Education

The Hanover County Sheriff's Office utilizes public information and education in its efforts to increase awareness and voluntary compliance pertaining to the use of occupant protection devices. These efforts include educational seminars by School Resource Officers at the four county high schools, a youth Explorers program, Youth Police Academy, Citizens Police Academy and the Senior Citizens Police Academy. The Hanover County Sheriff's Office strongly believes in the use of public information and education to gain voluntary safety belt compliance before the accident happens.

In 2015, the Hanover County Sheriff's Office School Resources Officers conducted 38 training seminars speaking on the importance of occupant protection. This class is taught in conjunction with the Driver's Education curriculum. The Explorers program along with the Youth Police Academy provide Hanover County youth with instruction and education in the areas of occupant protection. The Youth Police Academy is a 5-day academy held every June for Hanover County's rising 9th through 12th graders. During June 22-26, 2015, 17 youth attended the Youth Police Academy.

In 2015, The Hanover County Sheriff's Office also taught traffic safety in its annual Citizens Police Academy and Senior Citizens Police Academy.

Occupant Protection

Public Information and Education

Occupant protection is one of many traffic safety topics covered during both programs. Between September 15, 2015 and November 17, 2015, 34 citizens attended the Citizens Police Academy. An additional nine citizens attended the Senior Citizens Police Academy between April 7, 2015 and June 16, 2015.

The Hanover County Sheriff's Office also partnered with AAA Mid-Atlantic , the Mid-Atlantic Foundation for Education and Safety, and Hanover County Public Schools to produce the 2015 IDrive. Safe. Sober. Focused. event held at the Richmond International Raceway on September 29 and 30, 2015. This is a teen driver safety event featuring educational and interactive demonstrations including a crash course for dummies. This course provides a live demonstration of air bag deployment along with a student seat belt convincer where they learn the science behind the seat belt. The Hanover County Sheriff's Office contributed 10 deputies to this event.

IDrive participants being addressed by Colonel David R. Hines.

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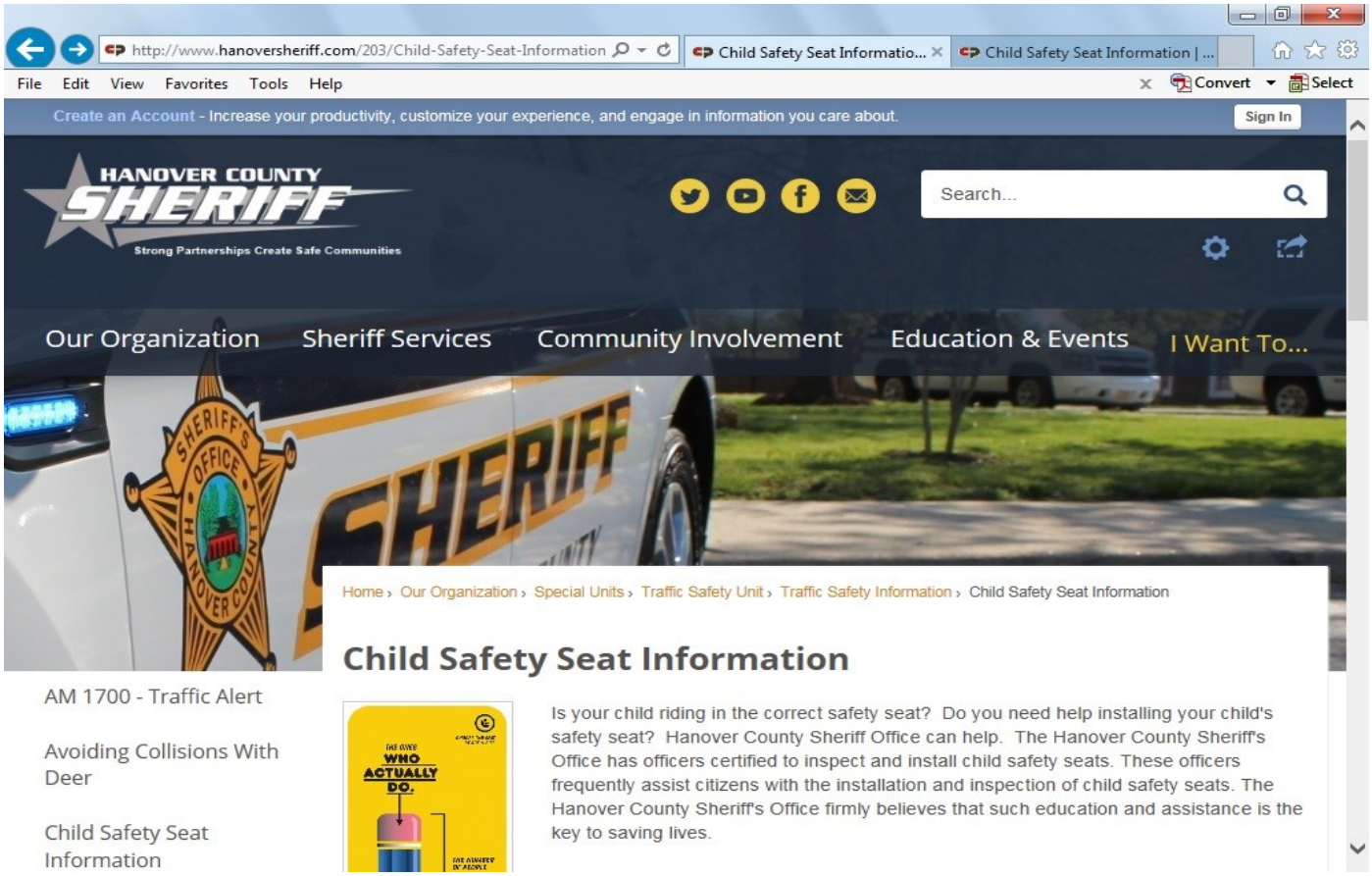
Public Information and Education

The Hanover County Sheriff's Office's website feature an entire section dedicated to providing information on child safety seats. This information includes at which ages and how various child safety seats should be used. It also provides citizens with information on how to have their child safety seat inspected or installed by a certified Hanover County Sheriff's Office member. Sixty-one child safety seat inspections and installations were conducted in 2015.



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Occupant Protection

Enforcement

In 2015, the Hanover County Sheriff's Office conducted **63** Click-It or Ticket special enforcement efforts for Occupant Protection. During these Click-It or Ticket special enforcement efforts, **391** contacts were made resulting in **245** safety belt citations issued. The total occupant protection enforcement efforts totaled **312** seat belt and **119** child seat citations issued in 2015. In all, **431** occupant protection citations were issued in 2015 compared to the 369 issued in 2014.

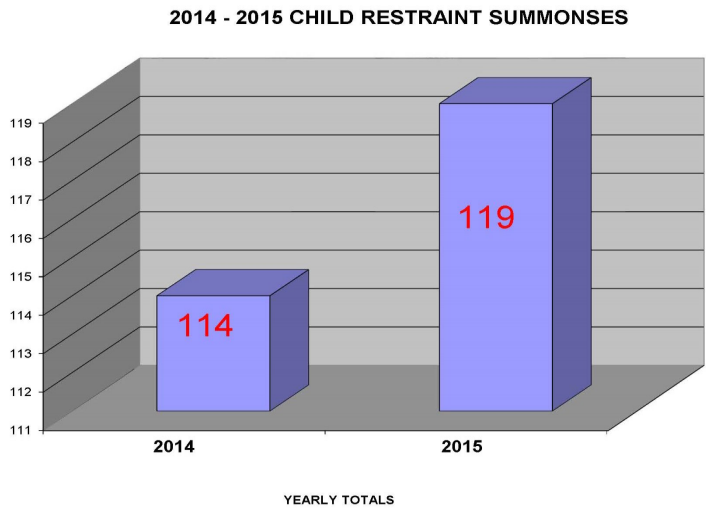
2015 TRAFFIC SAFETY INITIATIVES

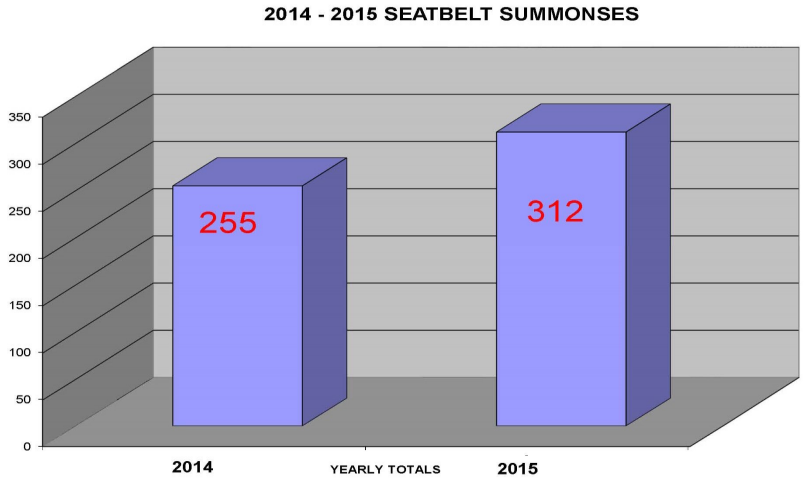
DATE	CAMPAIGN	ACTIVITY	DUI ARRESTS	ARRESTS	SUMMONS
5/18-31/2015	Click it or Ticket	CIOT Patrols – 28	0	14	107
11/16-26/2015	Click it or Ticket	CIOT Patrols – 35	0	9	138
Totals		CIOT Patrol – 63	0	23	245

2015 National Law Enforcement Challenge

Occupant Protection

Enforcement





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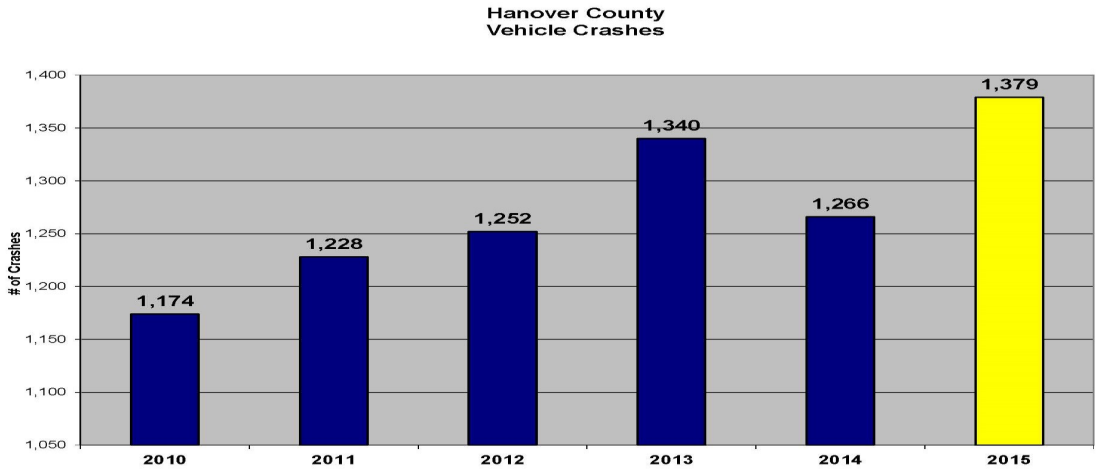
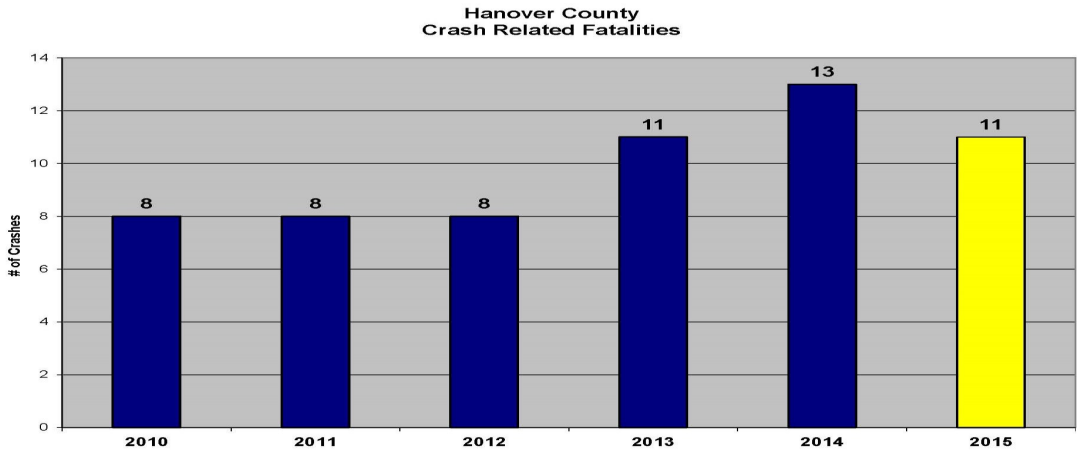
Occupant Protection

Outcomes

Hanover County Sheriff's Office Occupant Protection initiatives in 2015 proved to be effective. Although the county experienced an increase in motor vehicle accidents from 1,266 in 2014 to 1,379 in 2015, the accidents that resulted in fatalities dropped from 13 in 2014 to 11 in 2015.

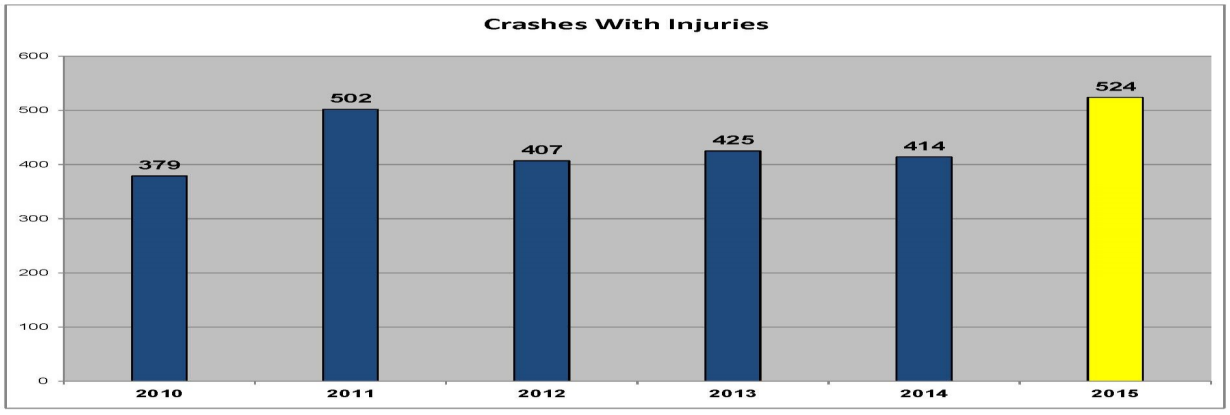


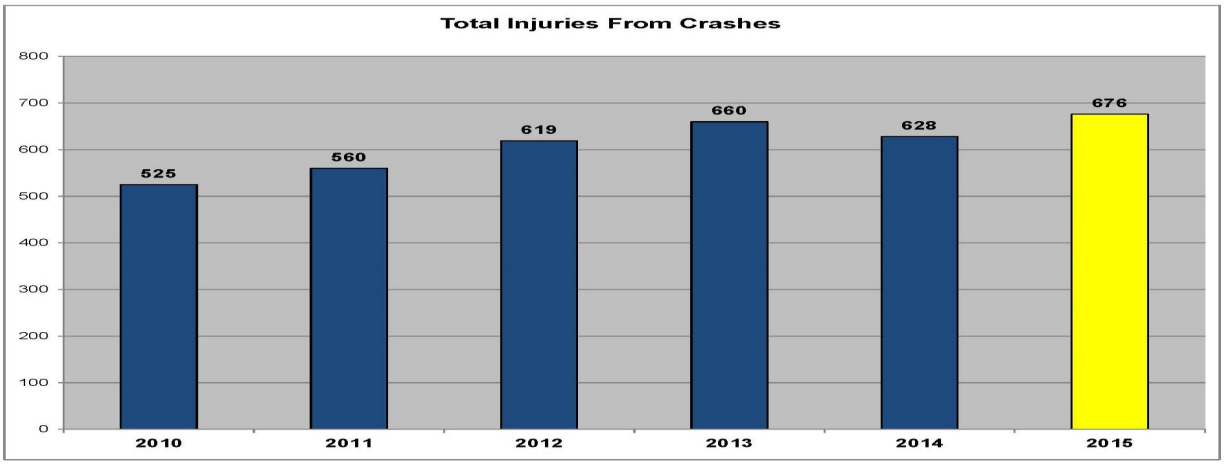


Occupant Protection

Outcomes

While the fatality rate in Hanover County dropped from 1% of all traffic crashes in 2014 to 0.8% in 2015, the injury rate provided mixed results. Accidents with injuries increased from 414 in 2014 to 524 in 2015 and total injuries increased from 628 to 676, but the rate of increase involving total injures was less than the rate of increase in traffic accidents. Simply put, although there were more traffic crashes in Hanover County in 2015, a 9% increase over 2014, the total injuries only increased 7.6%.





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Occupant Protection

Outcomes

Hanover County continues to enjoy a high occupant protection use rate. The Hanover County Sheriff's Office conducted a Seat Belt Survey on April 30, 2015 at the intersection of Mechanicsville Turnpike and Lee Davis Road. 100 drivers were observed and 90 were wearing a seat belt. After special enforcement efforts during the month of May, an additional survey was completed at the same intersection on June 5 and 93 drivers out of 100 observed were wearing a seat belt. As a result of Hanover County's exceptionally high seat belt usage rate, the Hanover County Sheriff's Office was awarded the Virginia Click-It or Ticket Most Improved Seat Belt Use Award and the Highest Seat Belt Usage Award. Hanover County also had a Saved by the Belt award winner in 2015. Cierra Simmons was struck head-on by an impaired driver. Ms. Simmons required extrication from her vehicle. She sustained serious injuries to include a broken femur. She most likely would have sustained more significant life threatening injuries had it not been for the appropriate use of her seat belt.

2015 Click It or Ticket Awards Presentation

Pictured (l to r): Colonel David R. Hines, Melanie Stokes (Virginia DMV), Michael Nash (Virginia DMV), Wayne Hazzard (Chairman—Hanover County Board of Supervisors, and Major Tom Woody

The Hanover County Sheriff's Office

Saved by the Belt Award

This award is presented to

Cierra Alexandra Simmons

In recognition of your responsible decision to properly wear a safety belt or were in a safety seat or protected by an air bag and a safety belt at the time of your crash. Your actions serve as a role model to other citizens!

Major Allen Davidson, Chief of Staff — Colonel D.R. Hines, Sheriff — Major T.M. Woody