

Regional Safety Task Force Meeting

HIGHLIGHTS OF APRIL 1, 2010 MEETING

1. Welcome & Introductions

Larry Bucci, RSTF Co-chair, welcomed everyone. John Ward, DVRPC, introduced John Miller, the new representative for FHWA New Jersey Division. Introductions followed.

2. Approval of February 2010 Meeting Highlights

Ray Reeve, RSTF Co-chair, asked for a motion to approve the highlights from the February 2, 2010 meeting. The meeting highlights were approved.

3. PennDOT Safety Summit Update

Mr. Bucci provided highlights from the PennDOT District 6 Safety Summit, which is part of the update of the Pennsylvania Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) and builds on the DVRPC Safety Action Plan. The District emphasized promoting proven engineering, enforcement, and education strategies that could be applied at a system-wide level. High crash locations will be targeted for improvements including shoulder and center-line rumblestrips, and pedestrian countdown timers. District 6 wants to work with DVRPC on a Pennsylvania Legislative Symposium, although a target date has yet to be established.

4. Panel: Reducing Impaired and Distracted Driving Crashes

A panel of experts discussed efforts to reduce traffic crashes due to impaired and distracted driving. The panel consisted of: Joe Ucciferro, National Safety Council (NSC); Pam Fischer, New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety (NJDHHS); Bonnie Weiner, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Southeast PA; and Lt. Neil Brosnan, New Jersey State Police.

Zoe Neaderland, DVRPC, gave a quick review of the DVRPC Safety Action Plan (SAP) and its products, including analysis and priority strategies for the emphasis area, "Reduce Impaired Driving." Ms. Neaderland discussed some of the nuances of this complex problem. While the analysis focused on DUI-related crashes because of the way the crash data is reported, the SAP and much recent national attention have focused on driver distraction as an important facet of impaired driving. In addition to alcohol, legal and illegal drugs, drowsy driving, and distracted driving can all be considered forms of impaired driving. Ms. Neaderland said that the goal of the panel was to work from the strategies in the SAP down to the level of specific, actionable items that build on the resources of all the members of the RSTF can help accomplish.

Keynote Speaker

Joe Ucciferro is the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Safety Council. He began with an overview of the NSC and its programs, which cover all aspects of safety. While workplace and highway death rates are down 31 percent and 29 percent respectively since 1992, death rates in the home and community are up 49 percent over the same period. The highway death rate is the lowest on record. Alcohol-impaired deaths decreased ten percent from 2007 to 2008. However, he said it is also estimated that drivers are distracted 34 percent of the time, accounting for at least 6,000 deaths in 2008. The NSC has a list of about 500 companies that totally ban cell phone use for their employees while they are driving, accounting for 1.6 million employees. The NSC has prepared a policy kit which is available to companies considering such a ban. Mr. Ucciferro said that public opinion seems to be in support of banning cell phone use while driving. However, there is a contradiction in public perception, because most people still don't believe this applies to them. He said that enforcement efforts could be modeled on the successful "Click it or Ticket," campaign. Technology can be used to help close the gap of those who refuse to obey laws banning cell phone use while driving. Mr. Ucciferro stressed that there must be a shift from the idea that hands-free devices are acceptable, as the data show that hands-free devices are no safer than hand-held. He said that the NSC expects some push-back from auto manufacturers on this point, since many have invested in hands-free technology.

Guest Panelists

Pam Fischer, Director and Governor's Representative, New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety, spoke about New Jersey's efforts to reduce impaired and distracted driving. She began by saying much of the issue has to do with social norming and branding. She stressed the importance of keeping messages consistent, saying research shows people will absorb a maximum of three points and even that requires repetition. Ms. Fischer said that looking at New Jersey's crash data, the numbers are very similar for crashes involving hand-held versus hands-free phones. Since New Jersey put its cell phone ban into effect, there have been about 225,000 tickets issued. However, there are still not enough officers available to properly enforce the ban. Ms. Fischer expressed her support for the state of New Jersey to adopt a policy banning cell phone use while driving for all state workers. She said that DUI numbers continue to go down, but there's still work to do. Driving while under the influence of drugs seems to be increasing, especially among teens. The law requiring ignition interlock devices for first-time offenders with high BACs has been successful so far. Collaborative DUI saturation patrols, in which officers are allowed to follow drivers from a bar to an adjacent town, are a good example of sharing resources to get the most effect.

Bonnie Weiner, Affiliate Executive Director, MADD, said that her organization has saved an estimated 300,000 lives since 1980. MADD is now shifting its focus from the reduction of DUI to its elimination. Four current initiatives include supporting high-visibility law enforcement efforts, pushing for maximum implementation of ignition interlock technologies, researching other advanced technologies to prevent DUI, and encouraging public participation. MADD has many volunteers that can help provide support for law

enforcement efforts. Ms. Weiner also stressed the importance of increasing public awareness, and encouraging people to participate in solutions to the problem.

Lt. Neil Brosnan, Assistant Bureau Chief, Operations Safety Bureau, New Jersey State Police, provided information on traffic enforcement efforts in New Jersey. The New Jersey State Police works closely with its partners, including FHWA, NJDOT, MADD, and many others. He described the Drunk Driving Enforcement Fund (DDEF), which provides \$1 million per year for DUI enforcement. This results in about 425 details per year, and about 270 arrests. Funds are distributed competitively, with an emphasis on results. Lt. Brosnan mentioned that in order to have DUI enforcement, local police are forced to balance their resources by pulling officers from somewhere else. Because of staffing shortages, this often means using overtime to cover enforcement efforts.

Mr. Reeve thanked all the panelists, and opened the floor to questions and comments. The discussion included the following highlights:

- A comment was raised regarding police officers using cell phones while driving, which sets a bad example. It was acknowledged that this is a problem and that it's possible there were some misconceptions created because when the law was being considered; there was some discussion of including an exemption for law enforcement. There have been conversations with the New Jersey Attorney General to get a directive on how to deal with this issue. Some local police chiefs have a policy in place regarding officers' use of cell phone while driving.
- In order to make data-driven decisions, we need good data, and data regarding cell phone use while driving is currently underreported. One problem is that police are usually not present when a crash happens, so it is hard to reconstruct the circumstances. However, data can be extrapolated from summons information when appropriate.
- There are numerous ways to disseminate the message to the public that hands-free and hand-held phones are equally unsafe. This messaging can start with individuals. It also helps to have awareness campaigns with high profile advocates including Secretary Ray LaHood and Oprah Winfrey.
- There are differences between a phone conversation and talking to another passenger in a car. Passengers are able to read the driver's body language, and they provide another set of eyes to watch the road. Research shows that the brain compartmentalizes information differently when speaking on the phone, versus speaking in person.

For more information, all presentations can be referenced on the RSTF website at <http://www.dvrpc.org/Transportation/Safety>.

5. Tracking Progress on Actionable Items

Ms. Neaderland redirected the discussion to focus on developing a short set of actionable items to reduce impaired and distracted driving in the Delaware Valley. The group voted on items building on the panel discussion and the existing implementation strategies in the SAP. These included promoting organizations that ban cell phone use while driving

and distributing model guidelines, working to present consistent messages with three points only, and further publicizing enforcement efforts. There was also interest in promoting technologies to increase safety, such as ignition interlock technologies.

The discussion included reflection about which countermeasures are most effective. There was agreement that police, state, federal, and all RSTF members can serve an important role by setting a positive example with their behavior. Lt. Ed Bryant, Gloucester Township Police Department, raised the issue that enforcement efforts are effective, but temporary. Charles Feggans, NJDHTS, said that for many people, fines are not enough of a deterrent. Adding points to a license can add to the effectiveness of a law. New Jersey's cell phone ban law does not include adding points. Lt. Bryant described a DUI outreach program that included talking to bartenders before St. Patrick's Day to build the educational foundation for a subsequent enforcement effort that resulted in zero fatalities for that day.

6. Legislative Update

Tracy Noble, AAA Mid-Atlantic New Jersey, and Jana Tidwell, AAA Mid-Atlantic Pennsylvania and Delaware, each provided a brief update of bills proposed to reduce impaired and distracted driving crashes. In addition, they highlighted other important transportation safety laws that recently passed in each state.

7. Open Forum

An open forum was held for members to share and exchange information. Ms. Neaderland announced the publication of DVRPC's report, "Fitting the Pieces Together: Improving Transportation Security Planning in the Delaware Valley," (Publication 09018). Mr. Ward announced that the RSTF is looking for a new co-chair, particularly a representative from New Jersey, and asked anyone interested to contact DVRPC. Bill Ragozine, Cross County Connection TMA, offered free reflective armbands for pedestrians and bicyclists. Luann Dunkerly, The CEI Group, described an online module her company recently developed, working with the NSC, to train fleet drivers about the dangers of distracted driving. Ms. Dunkerly offered to share the module with interested parties. Patrice McMorrow, Akers Biosciences, Inc., described a key-fob sized breathalyzer device her company developed. The low-cost device was first used by the US Military, with the idea that friends could test friends to make sure no one attempted to drive under the influence of alcohol. Ms. McMorrow said that her company is now working to distribute the devices at college campuses, and to the public in general.

Attendees:

Anderson, Matthew
Bartels, Stacy
Brahler, Richard
Brosnan, Lt. Neil
Bryant, Lt. Ed

Chester County Planning Commission
Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Bucks County Planning Commission
New Jersey State Police
Gloucester Township Police Department

Bucci, Larry	Pennsylvania Department of Transportation – District 6
Burke, Erin	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Buerk, Jesse	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Dean, Doreen	Philadelphia Police Department – Traffic Unit
Dunkerly, Luann	The CEI Group
Feggans, Charles	New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety
Fiocco, Joe	McMahon Associates
Fischer, Pam	New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety
Fought, Tricia	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Greenly, Scott	Greater Valley Forge TMA
Hansen, Janet	Rutgers University – CAIT/TSRC
Heimerl, Carol	MADD Southeast Pennsylvania
Hufnagle, Lou	Delaware County Planning Department
MacKavanagh, Kelvin	DVRPC Delaware Valley Goods Movement Task Force
Marrero, Violet	New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety
McKinney, Jean	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
McMorrow, Patrice	Akers Biosciences, Inc.
Miller, John	Federal Highway Administration – New Jersey
Moore, Regina	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Moyo, Jabulani	Philadelphia Streets Department
Murphy, Kevin	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Neaderland, Zoe	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Noble, Tracy	AAA Mid-Atlantic
Nuble, Patrice	Philadelphia Streets Department
Quick, Susan	Brain Injury Association of New Jersey
Paris, Sgt. Chris	Pennsylvania State Police
Philbin, Officer James	Cherry Hill Township Police Department
Ragozine, Bill	Cross County Connection TMA
Rann, Sgt. Michael	Cherry Hill Township Police Department
Ratko, Wes	Montgomery County Planning Commission
Reeve, Ray	New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety
Richardson, Jim	DVRPC Regional Citizens Committee
Sestito, Carissa	Rutgers University – CAIT/TSRC
Stafford, Joe	Pennsylvania Bicycle Access Council
Strumpher, Warren	DVRPC Regional Citizens Committee
Sullivan, Officer Michael	Lower Merion Township Police
Tidwell, Jana	AAA Mid-Atlantic
Tumola, Cheryl	League of Women Voters – Delaware County
Ucciferro, Joe	National Safety Council
Ward, John	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Weiner, Bonnie	MADD – Southeast Pennsylvania
Ziemer, Karl	Delaware River Port Authority