



NEWS ADVISORY

Bruce Gordon, Director of Communications

Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement

Bureau of Criminal Apprehension

Driver and Vehicle Services

Emergency Communication Networks

Homeland Security and Emergency Management

Minnesota State Patrol

Office of Communications

Office of Justice Programs

Office of Pipeline Safety

Office of Traffic Safety

State Fire Marshal

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVOCATES IN ST. PAUL FOR ANNUAL TOWARD ZERO DEATHS CONFERENCE

*Autonomous Vehicles, the Way of the Future? Keynote and Panel Discussion
Kick Off TZD Conference*

WHAT: For the automobile industry, safety is a priority, and it uses technology to ensure that safety. One technology that is being tested is autonomous vehicles, also known as self-driving cars.

To kick off the 2017 [Toward Zero Deaths Conference \(TZD\)](#), Jim Hedlund with Highway Safety North will deliver a keynote on the promises and challenges of self-driving vehicles and participate in a panel discussion on the traffic safety implications.

The conference is a forum to share best practices, identify ongoing and new traffic challenges, and share new approaches to reducing traffic fatalities and life-changing injuries. The conference is hosted by the state departments of health, public safety and transportation.

Attendees include law enforcement officers, emergency medical and trauma service providers, engineers, transportation and public health officials, educators and traffic safety advocates.

Since TZD’s inception in 2003, annual traffic deaths have declined by 40 percent. Through education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency medical and trauma services, TZD aims to reduce deaths and severe injuries in Minnesota with the ultimate goal of zero lives lost.

WHEN: Thursday & Friday, Oct. 26-27

Thursday, Oct. 26, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

- Opening session with **keynote speaker Jim Hedlund** and panel discussion on autonomous vehicles: 8:30 – 9:45 a.m.
- Luncheon and TZD Awards: Noon–1 p.m.
- [Breakout Sessions](#)

Friday, Oct. 27, 8 a.m. to noon

- **Keynote speaker Chuck Hayes:** Safeguarding Our “High” ways: Combatting Drugged Driving: 8 – 9 a.m.
- [Breakout Sessions](#)

WHERE: **St. Paul RiverCentre**
150 West Kellogg Blvd.
St. Paul

WHO: **Featured keynote speakers:**

- **Jim Hedlund**, principal, Highway Safety North, consults on behavioral traffic safety research and will present on autonomous vehicles and participate in a panel discussion.
- **Chuck Hayes**, Drug Evaluation and Classification Program, project manager, International Association of Chiefs of Police, will discuss drugged driving and how it’s impacting our roads.

WHY: Since TZD’s start in 2003, the state’s annual number of traffic deaths declined 40 percent from 655 in 2003 to 392 (preliminary) in 2016.

The four major contributing factors in Minnesota traffic crashes continue to be:

- Speed: 83 deaths per year.
- Distracted driving: 58 deaths per year.
- Drunk driving: 87 deaths per year.
- Lack of seat belt use: 97 deaths per year.

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