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News Release

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For Immediate Release

Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths Star Award winners from Minnesota Metro Region announced

ROSEVILLE, Minn. – Three individuals were recently recognized as recipients of the Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths 2013 Star Awards for their efforts to reduce traffic-related deaths and serious injuries on Minnesota roads. Recipients received their awards during the Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths conference in St Cloud, MN.

The Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) Star Awards recognizes excellence in engineering, enforcement, judicial/court systems, education, emergency medical and trauma services, child passenger safety, media and distinguished public leadership.

Public Leadership Star Award

Tom Sorel, CEO of AAA Minneapolis and former commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Transportation, is this year's recipient of the TZD Distinguished Public Leadership Star Award. During his time as the MnDOT Commissioner, Sorel elevated safety and TZD initiatives by promoting the TZD program and raising awareness of traffic safety issues.

Sorel supported the mission of the TZD program and made it priority throughout MnDOT and throughout Minnesota. Sorel always spoke about the TZD program in his public remarks and encouraged partnerships with contractors and trucking companies. He also raised the TZD message to a national level as the chair of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Standing Committee on Highway Traffic Safety and the chairperson of the cross-disciplinary committee for the National TZD Strategy Initiative.

Past recipients: Jean Ryan, Department of Public Safety (2010); Mark Ritchie, Minnesota Secretary of State and Michael Campion, Department of Public Safety (2011); Steve Simon, University of Minnesota (2012).





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Child Passenger Safety Star Award

Esther DeLaCruz, CPS Associates, is this year's recipient of the TZD Child Passenger Safety Star Award.

DeLaCruz has demonstrated exemplary organizational skills and outstanding teaching techniques that encouraged child passenger safety throughout Minnesota. She endlessly provided educational services and car seats throughout the Twins Cities and provided one-on-one safety seat inspections, education, and distribution to families.

DeLaCruz created professional relationships with crisis centers, community parenting groups, faith communities, local retailers, and local schools to promote traffic safety issues and to offer educational materials and training. In addition, for the past eight years she has been a member of the State Child Passenger Safety Advisory Board and is currently responsible for the statewide quarterly newsletter, which is designed to keep advocates around the state up-to-date on CPS programming.

Past recipients: Tom Jansky, Gold Cross Ambulance (2008); Brynn Duncan and family, crash survivor (2009); Sharon Munns, Saint Marys Hospital/Mayo Clinic (2010); Diana Van Wormer, Regions Hospital (2011); Jennifer Booge, Mahube Community Council (2012).

Judicial and Court Systems Star Award

Thomas Miller, an Information Technology Specialist for the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, is this year's recipient of the TZD Judicial and Court Systems Star Award.

Five years ago, Miller designed, built, and deployed a major online eCharging system that facilitated the movement of information between individual data systems in law enforcement, prosecution, courts and the state. His innovative project has improved public safety due to more accurate and complete criminal justice information and resulted in a more efficient use of human and financial resources.

Minnesota is the only state that has developed this type of judicial system and it would not be as successful as it is or deployed to its present extent without Miller's leadership, vision and guidance.

Past recipients: James Dehn, Isanti County Courts (2009); Joel Watne, former assistant attorney general (2010); Shari Schluchter, Beltrami County Courts (2011); Judge Mark Starr, St. Louis County Courts (2012).

About TZD

A primary vision of the TZD program is to create a safe driving culture in Minnesota in





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which motorists support a goal of zero road fatalities by practicing and promoting safe and smart driving behavior. *TZD* focuses on the application of four strategic areas to reduce crashes — education, enforcement, engineering and emergency trauma response.

More information about TZD can be found at www.minnesotatzd.org/

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