

2018-2019

Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths Annual Report



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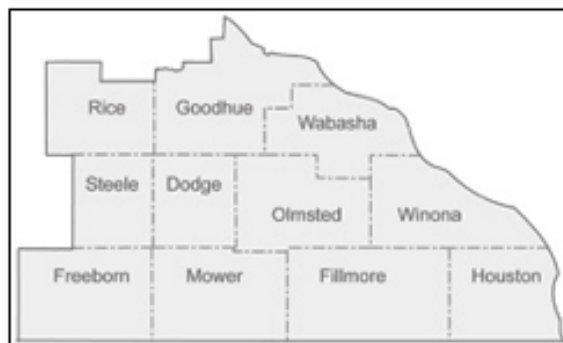
Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths

Mission

To create a culture for which traffic fatalities and serious injuries are no longer acceptable through the integrated application of education, engineering, enforcement and emergency medical and trauma services. These efforts will be driven by data, best practices and research.

Values

- ❖ Continuous improvements
- ❖ Engage partners
- ❖ Evidence-based approaches

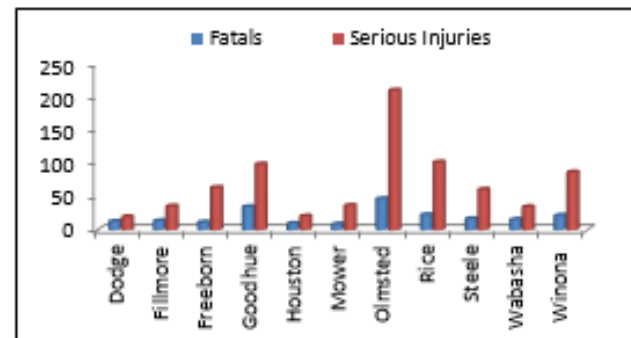


The Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths program began in 2005. The counties involved include: Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha and Winona.

The leading cause of traffic-related deaths and severe injuries in southeast Minnesota include:

- ❖ **Lack of Seat Belt Use**
- ❖ **Speed and Aggressive Driving**
- ❖ **Alcohol**

Southeast Minnesota Fatalities and Serious Injuries
by County (2014-2018*)



The leading type of crash resulting in deaths and severe injuries include:

- ❖ **Run-off-Road**
- ❖ **Intersection-related**

The Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths program is led by a Steering Committee comprised of the "4 Es:"

- ❖ Enforcement
- ❖ Engineering
- ❖ Education
- ❖ EMS/Emergency Medical & Trauma Services

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*2018 data are preliminary



Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths Regional Strategic Plan

Mission

To move southeast Minnesota toward zero deaths on our roads using education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency medical and trauma services.

Goal 1 – Reduce TZD Fatality and Serious Injuries

To continuously decrease traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries in southeast Minnesota from the past 5-year averages (2014-2018*) of 44 fatalities and 154 serious injuries. Note: New injury definitions were introduced in 2016 and may have contributed to a higher reported number of serious injuries.

Objectives:

- A. To continuously increase regional seat belt use rates.
As of April 2019, the seat belt compliance rate in southeast Minnesota was **89%**. As a region, our long-term goal is to achieve 100% usage rate. Our short-term goal is to see a continuous increase in the usage rate each year.
- B. To examine the characteristics of the unbelted fatalities and serious injuries. Calculation of seat belt use in fatal and serious crashes is possible with existing data.
- C. To continuously decrease the following:

5-year averages (2014-2018*) in the southeast region

Contributing factors:

Average Annual number of:		Alcohol	Speed	Distraction	Total
	Fatalities	11	9	5	44
	Fatal Crashes	10	8	5	39
	Severe Injuries	33	29	20	154
	Severe Injury Crashes	28	23	17	126

Note: a crash may have more than one of the above listed or additional contributing factors.

*2018 data are preliminary

Total Southeast Minnesota Region (2018+ data)

	Fatalities	Fatal Crashes	Severe Injuries	Severe Injury Crashes
2018 Total	41	37	187	140
2014-2018* Total	218	197	772	629

Region Goal 2 – TZD Partnership Goals

To continuously increase TZD awareness and partnerships across southeast Minnesota for both the general public and traffic safety professionals

1. Establish the vision of TZD as a priority for all government agencies (region, county, city)
 - A. Engage local government involvement in TZD steering committee and workshops
 - B. Educate/promote traffic safety awareness of city/county officials
 - C. Promote city/county employee education/policies that facilitate the TZD vision

Activities: Recruitment of city and county to attend TZD event, giving TZD presentations to boards/councils, mailings/connections to Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS)

2. Create and strengthen partnerships in the region
 - A. Engage stakeholders
 - B. Develop networking relationships
 - C. Recruit membership of the TZD partnership

Activities: EMS Conference booth/presentation, regional workshop, web, calendar, statistics, workshop, orientation

3. Promote and implement effective traffic safety initiatives in the region
 - A. Develop and distribute resource materials
 - B. Provide enforcement wave support in community
 - C. Promote evidence-based countermeasures
 - D. Collect data and statistics within region
 - E. Implement best practices within region

Activities: web, brochure, one-pagers, presentations, news advisories, workshop, seat belt observational survey and omnibus survey, media messaging and media events, news releases regarding activities woven into existing messages, worksite education and policy development, parent component to driver education, sober cab development, youth enforcement and education

Background: In 2006, the southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths Steering Committee developed the traffic safety mission and goals for the region in order to move toward zero deaths for traffic-related crashes.

Problem Statement: In 2006, there were 494 deaths on Minnesota roadways and 69 of these deaths occurred on southeast Minnesota roadways – an unacceptable number. Southeast Minnesota TZD includes partners from the 11-county area (Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha and Winona) who work together to create initiatives and programs to reduce traffic fatalities.

A regional strategic plan was developed in order to identify goals and strategies to accomplish the mission. In 2011, the data was reviewed and two of the three subcommittee goals had been met as well as nearly attaining the overall fatality reduction goal. As a result, a new strategic plan and new goals were set, beginning in 2012.

Mission: To move southeast Minnesota toward zero deaths on our roads using education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency medical and trauma services.

Goal 1 – Reduce Fatal and Serious Injuries

To continuously decrease traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries in southeast Minnesota from the past **5-year average** (2014-2018) of 44 fatalities and 126 serious injuries. Note: New injury definitions were introduced in 2016 and may have contributed to a higher reported number of serious injuries.

SE Counties Fatalities and Serious Injuries, 2014-2018													
County	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2014-2018 Total		
	Fatalities	Serious Injuries	Fatalities	Serious Injuries	Fatalities	Serious Injuries	Fatalities	Serious Injuries	Fatalities	Serious Injuries	Fatalities	Serious Injuries	All Fatalities and Serious Injuries
Dodge	3	2	2	2	1	6	1	3	6	7	13	20	33
Fillmore	2	7	2	6	3	7	1	8	6	8	14	36	50
Freeborn	3	9	2	3	4	21	3	15	0	16	12	64	76
Goodhue	10	9	8	22	4	35	5	15	8	18	35	99	134
Houston	0	2	5	3	0	6	3	4	2	6	10	21	31
Mower	1	5	2	2	2	9	2	9	2	12	9	37	46
Olmsted	8	28	14	34	12	46	6	52	7	48	47	208	255
Rice	6	11	5	11	6	25	4	24	2	33	23	104	127
Steele	6	12	4	5	5	16	1	11	1	17	17	61	78
Wabasha	4	11	3	3	4	13	2	5	3	3	16	35	51
Winona	6	10	1	24	5	22	6	12	4	19	22	87	109
All SE Counties	49	106	48	115	46	206	34	158	41	187	218	772	990

Successes:

- The Southeast Minnesota TZD program aims to create a collaborative, comprehensive, regional approach to reduce traffic-related deaths and severe injuries. As part of these efforts, an annual workshop is held to help facilitate the implementation of TZD in all southeast Minnesota communities. The 15th annual Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths Workshop was held May 1, in Rochester. More than 200 traffic safety professionals attended, representing 11 counties.
- Developed partnerships with Wisconsin State Patrol, as well as various law enforcement agencies from Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Held the first ever MN/WI cross-border media event.
- Community outreach with numerous media events focused on:
 - Seat belts
 - Impaired Driving
 - Distracted Driving
 - Speed
 - Hands-free Law
 - Motorcycle Safety
- Completed monthly reports accurately and timely.
- 4-E coalitions continue to expand across the region in both funded and unfunded coalitions including; Dodge, Olmsted, Steele, Winona, Freeborn and Goodhue.
- Continued partnership with Olmsted County Sheriff's Office social media specialist to create numerous videos to coincide with enforcement periods.
 - Distracted Driving
<https://www.facebook.com/OlmstedSheriff/videos/447549989329425/>
 - Impaired Driving
<https://www.facebook.com/OlmstedSheriff/videos/568938030195708/UzpfSTeZODk2NTA5NDk6MTAyMTgwMTQ2MzAyMjl1NDQ/>
<https://www.facebook.com/OlmstedSheriff/videos/2039229196374770/>
<https://www.facebook.com/OlmstedSheriff/videos/568938030195708/>
 - Seat Belt
<https://www.facebook.com/OlmstedSheriff/videos/439274913301143/UzpfSTExNjl0NzIxNDc6MTAyMTgwMTQ2MzAyMzU1OTU/>
<https://www.facebook.com/OlmstedSheriff/videos/2189490487794008>
https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=olmsted%20county%20sheriff's%20office&epa=SEARCH_BOX
 - Motorcycle Safety
<https://www.facebook.com/OlmstedSheriff/videos/351788675680333/>.

- Continued to represent TZD in the Highway 52 Goodhue County Improvement Planning Project. This project will require working with many landowners and businesses regarding the planning and execution of a possible interchange and roadway modifications. TZD involvement was requested due to the closing of access points along the corridor due to safety improvements. The meetings will include MnDOT, Goodhue County and numerous townships.
- Partnered with State Patrol to develop their new video focused on a Dodge Center teen that was killed in an unbelted, high speed rollover crash.
- Participated in the second round of County Highway Safety Improvement planning in Dodge and Goodhue counties. TZD traffic-safety culture, vision, mission and goals were presented at each meeting attended.
- Expanded partnerships with the corporate Federated Insurance Leadership Team.
- Partnered with Explore MN to have hands-free information at each Travel Information Center throughout the state.
- Partnered with DPS OTS to host the statewide Seat Belt kickoff focusing on the ten year anniversary of the primary Seat Belt law.
- Expanded partnerships with the Rochester Area Communicators work group.
- Developed relationships with local media. Media advisory, news release and all talking points were developed for events. Media packets were completed and distributed at each media event. KTTC-TV, KIMT-TV, KAAL-TV, WXOW-TV, FOX-29, Rochester Post-Bulletin, Dodge County Independent, Star Herald and KROC talk radio covered regional events.

Local government presentations:

Presentations included the TZD mission, vision and goals as well as updates on local efforts, successes and challenges. State and local TZD representatives from each of the 4-Es were invited.

- Goodhue County Board
- Pine Island City Council
- Rice County Board
- Faribault City Council

Active funded coalitions

Assisted and supported the funded TZD Safe Roads coordinators in various capacities throughout the year with supplies needed, assistance with events or directing to appropriate resources.

- Fillmore
- Goodhue
- Olmsted
- Rice
- Wabasha
- Winona

Active unfunded coalitions

Assisted and supported the unfunded Freeborn County TZD Safe Roads coordinator in various capacities throughout the year with supplies needed, assistance with events, or directing to appropriate resources. Facilitated the Dodge and Olmsted County Safe Roads coalitions. Was responsible for maintaining the coalition networks, meeting agendas, minutes and all activities and events as requested.

- Dodge
- Freeborn
- Houston
- Steele

Identified Gap:

Mower County – Southeast TZD Region has one community without a Safe Roads coalition or 4-E coalition sustained. Possible coalition champions have been contacted and are supportive in helping to reestablish the Safe Roads coalition and Fatal Review committee. Hope to have this up and running by the end of the year.

Regional Workshop – Southeast Minnesota TZD Workshop May 1, 2019

The 15th annual Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths Workshop was held May 1 in Rochester. More than 200 traffic safety professionals attended, representing 11 counties. Personal impact speaker was Matt Maas. His son, Logan, was an 18-year-old passenger in a vehicle that left the roadway and rolled into the ditch on Dec. 18, 2015. Logan, who was unbelted, was ejected from the vehicle. He died from his injuries. Matt spoke at a previous workshop, but wanted to thank everyone for their efforts in helping Logan complete his Senior Project by developing the new State Patrol video focused on Logan's crash and the effects on the community. Additional speakers are shown in the included agenda. The presentation slides can be found at:

<http://www.minnesotatzd.org/initiatives/regions/southeast/workshop/2019/index.html>



The southeast Minnesota TZD initiative aims to create a collaborative, comprehensive and regional approach to reduce traffic deaths and severe injuries. As part of these efforts, an annual workshop is held to help facilitate the implementation of TZD in all southeast Minnesota communities. Encouraged to attend are law enforcement, engineers, educators, emergency medical services, local policymakers and other traffic safety advocates.

The workshop participants are surveyed annually and each year the survey respondents rate the workshop with high marks and urge the planning team to continue to have the workshop annually. Anecdotally, the networking and forming relationships across the "4 E" boundaries continues in southeast Minnesota.

Workshop Attendance

2005: 90 participants
2006: 81 participants
2007: 96 participants
2008: 104 participants
2009: 106 participants
2010: 151 participants
2011: 159 participants
2012: 165 participants

2013: 163 participants
2014: 158 participants
2015: 189 participants
2016: 200 participants
2017: 207 participants
2018: 201 participants
2019: 218 participants



**Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths
15th Annual Regional Workshop Agenda
International Event Center
7333 Airport View Drive SW, Rochester**

May 1, 2019

- 8 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast**
- 8:30 a.m. Welcome**
Grand Ballroom 1
Mark Schoenfelder, District Engineer, MnDOT District 6; Capt. Christina Bogojevic, State Patrol Commander, District 2100; Jessica Schleck, Southeast Minnesota TZD Regional Coordinator
- 9 a.m. Rochester's Transportation Future: Keeping an Eye on Safety**
Kim Norton, Mayor, City of Rochester
Rochester is growing and changing and our infrastructure must change with it. Traffic safety, in all forms, must be a priority during this mode shift. Public understanding and support will be vital to our success.
- 9:15 a.m. Autism – Effective Emergency Response**
Ellie Wilson, Executive Director, Autism Society of Minnesota
In this dynamic presentation, you will learn to recognize and understand behaviors associated with autism and similar disabilities as well as how to address how various emergency response roles (medical, police, fire and others) can use effective, practical strategies for improved communication, assessment and behavior in domestic, community and prehospital settings. Autism Spectrum Disorders now occur with a prevalence of one in 59 individuals in the United States, while additional reports indicate that prevalence is even higher in the state of Minnesota. Additionally, studies show that children and adults on the spectrum are 7–12 times more likely to interface with emergency responders than their neuro-typical peers.
- 10:15 a.m. Break and Exhibits**
- 10:30 a.m. Why People Change: Proven Health Methods to Prevent Traffic-related Trauma**
Julie Philbrook, RN, DNP, Trauma Prevention Specialist, Hennepin Healthcare (HMC)
Due to traffic-related trauma being preventable and frequently predictable, it is subject to the same epidemiology as disease. In the case of any disease, the intervention of choice is prevention. The Health Belief Model (HBM) is a psychological model that attempts to explain and predict health behaviors. This is done by focusing on the attitudes and beliefs of individuals. By defining and addressing trauma as a disease, and approaching it within the context of behavioral theory, traffic safety advocates can develop interventions with the potential to reduce the impact and incidence of traffic-related trauma across a wide spectrum of at-risk groups.
- 11 a.m. "Lasting Impact: Life Without Logan"**
Sgt. Troy Christianson, Minnesota State Patrol; Matt Maas, Logan's father
The Minnesota State Patrol has produced their fourth video presentation focused on reducing teen death and injury in motor vehicle crashes. Logan was an 18-year-old passenger in a vehicle that left the roadway and rolled into the ditch on December 18, 2015. Logan, who was unbelted, was ejected from the vehicle. He died from his injuries.

- 11:30 a.m. **Lunch Provided and Visit Exhibits**
- 12:15 p.m. **Strategic Highway Safety Plan: Minnesota Needs YOU!**
Brad Estochen, State Traffic Safety Engineer and Eric DeVoe, Senior Research Analyst, MnDOT Office of Traffic Engineering; Chelsea Palmateer, Research Analyst, DPS Office of Traffic Safety; Richard Storm, HDR Consultants; Tina Roelofs, Athey Creek Consultants
 The Strategic Highway Safety Plan is a policy plan that sets an overall direction for future safety strategies and presents the framework for selecting strategies. These strategies include all 4-E partners – Enforcement, Education, Engineering and Emergency Medical Services and Trauma Systems. The plan provides insight and direction to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on Minnesota roadways.
- 1:15 p.m. **Break**
- 1:20 p.m. **Setting the Direction for Strategic Highway Safety Plans**
 Every five years, the Minnesota Strategic Highway Safety Plan is updated. It is time to update the plan and we want your ideas! Through interactive activities and discussion, help prioritize emphasis areas, identify and rank strategies and suggest local champions. Your input is important in developing a plan that works for Minnesota.
- 2:15 p.m. **TZD and Commercial Motor Vehicles: Bridging the Gap**
Capt. Jon Olsen, Minnesota State Patrol, Commercial Vehicles
Julie Whitcher, State Rail Safety Engineer, MnDOT Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicles
Brian Burke, Safety Director, Lawrence Transportation Company
 National projections indicate commercial vehicle traffic will be increasing at a steady rate as the demands for goods continue to rise. Unfortunately, merely because of their size, these 80,000-pound vehicles can create tragedy on Minnesota's roadways. What opportunities and challenges are there as we strive toward zero deaths? From a traffic management and engineering perspective, are there ways to harness existing technologies to better prepare drivers for what lies ahead? This presentation will provide valuable information on engineering, enforcement and education strategies.
- 3 p.m. **Door Prizes and Adjourn**

Please take time throughout the day to visit the traffic safety exhibit tables for reference materials and ideas to implement in your communities.

**SOUTHEAST TOWARD ZERO DEATHS REGIONAL WORKSHOP
EVALUATION SUMMARY**

International Event Center, Rochester, MN

May 1, 2019

Number Registered: 196

Number Registered + Walk-ins: 218

Total number of attendees (includes pre-registered + walk-ins - no-shows): 173

Total number of evaluations: 83

Number of paper evaluations: 73

Number of electronic evaluations: 10

General Sessions	Average Rating (out of 4.00)
Welcome	3.51
Rochester's Transportation Future: Keeping an Eye on Safety	3.11
Autism- Effective Emergency Response	3.73
Why People Change: Proven Health Methods to Prevent Traffic-related Trauma	3.04
"Lasting Impact: Life Without Logan"	3.78
Strategic Highway Safety Plan: Minnesota Needs YOU	2.97
Setting the Direction for Strategic Highway Safety Plans	2.89
TZD and Commercial Motor Vehicles: Bridging the Gap	3.48

Comments on the general sessions:

- Loved Ellie
- Great conference, topic areas for all E's
- Autism-Excellent talk on important topics. Well explained and related to EMS/Law Enforcement
- Lasting Impact- Impressed teen driver was brave to be included
- The last 2 speakers were very dry for the end of the day
- Great topics!
- More tech issues compared to past years. Enjoyed hearing speakers who had medical impact. Continue expanding EMS representation
- Keep sessions to about 35 minutes instead of over an hour
- The PowerPoint slides in general were hard to read...Too much text and/or too small font
- Ellie is a great speaker, autism was a great subject. Learned lots from about a different perspective

- Highway Safety Plan would be better completed at each table, working within the table would create great conversation locally instead of moving tables and losing people
- SHSP process was confusing, Capt. Olson was great, other 2 speakers not as engaging
- No small groups
- Good program.
- The general sessions were good, informative and helpful
- Hard to navigate so quick in the break-not sessions, we needed more time
- Very beneficial information from Capt. Jon Olsen
- I have seen the Logan session twice now-movie is awesome. Still touched me the same the second time around
- Ellie Wilson was phenomenal. I love to see new and unique presentations and the workshops. To get to zero we need to include everyone
- Everything moved quickly with time in between
- Very informative
- Good topics/hints with the Health Benefit Model Presentation
- Lasting Impact was very effective
- Good conference. Very informative
- So much of this info is valuable important but so many people weren't paying attention because of dull delivery
- Ellie was excellent-applicable information for many aspects of society. Jon Olsen-interesting information, well presented

Workshop Arrangements	Average Rating (out of 4.00)
Convenience of the registration process	3.75
Location of the venue	3.84
Facilities were comfortable and appropriate.	3.81
Food served for meals and breaks was satisfying.	3.85
Participant materials were helpful and useful.	3.53
How beneficial are the mounted regional crash maps?	3.14

Comments on the arrangements

- Good venue, good food, and good schedule
- Set up well
- I really enjoy having this event at the Event Center. Very easy access to it and loved the sign that MnDOT had on county 16 for us
- Regional crash maps are good, it was great to have them available online
- Thanks for the cookies, Jess!
- SHSP was a waste of time. Maybe do privately instead of in groups
- Setup very nice. Food was amazing
- Great venue

- Like the place. Food was delicious. Good to get together
- Good notification process of event. Registration was quick and easy. Great venue. Program flowed and was superbly put together
- Excellent
- Great!
- Good workshop
- Snacks?
- Always do a good job
- Very informative
- Well organized, site and food excellent
- Everything was good and the venue is very roomy
- Very good. Well organized
- Everything fantastic
- The story about Logan and the autism sessions were really good!
- SHSP-the group should really be checking with MnDOT District 6 and not just the TZD group. Not sure that is the appropriate audience.
- Autism speaker was awesome, Logan video was awesome-I have seen the presentation before but not the video-awesome way to get the message delivered everywhere, both of the SHSP were absolutely terrible and I got nothing out of them at all whatsoever, commercial video State Patrol speaker was good---should have spent more time on him and not the others from that topic

Do you have suggestions for topics you would like to see offered at future workshops?

- I would like to see a speaker about the epidemic of children getting killed while trying to board the school bus. Also, a speaker about demand of RPT drivers to keep up with schedules, a company's asking drivers to break the law "just a little" to keep customers happy
- Spotlight on what is happening in the state and legislatures
- Nice to see more pedestrians especially non-traditional pedestrian-scooters, horse and buggy, skateboards, etc.
- Mentoring new traffic safety professionals
- Very good
- Bus safety-following the rules, lights and stop arms. Why do buses sometimes pull over on side of the highway and wave you by. Very confusing to drivers
- How is technology are going to help traffic accidents decrease
- Law enforcement speakers
- Ways to talk about TZD to friends and family in a non-preachy way
- Driving around bicycles
- Drowsy driving/sleep issues
- More impacts on people who were involved fatalities
- Passing stronger legislation-helmets, no cell phone use, ignition locks for repeat offender. Jail time for 3rd DWI arrest
- Emphasize the move over law and communicate to truckers especially over the winter
- The bikes and googles and let people try it out
- Law enforcement explaining the difficulties of enforcing things

- High risk drivers, educating and getting off the road for these younger, older and other drivers
- Keep having one speaker whose family was impacted by a crash.
- How to get people to slow down in work zones. People always say they never see the sign. They are all up as needed
- Fatal vision goggles-video showing tips
- Break down of a crash investigation as very interesting and statewide TZD last year
- A longer afternoon break please :) the 5 minutes to get from one table to the next was not long enough. We need a full 10-15 minute break in the PM.
- Agenda handout was beneficial
- E packet did not seem to be set up in a way that corresponded to the presentations. Also the state planning part wasn't included and I didn't appreciate getting that material at the workshop in paper form.

What are your suggestions for building and maintaining support for this region's Minnesota TZD program?

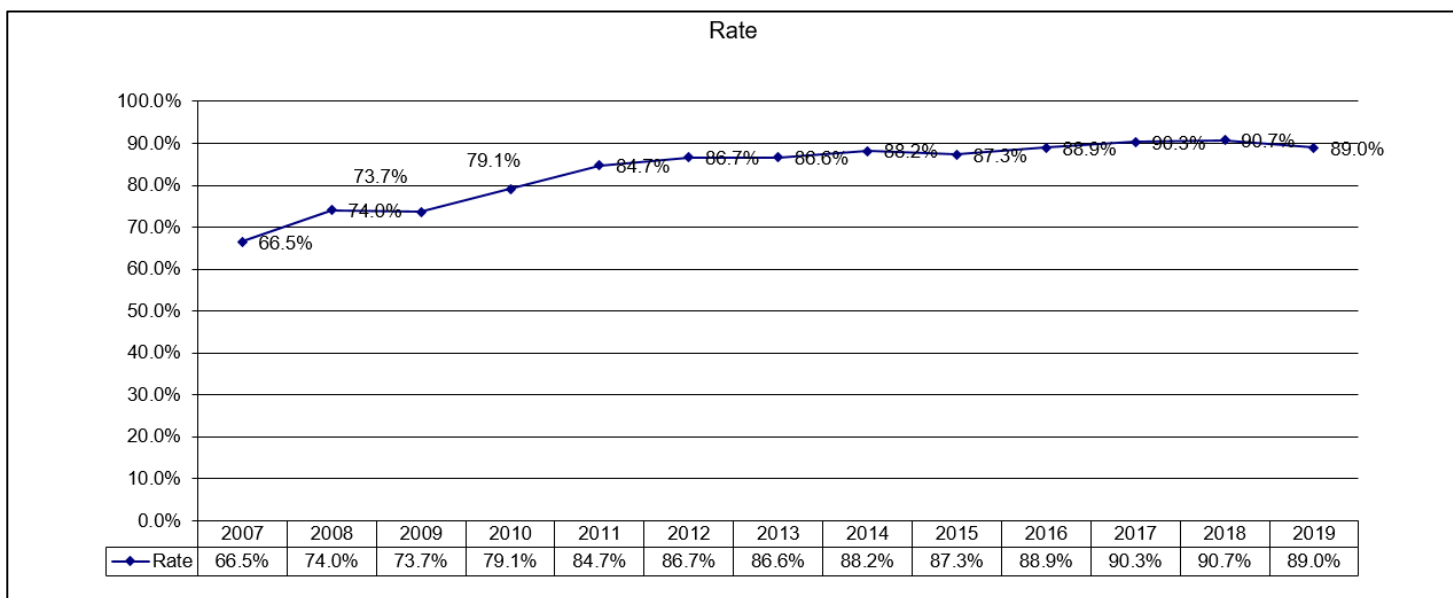
- Educating teachers/working with teachers on these issues and TZD. Students listen to people they know and respect-scare tactics don't always work and/or aren't long lasting
- Continue education efforts
- I think partnerships with local companies would be a great support. I know my employer would love to partner with the MN TZD. Maybe an advertisement on a bus will be beneficial
- Include a "hot topic" in the agenda and invite local media
- Continue this workshop
- Continue to do what you are doing. Explore and remain flexible and open to ideas.
- Continue working with schools
- Have SRO's attend from rural areas or have them present on ideas
- Keep up the good work
- Outreach and education
- Continue doing what you're doing. Fabulous program. The partnerships that have been built are incredible and its due to the staffing of who is running the region
- Same venue
- Keep up the good work
- Simplify disseminating information. One website to address things going on?
- Reach out to the other groups in the SE's
- Tell general public the truth. Don't sugar coat it? Graphic detail and grim facts open eyes and ears
- Need to get local contractors on-board
- More public invite
- More talks from State Patrol on rules, laws. The questions regarding commercial vehicle license requirements, what you can and can't pull, drive Class A motorhome, not carrying alcohol in the vehicle, etc. etc. were very interesting.
- Continued events by state patrol, at schools and these annual meetings all help raise public awareness

Any other comments or suggestions are welcome.

- I like the variety of activities and presentations. Keep up the good work
- Great job!
- Life without Logan is hard to imagine-Great reminder or eye opener for all
- Great presentations, loved music in between
- Great food, great people
- Great job!
- The Logan video was too cheesy because of the music to be as powerful as it could be in my opinion
- Another great conference. Looking forward to next year
- Loved the "HIPS" display
- TZD isn't about just Rochester
- I really liked the 6th grade Safety Card on the tables
- Breakout sessions that allow the E's to work together. Not to try to talk out each other
- Speakers are more engaging
- Keep up the good work
- Excellent as always, discussion for older drivers
- Reach out to tow companies for their part
- Awesome job everyone!
- I think that high school SADD programs should bring some of their SADD members to this workshop
- It was all very good!
- Very successful conference. The great coordination by many is noted and appreciated

Regional Seat Belt Survey Results

The Southeast Minnesota TZD Steering Committee wanted to show the regional trends in the area, and therefore, began collecting their regional data beginning in 2006, enlisting the help of DPS OTS evaluators to set up a scientifically significant survey. The 2006-2019 results are shown below. As of April 2019, the seat belt compliance rate in southeast Minnesota was **89 percent**. As a region, our long-term goal is to achieve 100 percent usage rate. Our short-term goal is to see a continuous increase in the usage rate each year.



The seat belt efforts focused this past year on educational activities, such as partnering with law enforcement on a regional level with the various mobilizations, as well as educating citizens in southeast Minnesota and state lawmakers. Focus for the upcoming year will continue with educational efforts, combined with law enforcement mobilizations, educating parents through driver education and worksites throughout the region.

Regional Seat Belt Efforts

▪ *Olmsted County Seat Belt Challenge/Championship*

Students from 7 schools across Olmsted County participated in the Championship. Students were timed on how quickly they could move to each seating position in a car and buckle up. Each school crowned a champion in early May as students were timed on how quickly they could move to each seat in a car and buckle up. The winning team from each school competed for the overall championship on May 21.



- ***Dodge County Seat Belt Challenge/Championship***

Students from 3 schools across Dodge County participated a similar Championship. The winning team was awarded the TZD traveling trophy. See page 61 for media coverage.



- ***Regional Seat Belt news conference***

TZD partnered with DPS OTS to host the statewide Seat Belt kickoff. The media event focused on the state's primary seat belt law, which requires drivers and passengers in all seating positions to buckle up or be seated in the correct child restraint. The law took effect on June 9, 2009 in honor of Meghan Cooper. Meghan's family was a driving force behind the passing of the primary seat belt law. Kathy, who lost her daughter (Meghan) in June 1999, joined law enforcement to urge motorists to join the 92 percent of Minnesotans who buckle up. More than 50 individuals representing Law Enforcement, Education, EMS and Engineering were present at this regional event. *For the first time in SE, the TZD event was streamed live! The TZD kickoff was held May 21 at Cabela's in Owatonna. See pages 59-61 for media coverage.



- ***Regional TZD Seat Belt event at the Rochester Honkers***

Attendees were invited to explore the emergency vehicles and visit with responders. Along with the Rochester Fire Department truck, Gold Cross ambulance, and numerous squads, the Rochester Police Department had their Incident Command Center and their armored truck displayed. Goodhue County was represented with a Bearcat and Wabasha County with a squad. Olmsted County Sheriff Kevin Torgerson threw out the first pitch. The Rochester Police Department K-9 unit performed demos on the field and State Patrol and the Olmsted County Sheriff's Office shot t-shirts into the stands during intermission while the announcer read seat belt messaging to the crowd.



- ***Seat Belt Demonstration at the Kasson Police Department***

Partnered with Kasson Police and Kasson Fire to emphasize that seat belts can save lives by demonstrating the strength of a seat belt. The Kasson Police Department Open House was highlighted by having a tow truck lift a vehicle by its seat belt, showing the strength of a belt and how it can help prevent injury or loss of life when properly used.



- Partnered with regional Safe Roads coordinators to provide educational events at more than 30 local high schools. Events including seat belt stenciling and seat belt checks were completed throughout the year.

Regional Distracted Driving Efforts

- ***TZD Traffic Safety Champion Award***

TZD partnered with the Rochester Police Department, Olmsted County Sheriff's Office and the Minnesota State Patrol to recognize a young Traffic Safety leader. John Marshall High School Senior Mohammad Alhusaini was recognized with a TZD Traffic Safety Champion Award for Outstanding Teen Leadership. Mohammad recently produced a video to remind students that "No text is worth a death". Link to video: <https://youtu.be/YkrxGDSgQm8>
See pages 49-53 for media coverage.



- **#PhonesDown #HeadsUp #JustDrive**

TZD partnered with the Olmsted County Sheriff's Office and Rochester Community and Technical College help raise awareness about Distracted Driving. Students and staff helped to create a video as a reminder of the dangers of driving distracted.

Link: <https://www.facebook.com/OlmstedSheriff/videos/447549989329425/>



- Worked with regional Safe Roads coordinators to provide education at more than 30 regional high schools and businesses. Events including the distracted driving simulator, Wheel of Distraction, Snapchat obstacle courses and pledging to *Never Drive Distracted* were completed throughout the year. Regional coordinator organized and executed the following:
 - Rochester Community and Technical College
 - Kasson-Mantorville High School
 - Hayfield High School
 - Triton High School
 - Dodge County Business Expo
 - Annual EMS Conference
 - Central Farm Services
 - Federated Insurance Leadership Team



Regional Impaired Driving Efforts

- ***Holiday Impaired Driving kickoff***

Local Top DWI Enforcers were recognized at a DWI enforcement kickoff at the Rochester Police Department's North Station. Speakers included; Chief Jim Franklin, Rochester Police Department; Scott McConkey, Southern Minnesota Law Enforcement Liaison; Deputy Chad Myers, Winona County Sheriff's Office; Jessica Schleck, Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths regional coordinator and Sgt. Troy Christianson, Minnesota State Patrol. See pages 47-49 for media coverage.



- ***Voluntary Preliminary Breath Tests***

TZD partnered with the Rochester Police Department and Olmsted County Sheriff's Office to offer voluntary Preliminary Breath Testing (PBT) to community members at three *Thursdays Downtown* events in Rochester. More than 300 PBTs were administered at each event. This educational event gave community members the opportunity to see first-hand how alcohol affects their blood alcohol level.



- Regional Responsible Beverage Server training was offered in Dodge, Olmsted, Wabasha, Winona, Fillmore and Houston counties.
- Partnered with regional Safe Roads coordinators to provide education at more than 30 regional high schools. Events including the DWI obstacle course and various drunk goggle activities were completed throughout the year.
- Coordinated the DWI crash car calendar. The car was used at numerous festivals and high schools across the region to remind the community of the dangers of driving impaired.
 - Hayfield High School
 - Kasson High School
 - Triton High School
 - Pine Island High School
 - Owatonna High School
 - Plainview High School
 - Zumbrota High School
 - Dodge County Free Fair
 - Kasson Police/Fire Open House



Regional Speed Efforts

- ***Annual Speed Poster***

Once a year, regional traffic safety stakeholders pose for a regional Speed photo to use with local news releases to distribute in their communities. In previous years, the event was held in Lanesboro, Northfield, Owatonna, Red Wing, Rochester, Winona, Kasson, Lake City, Albert Lea, Austin, Rochester, and most recently in Owatonna. The photo shoot is used to recognize the 4Es. TZD uses an interdisciplinary approach pairing education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency medical and trauma services. This photo has occurred for many years and has rotated through the 11 counties. This group has expanded to include other “E”s such as ambulance, county snow plows and sometimes crash cars to show the unity of TZD and that we all work together. The poster helps to shows the partnership, and more importantly, helps with relationship building amongst the groups. More than 500 Speed posters were developed and distributed to the region. See pages 59-60 for media coverage.



- ***Border-to-Border Speed Saturation***

Border-to-Border multiagency speed enforcement was coordinated on Highway 14 through five southeast counties on July 6, 2019. Southeast TZD partnered with the southern Minnesota LEL and local law enforcement to incorporate regional educational outreach.



Results of the one-day saturation:

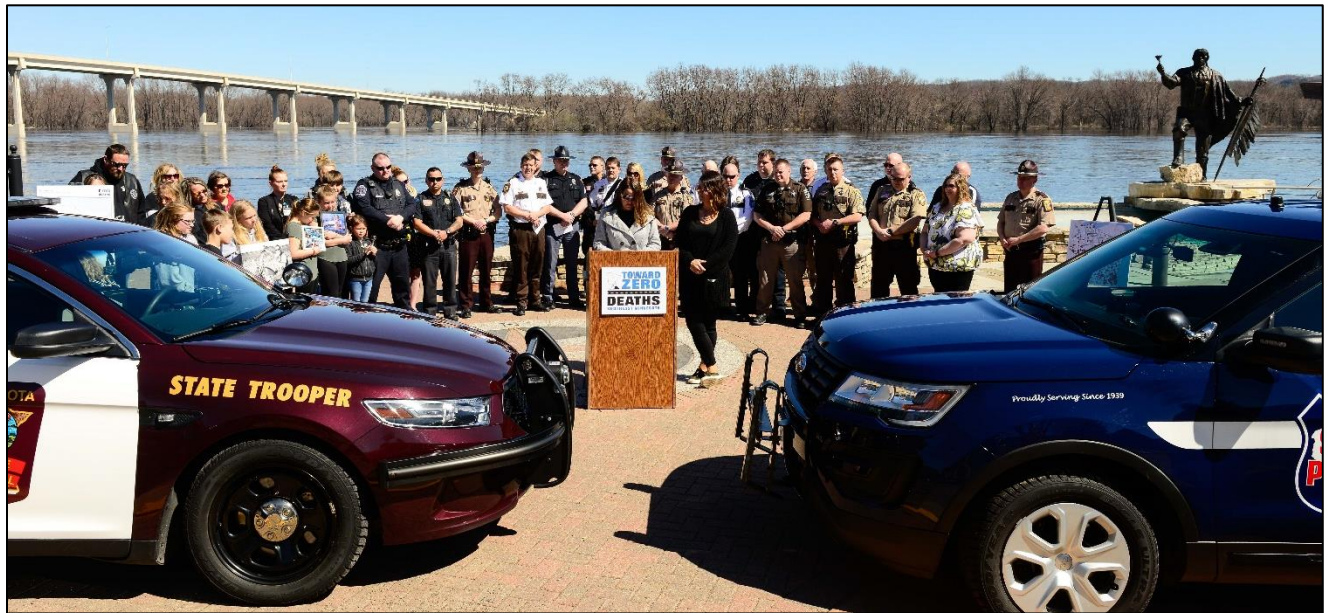
The multiagency Speed enforcement resulted in **274 stops** and **84 speed citations** issued on Friday, July 6. A media advisory with information regarding the saturation was distributed prior to the event as well as a news release following the event. Electronic messaging boards were deployed displaying the enforcement message.

Department	Traffic Stops	Speed Citations
Kasson Police Dept.	17	13
Minnesota State Patrol	174	46
Dodge County Sheriff's Office	10	5
Steele County Sheriff's Office	39	12
Houston County Sheriff's Office	1	0
Lewiston Police Dept.	3	1
La Crescent Police Dept.	3	0
Olmsted County Sheriff's Office	27	7

Regional Motorcycle Safety efforts

- ***Spring Flood Run Cross-Border Media Event***

Minnesota and Wisconsin partnered in a first ever Flood Run cross-border media event to remind motorists and riders the importance of sharing the road. Two families who lost loved ones in motorcycle crashes joined traffic safety stakeholders from Minnesota and Wisconsin to share the importance of motorcycle safety, and traffic safety stakeholders reminded the public that law enforcement on both sides of the river will be out in full force during the Flood Run to help everyone make it home safely. See pages 53-57 for media coverage.



- ***Fall Flood Run media advisory***

Partnered with Wisconsin State Patrol and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to remind the public that law enforcement from both sides of the river will be out in full force.

Regional Hands-Free efforts

- ***Safe City Nights media event***

TZD partnered with the Rochester Police Department to host a Hands-free media event. Nearly 1,000 community members and more than 20 agencies were in attendance at the Safe City Nights event. Speakers included; Captain Christina Bogojevic, Minnesota State Patrol; Chief Jim Franklin, Rochester Police Department; Sheriff Kevin Torgerson, Olmsted County Sheriff's Office. See page 62 for media coverage.



- ***Governor Walz media event***

Gov. Tim Walz, Olmsted County Sheriff Kevin Torgerson, Rochester Police Chief Jim Franklin, and Minnesota State Patrol Captain Christina Bogojevic spoke outside the Minnesota Department of Transportation Rochester Office. Walz and the local law enforcement leaders urged Minnesotans to begin practicing going hands-free if they hadn't already to be accustomed to the new law. See pages 62-64 for media coverage.



- ***Hands-free cards***

Partnered with the Rochester Police Department, Olmsted Sheriff's Office and Dodge County Sheriff's Office to develop and distribute 30,000 Hands-free cards to be distributed throughout the region. Also partnered with Explore MN to have Hands-free cards and handouts at all Travel Information Centers throughout the state.



- ***Public Engagement***

Partnered with the Rochester Police Department to host multiple community engagement events focusing on the Hands-free law.



- **Minnesota State Patrol Video**

Assisted the Minnesota State Patrol in creating ***Lasting Impact***, a 16 minute video about a teen driver who made a fatal mistake. In December 2015, Logan Maas was killed when a teen driver lost control of her vehicle at a high rate of speed. Eighteen-year-old Logan, a Triton High School senior, was killed when he was ejected from the vehicle. ***Lasting Impact*** includes interviews with the Maas family, the driver and school officials, and shows how one life lost can change a community forever.

Assisted in organizing interviews and the mock crash for the video, as well as the first student viewing to students at Triton High School on February 5, 2019. Colonel Langer and Matt Maas spoke to the students, answered questions, and were available for media interviews following the presentation. Additional media coverage on page 49-50.

Link to KARE11 coverage of the first presentation to students:

<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/msp/Pages/lasting-impact.aspx>



Organized additional presentations for:

- Staff at Triton High School
- Triton School Board and community members
- Kasson-Mantorville High School
- Hayfield High School
- Pine Island High School
- Blooming Prairie High School
- Stewartville High School
- SE TZD workshop
- Milton Township Officers
- Pine Island Fire Department
- West Concord Fire Department



MINNESOTA TOWARD **ZERO** DEATHS

Oct. 25, 2018

Contact: Jessica Schleck
Southeast Minnesota TZD Regional Coordinator
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Toward Zero Deaths program honors two local leaders

MANKATO, Minn. — Two southern Minnesota community members, Emily Steffens, Dodge Center, and Lt. Jeff Strom, Albert Lea, were among the 10 individuals and organizations honored by Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths program for their outstanding traffic safety efforts. The awards were announced at the statewide TZD conference Oct. 23-24 in Mankato.

Emily Steffens was honored with a TZD Special Award of Recognition for writing a weekly newspaper column called "It's My Life: Living with Severe Traumatic Brain Injury."

Lt. Strom was honored with the Education Star Award for his multiple community outreach efforts focusing on teen drivers as well as encouraging motorists to make good choices behind the wheel.

"Working with Emily and Lt. Strom is so rewarding," said Jessica Schleck, southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths coordinator. "I feel very fortunate to be a part of the TZD program and collaborate with such dedicated individuals."

Steffens, her high school class valedictorian, was seriously injured in a car crash one week after graduation. Emily and three of her friends traveled to the cities to register for college classes. An RV pulled out in front of the car Emily was riding in, causing the vehicles to collide. Emily was thrown into the front, her face striking the dashboard. Consequently, Emily was in a coma for almost three months — six weeks of that in intensive care, followed by years of physical therapy. As a result of the crash, Emily is paralyzed on the right side, blind in the right half of each eye and suffers from significant memory issues.

Two years ago, she began to share her life and its challenges with others through a column in the newspaper titled, "It's My Life, Living with Severe Traumatic Brain Injury." Because of her memory issues, she and her father sit down and discuss what she would like to say in her column. She dictates as her father writes. When she is done, she types it on the computer and submits it.

-more-



Emily uses the column to educate the community each week on the importance of seat belt use. Most of her columns focus on how her life will forever be changed because she didn't wear her seat belt. The residents that receive the newspaper will tell you that her column is the first thing they turn to each week. Emily is a very positive person, always trying to brighten someone's day with a compliment. This column is her way of trying to change behavior so another family doesn't have to go through what they have been through.

Steffens and her parents support the TZD program by speaking at media events, most recently at the Southeast TZD Regional Seat Belt kickoff.

Lt. Jeff Strom has participated in TZD since its inception. He has led the Freeborn County TZD Safe Roads coalition for many years. He conducts quarterly Fatal Review committee meetings, where he brings TZD partners together to review all serious and fatal crashes in the county.

In addition, he participates in traffic safety events at many schools in the area and organizes mock crashes and impact speakers for community events. He volunteers to teach the parent component of driver's education and partners with Freeborn County Public Health to coordinate monthly child passenger safety clinics. He also partnered with Freeborn County Partners in Prevention to secure funding to purchase a distracted driving simulator.

Lt. Strom regularly promotes TZD including developing a TZD display he used at events throughout the county, as well as placing TZD decals on department squads.

"More than ever, we need people who are passionate about traffic safety to find innovative ways to reduce traffic-related deaths," said Kristine Hernandez, Minnesota Statewide TZD program coordinator. "I appreciate hearing about new ideas that I can share across the state."

The Minnesota TZD program is an interdisciplinary partnership with the state departments of health, transportation and public safety.

Learn more about TZD, including a full list of award recipients, at www.minnesotatzd.org.

The Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths program brings area law enforcement, public health educators, engineers and emergency medical and trauma services together to reduce the number of traffic fatalities and severe injuries to zero in southeast Minnesota. The 11-county area encompasses: Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha and Winona counties.

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Region Goal 2 – TZD Partnership Goals

To continuously increase TZD awareness and partnerships across southeast Minnesota for both the general public and traffic safety professionals

Building internal and external relationships

- Participated in State Patrol Oral Boards for trooper selection
- TZD presentation to D6 District employees
- Partnered with State Patrol to meet with local motorcycle dealers. We spoke with them about the importance of reminding their customers to buy appropriate sized motorcycles and encouraging customers to wear safety gear and register for the motorcycle skills courses. They were given handouts to distribute to customers. Followed up throughout the year to update handouts and to continue developing relationships with owners and staff.
- Bi-monthly Steering Committee meetings
- Participation in quarterly regional Fatal and Serious Injury Review committees
 - Facilitated all Dodge and Steele County meetings
- Participation in bi-monthly regional TZD Safe Roads coalition meeting
 - Facilitated all Dodge and Steele County meetings
- Hosted quarterly TZD Safe Roads coordinator meetings for 6 regional Safe Roads coordinators
- Attend Southern Minnesota Regional Trauma Advisory (SMRTAC) meetings when possible
- Attended and participated in the Regional EMS Conference
- Minnesota State Patrol – Annual new trooper orientation TZD presentation
- Presentation to Federated Insurance Leadership Team
- Presentations to Central Farm Service employees
- TZD vision, mission, goals presentation to 4 city councils and county boards throughout the region. Most of the county board local government TZD presentations were completed in 2016 and 2017.



MINNESOTA TOWARD ZERO DEATHS

Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths

Media Availability

Contact: Jessica Schleck

Southeast Regional TZD Coordinator

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Oct. 10, 2018

Seat belts Save Lives

Demonstration to Show Strength of Seat Belt

What: Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths will partner with Kasson Police and Kasson Fire to emphasize that seat belts can save lives by demonstrating the strength of a seat belt.

The Kasson Police Department Open House will be highlighted by having a tow truck lift a vehicle by its seat belt, showing the strength of a belt and how it can help prevent injury or loss of life when properly used.

This educational event will coincide with the Kasson Fire Department Open House. A vehicle extrication demonstration will immediately follow the seat belt event.

Minnesotans are making smart choices as a high rate of motorists continue buckling up (92.4 percent) in Minnesota. Even so, failing to put a seat belt on even one time can mean the difference between life and death.

When: Wednesday, Oct. 10 at 7 p.m.

Where: Kasson Police Department
19 E. Main St, Kasson

Who:

- Chief Kent Berghuis, Kasson Police Department
- Chief Joe Fitch, Kasson Fire Department
- Jessica Schleck, Southeast Minnesota TZD Regional Coordinator

Why:

- In 2017, 78 unbelted motorists lost their lives on Minnesota roads.
- In 2017, 76 percent of the unbelted deaths occurred in Greater Minnesota (outside the seven-county metro area).

The Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths program brings area law enforcement, public health educators, engineers and emergency medical and trauma services together to reduce the number of traffic fatalities and severe injuries to zero in southeast Minnesota. The 11-county area encompasses: Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha and Winona counties.

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MINNESOTA TOWARD ZERO DEATHS

Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths

Media Advisory

April 15, 2019

Contact: Jessica Schleck
Southeast Minnesota TZD Regional Coordinator
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John Marshall Teen Receives Traffic Safety Champion Award

Local teen and regional Toward Zero Deaths partners speak out as a reminder to reduce distraction behind the wheel and focus on the road.

What: John Marshall High School Senior Mohammad Alhusaini will be recognized with a Traffic Safety Champion Award for Outstanding Teen Leadership. Mohammad recently produced a video to remind students that "No text is worth a death".

To save lives on Minnesota roads, more than 300 law enforcement agencies including, Southeast Minnesota regional law enforcement officers are currently conducting an enhanced distracted driving enforcement and education campaign. The campaign that runs through April 30 is coordinated by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety (DPS-OTS).

When: Tuesday, April 16, 10 a.m.

Where: John Marshall High School
1510 14th St NW, Rochester

Who:

- Officer Greg Marx, Rochester Police Department, School Resource Officer
- Sgt. Chris Lowrie, Rochester Police Department
- Steve Akin, John Marshall High School
- Mohammad Alhusaini, John Marshall High School student

Why:

- More than 60,000 crashes were distracted driving-related from 2014 – 2018 (preliminary), contributing to nearly one in five crashes in Minnesota.
- Distracted driving contributes to an average of 45 deaths and 204 life-changing injuries a year (2014 – 2018 preliminary).

The Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths program brings area law enforcement, public health educators, engineers and emergency medical and trauma services together to reduce the number of traffic fatalities and severe injuries to zero in southeast Minnesota. The 11-county area encompasses: Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha and Winona counties.

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*Editor's note: Link to video can be found at: <https://youtu.be/YkxGD5eQm8>





MINNESOTA TOWARD ZERO DEATHS

Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths

Media Advisory

April 17, 2019

Contact: Jessica Schleck

Southeast Minnesota TZD Regional Coordinator

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Border States Team up to Battle Motorcycle Safety

Minnesota and Wisconsin partner with two families that know the heartache of motorcycle crashes in a first ever Flood Run event to remind motorists and riders the importance of sharing the road

What: The Vikings and the Packers are known for their friendly rivalry on the field, but when it comes to motorcycle safety they are teaming up for a big win.

Two families who lost loved ones in motorcycle crashes will join traffic safety stakeholders from Minnesota and Wisconsin at a first ever cross-border media event. The families want to share the importance of motorcycle safety, and traffic safety stakeholders want to remind the public that law enforcement on both sides of the river will be out in full force during the Flood Run to help everyone make it home to safe.

On Sept. 15, 2018, Daniel Folsom was traveling north along Lake Pepin during the annual fall flood run. Witnesses said he crossed the centerline, drifted back into his lane and then struck a guardrail. He attempted to regain control, but hit the guardrail a second time and was thrown from his motorcycle. Daniel was not wearing a helmet and died as a result of head injuries sustained in the crash.

On July 4, 2017, Daniel Syverson was traveling on his motorcycle to Red Wing to meet up with friends. As Dan approached Wabasha County Road 3, an eastbound vehicle attempted to make a left turn on County Road 3. The driver did not see Dan on his motorcycle, resulting in a devastating crash. Dan, who was not wearing a helmet, was thrown from the motorcycle and died from his injuries.

When: Friday, April 19, 11 a.m.

Where: National Eagle Center
50 Pembroke Ave, Wabasha

Who:

- Jessica Schleck, Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths regional coordinator
- Sgt. Dean Haigh, Wisconsin State Patrol
- Joel Wener, Pepin County Sheriff's Office
- Family of Daniel Folsom
- Rodney Bartsh, Wabasha County Sheriff's Office
- Dana Syverson, Daniel Syverson's significant other
- Sgt. Troy Christianson, Minnesota State Patrol

Why:

- There have been 271 motorcyclists killed on MN roads and 386 on WI roads in the last five years, according to preliminary reports (2014-2018).

(more)



- Motorists – Please look twice for motorcyclists. Failure to yield the right of way is among the most-cited contributing factor in crashes involving a motorcycle and another vehicle in Minnesota and Wisconsin.
- Riders – Wear protective gear, be alert, keep your distance, watch your speed and always ride sober. More than half of the fatal motorcycle crashes last year in Minnesota and Wisconsin involved only the motorcycle.

The Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths program brings area law enforcement, public health educators, engineers and emergency medical and trauma services together to reduce the number of traffic fatalities and severe injuries to zero in southeast Minnesota. The 11-county area encompasses: Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha and Winona counties.

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MINNESOTA TOWARD ZERO DEATHS

Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths

Media Advisory

May 15, 2019

Contact: Jessica Schleck

Southeast Minnesota TZD Regional Coordinator

507.696.8435; jessica.schleck@state.mn.us

Local Teens and Regional Toward Zero Deaths Partners Encourage Community Members to Buckle Up *Mayo High School Hosts Seat Belt Championship*

What: Students across Olmsted County will participate in a seat belt challenge championship to remind students how easy it is to buckle up and save lives. Each school crowned a champion earlier this month as students were timed on how quickly they could move to each seat in a car and buckle up. The winning team from each school will compete for the overall championship.

The championship kicks off the Click It or Ticket campaign on seat belt enforcement and education awareness. To save lives and help educate the public, statewide law enforcement agencies will have extra patrols out for Click It or Ticket enforcement beginning Monday, May 20. The campaign that runs through June 2 is coordinated by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety.

When: Friday, May 17, 12:30 p.m.

Where: Mayo High School
1420 11th Ave SE, Rochester

Who:

- School Resource Officer Pat Kelly, Rochester Police Department
- Seat Belt Championship winner

Why:

- Preliminary numbers show 92 unbelted motorists lost their lives on Minnesota roads in 2018.
- In a five year period (2014 – 2018), 446 unbelted motorists lost their lives and 981 people suffered life-changing injuries on Minnesota roads.
- According to the 2018 Minnesota Seat Belt Survey, 92.4 percent of front seat occupants are wearing their seat belts.

The Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths program brings area law enforcement, public health educators, engineers, emergency medical and trauma services and everyone to reduce the number of traffic fatalities and severe injuries to zero in southeast Minnesota. The 11-county area encompasses: Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha and Winona counties.

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MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY



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

NEWS ADVISORY

Bruce Gordon, Director of Communications

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 17, 2019

CONTACT:

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[Dave Boxum](#), 651-201-7146

[Jessica Schleck](#), 507-696-8435

SAVING LIVES: TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF PRIMARY SEAT BELT LAW

News Conference: Extra Seat Belt Enforcement May 20 – June 2

WHAT: Progress. That's what's taken place over the last 10 years since Minnesota passed the primary seat belt law in 2009. In 2018, preliminary numbers show that number decreased to 92. A year prior to the primary seat belt law (2008), 152 unbelted motorists lost their lives on Minnesota roads.

In the five years (2004-2008) leading up to the law, more than half of all fatalities (51 percent) were known to be unbelted motorists. In the last five years (2014-2018), that number decreased to 34 percent. While significant progress has been made, much more work remains to be done.

To remind motorists that seat belts save lives and it's the law to buckle up, more than 300 law enforcement agencies across the state will be participating in the statewide Click It or Ticket campaign May 20 – June 2. The Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety coordinates the extra enforcement and education campaign.

The state's primary seat belt law, which requires drivers and passengers in all seating positions to buckle up or be seated in the correct child restraint, took effect on June 9, 2009 in honor of Meghan Cooper.

Megan's family was a driving force behind the passing of the primary seat belt law. Kathy, who lost her daughter in June 1999, will join law enforcement in urging motorists to join the 92 percent of Minnesotans who buckle up.

WHEN: Monday, May 20, 10:30 a.m.

WHERE: ~~Cabela's~~
3900 Cabela Dr. NW, Owatonna

WHO: Mike Hanson, Office of Traffic Safety director
Lon Thiele, Steel County Sheriff's Office
Kathy Cooper, Meghan's mother

Sgt. Troy Christianson, Minnesota State Patrol

Why:

- Preliminary numbers show 92 unbelted motorists lost their lives on Minnesota roads in 2018.
- In a five year period (2014 – 2018), 446 unbelted motorists lost their lives and 981 people suffered life-changing injuries on Minnesota roads.
- According to the 2018 Minnesota Seat Belt Survey, 92.4 percent of front seat occupants are wearing their seat belts.



MINNESOTA TOWARD ZERO DEATHS

Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths

Media Availability

June 12, 2019

Contact: Jessica Schleck
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DON'T LET SUMMER BE A BUZZ KILL WITH A DWI

Voluntary Preliminary Breathalyzer Testing (PBT) at Thursdays Downtown

What: Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths will partner with the Rochester Police Department and the Olmsted County Sheriff's Office to offer voluntary preliminary breathalyzer (PBT) testing at Thursdays Downtown in Rochester.

This educational event will give community members the opportunity to see first-hand how alcohol affects their blood alcohol level and will serve as a reminder to make good choices behind the wheel. Driver behaviors continue to play a significant role in motor vehicle crashes with speed, distraction, lack of seat belt use and drunk driving the top contributing factors in Minnesota road fatalities.

To help keep the roads safe, officers, deputies and troopers from more than 300 agencies statewide will be participating in extra enforcement targeting speeding motorists. The campaign begins June 18 and will run through July 21. The Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety coordinates the extra enforcement and education effort.

When: Thursday, June 13; 4-8 p.m.

Where: Thursdays Downtown
Peace Plaza - Rochester Police Department display
101 1st St SW, Rochester

Who:

- Officer Jim Marsolek, Rochester Police Department
- Sgt. Jens Dammen, Olmsted County Sheriff's Office
- Jessica Schleck, Southeast Minnesota TZD Regional Coordinator

Why:

- Memorial Day through Labor Day marks the 100 deadliest days on Minnesota roads.
- Preliminary numbers show the 100-day stretch last year accounted for 124 of the 381 fatalities, making up 33 percent of all the traffic deaths in 2018.

The Southeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths program brings area law enforcement, public health educators, engineers and emergency medical and trauma services together to reduce the number of traffic fatalities and severe injuries to zero in southeast Minnesota. The 11-county area encompasses: Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha and Winona counties.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local and State Law Enforcement Agencies to Share Important Hands-Free Messages at Upcoming Safe City Nights Event

Jul 25, 2019 – ROCHESTER, MINN – The Rochester Police Department (RPD) will hold their fifth Safe City Nights event from 6-8 p.m. on July 30 at Watson Field. In addition to the free meal and activities, a special program will take place to share information about the hands-free law, which will go into effect on Aug. 1.

Members from the Rochester Police Department, Olmsted County Sheriff's Office, Minnesota State Patrol and Towards Zero Deaths (TZD) will take part in a hands-free presentation at 6 p.m. . The hands-free bill was signed by Governor Tim Walz on April 12, 2019.

The new law allows a driver to use their cell phone to make calls, text, listen to music or podcasts and get directions, but only by voice commands or single-touch activation without holding the phone. Drivers may not hold your phone in your hand. Also, a driver may not use their phone at any time for video calling, video live-streaming, Snapchat, gaming, looking at video or photos stored on the phone, using non-navigation apps, reading texts and scrolling or typing on the phone. More information can be found HandsFreeMN.org

According to the National Safety Council and Insurance Federation based on National Highway Traffic Safety Administration data, traffic fatalities decreased by an average of 15 percent in 12 of 15 states with the hands-free laws.

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Alcohol
and Gambling
Enforcement

Bureau of
Criminal
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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

NEWS RELEASE

Bruce Gordon, Director of Communications

September 20, 2019

CONTACT:

Megan Leonard, 651-201-7566

THOUSANDS OF MOTORCYCLISTS EXPECTED FOR FALL FLOOD RUN THIS WEEKEND

Motorists & Riders Urged to Use Caution along Scenic River Routes

ST. PAUL — Riders and motorists should exercise extreme caution this weekend along the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers as thousands of motorcyclists take to the road for the Fall Flood Run. As many as 30,000 riders will be traveling between the Twin Cities and Winona on Saturday, Sept. 21.

So far this season, 39 motorcyclists have died on Minnesota roads, according to preliminary reports, compared to 52 at the same time last year. Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) officials ask riders and motorists to safely share the road. Riders should take safety into their own hands and motorists should look twice for motorcyclists.

Law enforcement agencies in southeast Minnesota, along with Minnesota State Troopers, will be out patrolling the area during the event to ensure a safe riding environment.

Wisconsin law enforcement will have an increased enforcement presence along the Wisconsin portions of the route.

"We want everyone to have a safe, enjoyable ride," says Lt. Gordon Shank, Minnesota State Patrol. "That takes a joint effort. Motorcyclists should ride sober and ride at their own pace in groups, while other motorists should give riders space and diligently check blind spots before changing lanes and at intersections."

"The Wisconsin State Patrol is pleased to partner with other law enforcement agencies and traffic safety advocates to support the Fall Flood Run," said Lieutenant Les Mlsna with the Wisconsin State Patrol's Northwest Region. "Along with additional officers to help keep traffic moving safely, our motorcycle safety training program will have staff and interactive displays located in the Buffalo County community of Nelson along the Flood Run route."

--MORE--

DPS offers these safety tips:

Riders

- Be prepared for inattentive drivers by staying focused on riding, keeping your speed in check and maintaining a two-second following distance.
- Wear the gear. Motorcyclists should wear a DOT-approved helmet and brightly colored protective gear for visibility and protection.
- Don't drink and ride. One-third of all motorcycle fatalities involve impaired riders.

Motorists

- Watch for motorcycles. Due to the smaller size of motorcycles, their speed and distance is more difficult to judge.
- Always look twice before entering a roadway, turning left or changing lanes.
- Give riders room by maintaining a two-second following distance and check blind spots.
- Pay attention and drive at safe speeds.

About the Minnesota Department of Public Safety

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) comprises 11 divisions where 2,100 employees operate programs in the areas of law enforcement, crime victim assistance, traffic safety, alcohol and gambling, emergency communications, fire safety, pipeline safety, driver licensing, vehicle registration and emergency management. DPS activity is anchored by three core principles: education, enforcement and prevention.

About the Minnesota Motorcycle Safety Center

The Minnesota Motorcycle Safety Center (MMSC) provides high-quality rider education, training and licensing to prevent motorcycle crashes and the resulting fatalities and injuries. It was created in the early 1980s to address record high motorcyclist fatalities.

The MMSC provides on-cycle and classroom rider training courses, develops awareness campaigns and informational materials, and coordinates third-party skills testing for motorcycle license endorsement through the Basic Rider Course and evening testing at select DVS Exam Stations.

Motorcycle safety is a component of *Toward Zero Deaths (TZD)*, the state's primary road safety initiative. A primary vision of the *TZD* program is to create a safe driving culture in Minnesota in 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.

Recent MMSC Activity and Statistics

- There are more than 223,000 registered motorcycles and more than 414,000 licensed operators in Minnesota.
- During the 2018 training season, MMSC trained more than 5,000 students statewide.
- Follow MMSC on Twitter [@MnDPS_MCSafety](#) and "like" [MMSC on Facebook](#).

###

KTTC-TV and FOX-47

11.21.2018

Minnesota law enforcement officers plead for fewer drunken drivers over holidays

Link: <https://kttc.com/news/2018/11/21/minnesota-law-enforcement-officers-plead-for-fewer-drunken-drivers-over-holidays/>



ROCHESTER, Minn. (KTTC) – Law enforcement officers in Minnesota kicked off extra DWI enforcement for the holiday season Wednesday. They stressed how damaging a preventable deadly crash can be at a morning press conference. “One of the most difficult things in law enforcement is when officers have to tell family members that their loved ones are not coming home because of an impaired driver,” said Rochester Police Department Chief Jim Franklin. Officers across southeastern Minnesota shared stories about dealing with DWI-related incidents. Deputy Chad Myers, Winona County Sheriff’s Office. “We’re never gonna know the number of lives we’re going to save. I think the closes we’ll get is knowing that when these numbers decrease, then we’re winning this war,” said Winona County Sheriff’s Deputy Chad Myers. “I don’t want to have to give that death notification. I’ve done it three times in my career and it’s three times too many. I don’t want to have to tell someone that their loved ones not coming home. And although we’re not going to get them all, but if we can get one and save one life and stop the heartbreak of an entire family, to me that’s worth it.” On average, three people are arrested for DWI every hour in Minnesota. There were more than 4,400 alcohol related crashes last year statewide. 113 people died. The extra enforcement campaign runs on weekends through December 29th.

KIMT-TV

11.21.2018

Extra DWI enforcement and education over the holidays

By: Annalise Johnson

Link: <https://www.kimt.com/content/news/Extra-DWI-enforcement-and-education-over-the-holidays-501051401.html>



A campaign of special enforcement and education begins Wednesday and runs through December 29th on the weekends.

ROCHESTER, Minn. - Southeastern Minnesota law enforcement agencies, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, and the Department of Public Safety are teaming up to crack down on drunk driving over the holiday season. A campaign of special enforcement and education begins Wednesday and runs through December 29th on the weekends.

"More Minnesotans need to commit to making repeated choices and better choices in reference to impaired driving. In essence, lining up a sober driver," says Rochester Police Chief Jim Franklin.

KAAL-TV

11.21.2018

Locals Warn Against Impaired Holiday Driving

By: Talia Milavetz

Link: <https://www.kaaltv.com/news/warning-about-impaired-holiday-driving/5151130/?cat=10151>



(ABC 6 News) -- This Thanksgiving, tens of millions of Americans are expected to hit the roads. After a holiday that revolves around eating and drinking, law enforcement officials expect a spike in impaired driving. That's why people in Rochester are raising awareness about drunk driving during the holidays. As Sandy Melville prepares for the upcoming holiday season, she does so with her son Austin in mind. "Austin was a walk in the park, he was very kind-hearted. He loved people and he loved life," said Sandy.

Every Christmas, Sandy decorates a tree in his honor. In 2010, over Thanksgiving weekend, Austin was killed by a drunk driver in a hit-and-run accident. Since then, she has been working to spread the word about impaired driving throughout the year, but especially around the holidays. "We are involved with MADD facilitated victim impact panels here in Rochester. These panels are for arrested DWI attendees to sit through and listen to the victim's family story. I also started speaking to Zumbro Valley Health and go to Mankato and Red Wing to Speak to Offenders in both of those towns," said Sandy. Across the country last year, 528 people were killed in crashes involving drunk drivers over Thanksgiving weekend, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

To get ahead of that this weekend, local law enforcement officials are getting the word out on social media. "A lot of general messaging on Social Media short and sweet spots to remind people to plan ahead, find a sober ride and not drink and drive," said Media Development Specialist Kyle Bradt. He says the best way to get through to people is through examples. That's why Sandy makes an effort to share her story. "This is all I can do for my son. I have to do this and I don't want any other family to go through the horror of losing a 23-year-old son or daughter because of someone's deadly choice," she said.

KTTC-TV

4.04.19

Family turns tragic crash into lesson for students

By: Ubah Ali

Link: <https://kttc.com/news/minnesota-news/2019/04/04/family-turns-tragic-crash-into-lesson-for-students/>



KASSON, Minn. (KTTC) – A family dealing with the loss of their son turned their tragedy into a learning lesson for students at Kasson-Mantorville Thursday afternoon.

Logan Maas and his friends were on a joyride in a rural part of Dodge County in December, 2015. With what started as a joyride ended in heartbreak for his parents.

For fun, Maas and his friends drove over a steep hill twice without incident , but they made a fateful decision on the third pass.

Matt Maas, his father, said that decision changed their lives forever, “The last time they decided, they were gonna take their seatbelt off everybody but the driver, but the last time they were going over the hill the estimate I was told was around 90 mph,” “Its absolutely so hard to literally relive the worst day of my life.” They crashed, Logan Mass was thrown from the car, and died from his injuries.

It is the hardest part, but Maas said he continues to share his son’s story with high school students hoping it will save a life, “I don’t wanna see another family go through the heartache we had to go through.”

The auditorium was filled with about 600 students, who walked in happy and smiling, but were left speechless and in tears after watching Logan’s story. Hannah Brumfield, said the real life situation captured her attention, “We are constantly preached at not to do these things and to wear a seat belt but having speakers come in who have experienced it.”

The presentation of Logan’s tragic death at Kasson-Mantorville is just ahead of their prom this weekend.

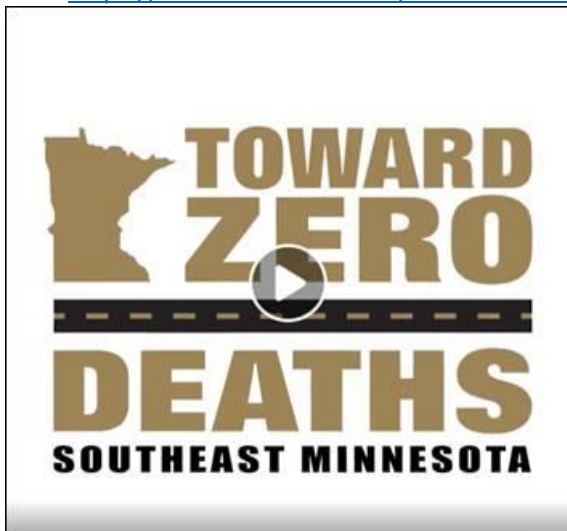
Olmsted County Sheriff’s Office

4.08.19

[#PhonesDown](#) [#HeadsUp](#) [#JustDrive](#) [#OlmstedCounty](#) [#Minnesota](#)

By: Kyle Bradt

Link: <https://www.facebook.com/OlmstedSheriff/videos/447549989329425/>.



KAAL-TV

4.16.19

John Marshall High School student receives traffic safety champion award

By:

Link: <https://kttc.com/news/2019/04/16/john-marshall-high-school-student-receives-traffic-safety-champion-award/>



ROCHESTER, Minn. (KTTC) – One John Marshall High School student’s effort to promote safety behind the wheel was recognized Tuesday morning. Senior Mohammad Alhusaini recently produced a video to remind his fellow students that “no text is worth a death.”

The Rochester Police Department and Minnesota State Patrol came together to award Mohammad with a traffic safety champion award.

Mohammad says he made sure his video was just 30 seconds long, because that’s how fast someone’s life can change or worse, be lost.

“Most of these accidents happen from using the phone so I would say that like everything can wait in life. Your phone can wait.

Everything can wait, but your life can’t.” Said Mohammad.

“You have to be more protective in that situation because at the end you have loved one’s and people who care about you and the opposite so they don’t want to lose you.”

After graduating, Mohammad says he plans to attend film school at Penn State University.

To see Mohammad’s full video click [here](#).

KIMT-TV

4.16.19

Student sends message about distracted driving: 'No text is worth a death'

By: Calyn Thompson

Link: <https://www.kimt.com/content/news/Student-sends-message-about-distracted-driving-No-text-is-worth-a-death-508673491.html>



ROCHESTER, Minn. – It's responsible for several death every year, still many people are driving distracted. A local student is being recognized for raising awareness and fighting back against the deadly driving habit. Mohammad Alhusaini is a senior at John Marshall High School. He moved to Rochester in 2017 from Kuwait.

He's using his passion of film to get this message across: "No text is worth a death."

"They are putting their lives and other people's lives in danger," Alhusaini said. "We have to take this really seriously."

It's a 30-second video showing what could happen when you text and drive.

Alhusaini made the video short on purpose, showing just how little time it takes to change a life.

"You have to be more protective for your life," Alhusaini said, "because at the end, you have like loved ones and people who care about you. They don't want to lose you."

Law enforcement are giving the senior a "Traffic Safety Champion Award."

Greg Marx, a school resource officer with the Rochester Police Department, thinks the message may ring louder coming from a fellow student rather than an officer with a badge.

"I think it resonates a lot better with those kids and they tend to take a look at it a little bit differently when it comes from somebody their own age," Marx said.

It's a lesson for all drivers to look up from your phones.

"We don't want to see something bad happen just because they're worried about when a text message is coming," Marx said.

Right now, law enforcement in the region are doing enhanced distracted driving enforcement and education.

Starting Aug. 1, Minnesotans will have to use hands-free devices in their cars.

4.16.19

John Marshall High School student receives traffic safety champion award

By: Jack Keenan

Link: <https://myfox47.com/2019/04/16/john-marshall-high-school-student-receives-traffic-safety-champion-award/>



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KARE 11-TV

4.19.19

Minn. and Wis. law enforcement team up to keep motorcyclists safe

By: Jennifer Austin

Link: <https://www.kare11.com/mobile/article/news/minn-and-wis-law-enforcement-team-up-to-keep-motorcyclists-safe/89-8a5ef384-3590-4abf-890b-028fc8dec92f>



WABASHA, Minn. — Now that the weather is getting nicer, you're going to see more motorcycles on the roads.

That's why Minnesota and Wisconsin are coming together. The two states are teaming up with an important message about sharing the road.

It's a message the Folsom family wants to spread.

"He loved snowmobiles, he loved motorcycles, he loved anything that moved," Amber Kopka said of her father, Dan Folsom. Folsom died in September 2018, during a charity motorcycle ride called the Flood Run. Authorities say he was on highway 35 when he crossed the centerline, eventually hitting a guardrail twice before being thrown from the bike without a helmet.

"They say that was on impact, that he had passed away," said his daughter, Allison Swanson, "It was the day before his 64th birthday."

The next Flood Run is Saturday, April 20.

"It's kind of right up and down the river, Minnesota and Wisconsin sides," said Sgt. Troy Christianson with the Minnesota State Patrol.

It's why stakeholders from both states are teaming up this weekend to remind drivers and motorcyclists about the importance of sharing the road.

"It's important that people just educate themselves, and drive a safe speed, and be a defensive rider," he said.

"One of the things that really you wonder a lot about is if he did have a helmet on what would have happened? Would he have lived? Would he have been brain dead? Would he have still died? Those kinds of questions kind of haunt you a little," Kopka said.

The state patrol says law enforcement on both sides of the river will be out in full force this weekend to make sure everyone stays safe.

WXOW19-TV

4.19.19

Motorcycle safety before annual “Flood Run”

By: Marcus Aarsvold

Link: <https://wxow.com/news/2019/04/19/motorcycle-safety-before-annual-flood-run/>



WABASHA, Minn. (WXOW) — Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths hosted a media event to address motorcycle safety at the National Eagle Center ahead of the annual “Flood Run” ride starting Saturday.

The annual “Flood Run” is a motorcycle tour in the Winona area. The name dates back to 1965 when motorcycle riders brought sandbags to Winona to protect against flooding.

With thousands of riders on the roads, local law enforcement in Minnesota and Wisconsin are teaming up to urge safety for those on either two or four wheels.

According to the Minnesota Motorcycle Safety Center (or MMSC), there are a registered 223,000 motorcyclists in the state. Historically those riders and Wisconsin riders dust off their bikes for Saturday’s ride.

Dana Syverson spoke at the media event. She told the story of her husband who was killed on the 4th of July weekend by a driver who did not see him while attempting to make a left turn. “He believed in following the rules,” Syverson said. “Be aware of your surroundings and know that you could be the best driver or rider [but] you always have to be watching out for other people.”

“This weekend we will have a significant increase in staffing levels,” Wisconsin State Patrol Sergeant Dean Haigh said. “[We’re] trying to help make sure that everybody makes it home safely through presence.”

Aside from more policing on the roads, Sergeant Haigh asked for all drivers to pay extra attention. "Motorists need to watch for cyclists and cycle riders need to be alert and be attentive and ride safely themselves also."

Cyclist Doug Noreen rode with Dan Syverson in the "Fat Rat Chopper" riding group. "Just stay safe, slow down and don't be drinking and driving," Noreen said. "Watch out for other riders and other riders—be aware."

According to Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths program, from 2014-2018 there were 271 motorcycle deaths in Minnesota and 386 in Wisconsin.

WKBT 8-TV

4.19.19

Wisconsin and Minnesota State Troopers meet for Motorcycle Safety

By: Alec Giannakopoulos

Link: <https://www.news8000.com/news/wisconsin-and-minnesota-state-troopers-meet-for-motorcycle-safety/1070696850>



LA CROSSE, Wisc. - State troopers teamed with Toward Zero Deaths to prevent motorcycle accidents Friday morning.

Toward Zero Deaths had invited two families to share their stories of losing a loved one due to a motorcycle accident. Those speakers along with speeches from highway patrolmen from both states urged motorcyclists to be more careful.

"Wear a motorcycle helmet, it's an easy thing to do, and also wear visible clothing while riding," explained Sgt. Troy Christianson of the Minnesota State Patrol. Visible clothing can be any bright color along with reflector strips to catch headlights. According to Sgt. Christianson, motorists are also responsible for keeping an eye out for motorcycles. "Most accidents happen at intersections, so make sure that you are giving a motorcycle plenty of space in front and behind you, and always watch intersections."

The event is planned to come before the start of motorcycle season, and the Flood Run. Starting in 1965, the Flood Run is an annual event where cyclists from both Minnesota and Wisconsin drive down the Great River Road. The origins of the run date back to the flood of 1965, where 12 cyclists made the trip to gather flood supplies. The current route has changed from the original route to include both Minnesota and Wisconsin.

KIMT – TV
5.01.2019

Man shares story of his son's death at Southeast Minnesota's Toward Zero Deaths workshop

By: Annalise Johnson

Link: <https://www.kimt.com/content/news/Man-shares-story-of-his-sons-death-at-Southeast-Minnesotas-Toward-Zero-Deaths-workshop-509352151.html>



ROCHESTER, Minn. - On Wednesday at the International Event Center, First responders, engineers, educators, and local leaders met at Southeast Minnesota's Toward Zero Deaths workshop to address traffic deaths.

At the workshop, Matthew Maas and Minnesota State Patrol Sergeant Troy Christianson presented to the workshop attendees and showed State Patrol's latest video featuring the Maas family. Matthew's son Logan was a senior at Triton High School in 2015. In December of that year, he was in a car crash. He wasn't wearing his seatbelt, was ejected from the car, and fractured his skull. He did not survive the crash.

"To come out and speak at events like this or at a high school is hard. It's very, very hard. It's me reliving the worst day of my life over and over publicly.... but I do it because I don't want other families to go through what our family has had to go through, the heartache that we've gone through."

Maas and Christianson are presenting to Stewartville High Schoolers on Thursday.

KTTC - TV
5.01.2019

Hands-free legislation and autism discussed at “MN Toward Zero Deaths”

By: Kilat Fitzgerald

Link: <https://kttc.com/news/2019/05/01/hands-free-legislation-and-autism-discussed-at-mn-toward-zero-deaths/>



ROCHESTER, Minn. (KTTC) – It has taken years of effort to bring down the number of tragic collisions on Minnesota’s highways.

But there’s still more work to be done in order to bring that number to zero.

The program, “Minnesota Towards Zero Deaths” showed the efforts by the legislature to make the roads safer.

This includes the “Hands-Free” law that will go into effect this summer.

Today’s meeting was attended by the officers that are expected to enforce the new law.

Local leaders, including Rochester Mayor Kim Norton, cited a number of cultural shifts that encourage more safe driving practices.

A special presentation was made on how to respond to a crisis affecting a person with autism.

Ellie Wilson, the executive director of the Autism Society of Minnesota (AUSM) spoke to how first responders can mitigate their distress during a rescue.

“People with Autism use the roads just like everybody else,” Wilson said. “One in 59 people are now diagnosed with Autism in the United States. One in 42 in the state of Minnesota. That means that in order to get to zero, we can’t just think about the 98 percent, we have to think about 100 percent of our community and that means those that are part of the neurodiverse community.”

Those tips for included turning off lights, sirens and radios. She also advised avoiding physical contact if possible.

KAAL – TV
5.01.2019

Emergency Responders Get Lesson in Responding to People With Autism

By: Jaclyn Harold

Link: <https://www.kaaltv.com/news/rochester-minnesota-emergency-responders-get-lesson-in-responding-to-people-with-autism/5337453/?cat=10151>



(ABC 6 News) -- What works for everybody doesn't always work for people with autism, but what works for people with autism works for everybody.

That was part of today's lesson in an emergency responders workshop: To respond to different types of emergency situations more effectively.

Advertisement

Ellie Wilson, the executive director of the Autism Society of Minnesota, presented the group with scenarios that first responders or law enforcement may encounter with someone who has autism.

The course focused on how responders can determine if someone is on the autism spectrum, and from that point, how to better serve them in their crisis.

Small adjustments like asking short and clear questions, or avoiding flashing lights, and the loud sounds of an emergency radio, are things that can help when dealing with someone with autism, Wilson said.

"There's a lot of misunderstandings around autism that are still present in a lot of communities," she said, "and to give people that really good information to help them understand the wide spectrum that is autism helps prepare them to use the very easy tools that can help lead to great outcomes, not just in safety, but in community inclusion."

YouTube – recorded live stream

Minnesota's Seat Belt Law Saving Lives for 10 Years – Click It or Ticket

5.20.19

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KEyFLGpDjVw&feature=youtu.be>



Owatonna People's Press

5.20.19

Law enforcement out in numbers to enforce seat belt laws

By: Jeffery Jackson

Link: http://www.southernminn.com/owatonna_peoples_press/news/article_16b97a78-4a5c-5ddd-a10d-28fa5f6d591d.html



Steele County Sheriff Lon Thiele speaks at a press conference surrounded by law enforcement officials from 11 counties, the Minnesota State Patrol and the Department of Public Safety at Cabela's in Owatonna Monday morning as part of the kickoff of the Click It or Ticket campaign, which runs May 20 through June 2 — a campaign focused on making sure occupants of motor vehicles are wearing their seatbelts. Standing immediately behind Sheriff Thiele are, from left to right, Kathy Cooper, the mother of Meghan Cooper, who was killed in a crash nearly 20 years ago; Sgt. Troy Christianson of the

Minnesota State Patrol; and Mike Hanson of the office of Traffic Safety director. (Jeffrey Jackson/People's Press)

Olmsted County Sheriff's Office
5.17.19

2019 Rochester/Olmsted County Seat Belt Challenge

Kyle with the Olmsted County Sheriff's Office produced a great video featuring the event... feel free to like and share!
Link:

<https://www.facebook.com/OlmstedSheriff/videos/439274913301143/UzpfSTExNjI0NzIxNDc6MTAyMTg3MzA2NzMwMzU1OTU/>



Post Bulletin
5.17.19

Olmsted County Schools Seatbelt Challenge Championship

Link: https://www.postbulletin.com/news/education/olmstead-county-schools-seatbelt-challenge-championship/youtube_9db2d69b-b00b-560d-850b-9e6bb93b8b27.html



KAAL-TV

7.30.19

No "Grace Period" For Hands-Free Law

By: Hanna Tiede

Link: <https://www.kaaltv.com/news/no-quotgrace-periodquot-for-hands-free-law---minnesota/5441748/?cat=10217>



(ABC 6 News) - On Thursday, Minnesota will become the 20th "Hands-Free" state and authorities say there won't be a "grace period". Come August 1, Minnesota drivers and those traveling through are expected to follow the new law. Authorities made that message clear on Tuesday at the 5th "Safe City Nights" in Rochester. "The time to start adapting to this new law is now," said Sheriff Kevin Torgerson with Olmsted County Sheriff's Office.

"Our troopers on August 1 will be looking for those violations," said Capt. Christina Bogojevic with the Minnesota State Patrol. It's already illegal to text or be on your phone while driving but the Hands-Free law eliminates holding your phone while on a call. Only voice commands or single-touch activations are allowed. For those who don't have Bluetooth capabilities in their car, a good alternative is a set of headphones. However, you're only allowed to drive with one earpiece in. It's a law many say they can get behind. "I think it's about time," said Reymond, a Rochester resident. "I walk every day and I see these people [on their phones behind the wheel]... I don't have time for it." "With two young kids, I don't want distracted drivers on the road," said Megan Campion, a Rochester driver. "It's great for me too to make sure I put my phone away and am focusing on my driving and my kids." "My phone will stay in my glove box like it has since I got my license," said Christopher Remling, a new driver. "[My phone is] always in my pocket or in a place I can't reach without moving around," said Jakob Ratelle, another new driver. The new law aims to reduce the number of crashes on Minnesota roads. "In 12 of the states that have collected their data on the Hands-Free law, traffic fatalities have decreased by 15%," said Chief Jim Franklin with the Rochester Police Department.

Fatal crashes aren't just tragic for loved ones. "There's not a trooper out there that hasn't had to give a family member bad news and it's the absolute worst part of our jobs," said Bogojevic, "so if this law can

make one of those not happen it's well worth it." The first offense will land you a \$50 ticket plus court fees. After that, prepare yourself for a \$275 ticket with court fees on top.

KTTC-TV

7.30.19

Governor Walz, Rochester law enforcement unite to highlight incoming "hands-free" law

<https://kttc.com/news/2019/07/30/governor-walz-rochester-law-enforcement-unite-to-highlight-incoming-hands-free-law/>



ROCHESTER, Minn.(KTTC) – Tuesday, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz arrived in Rochester to help make sure the Southeast part of the state is ready for the "hands-free" law to go into effect.

"If you do have a change in plan and you don't know where you're going...pull over, get to a safe place, reprogram, and then continue on your way." Said Olmsted County Sheriff Kevin Torgerson.

On August 1st Minnesota becomes the country's 16th state to enact the new legislation, which prohibits the use of cell phones while driving a motor-vehicle or while in traffic.

"The easiest thing is just put your phone down while you're in the car. Enjoy the ride. Focus on the driving," said Governor Walz.

"There's some things you can do hands-free, there's some things you can do Bluetooth and certainly there's situations where emergencies warrant using that phone, but for the most part... there's not a situation where you need to be using it. This piece of legislation recognizes that and puts law enforcement in a position to enforce it."

"There's some things you can do hands-free, there's some things you can do Bluetooth and certainly there's situations where emergencies warrant using that phone, but for the most part...there's not a situation where you need to be using it." Said Governor Walz

Rochester Police Department, Minnesota State Patrol and Olmsted County Sheriff Office leaders all spoke alongside the governor, pleading to avoid an accident or tragedy by staying hands-free.

"If you do have a change in plan and you don't know where you're going... pull over, get to a safe place, reprogram and then continue on your way," said Olmsted County Sheriff Kevin Torgerson.

"It takes just a few seconds to do those things and those short little reminders, as opposed to the tragedy that we have seen."

In the law's first year alone, Governor Walz says approximately 40 lives will be saved, based on data from other "hands-free" states.

Local authorities are continuing their hands-free education push at Tuesday's safe city nights event at Watson Field.

KIMT-TV

7.30.19

Gov. Walz on hands-free law: 'It's time for us in Minnesota to make our roads safer'

By: Annalise Johnson

Link: <https://www.kimt.com/content/news/Governor-Walz-in-Rochester-talks--513403961.html>



ROCHESTER, Minn. - On Tuesday, Gov. Tim Walz spoke outside the Minnesota Department of Transportation Rochester Office. He was joined by Olmsted County Sheriff Kevin Torgerson, Rochester Police Chief Jim Franklin, and Minnesota State Patrol Captain Christina Bogojevic.

Hands-Free legislation goes into effect on Thursday. Minnesota will be the 20th state to make this change.

"This legislation came about out of tragedies and the selfless service of families who out of incredible grief chose to make sure that this law was put in place to reduce the chance of it happening to another family. And as the father of an 18-year-old, I can't tell you how grateful I am for them," said Walz.

Walz and the law enforcement leaders urged Minnesotans to begin practicing going hands-free if they hadn't already to be accustomed to the new law when it kicks in on Thursday.

Local law enforcement gave a hands-free legislation presentation Tuesday night at Safe City Nights at Watson Field.