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**Minnesota TZD  
Distracted  
Driving  
Enforcement  
Wave:  
April 11-20**

**U DRIVE. U TEXT.**



## Minnesota Takes Action to Stop Distraction



*D.J. Logan was texting and driving when she crashed into the back of a school bus in 2012.*

April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month. The month was introduced as a resolution and passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in 2010. The resolution mentions 9-year-old Erica Forney, who was struck and killed by a distracted driver in Fort Collins, CO, in November 2008.

Erica's story is one of many tragic stories involving distracted driving – an all too common occurrence. Distracted driving continues to be a growing concern in the United States. In 2012, the number of people killed nationally in

distracted-related crashes was 3,328, and an estimated 421,000 people were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving a distracted driver. In Minnesota alone, inattentive driving is a factor in one in four crashes, resulting in at least 65 deaths and 350 serious injuries each year, according to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

These staggering numbers show that there is still work to be done, and Minnesota's TZD Regions are up to this challenge.

Minnesota's distracted driving TZD law enforcement wave takes place April 11-20 with numerous TZD events and activities planned throughout the state to both support law enforcement efforts and provide education and outreach.

In the Northeast Region, local television station WDIO-TV rode along with enforcement officers in unmarked vehicles recording and

*Story continued on pg. 3*

**A Note from our Co-Chairs:** *Donna Berger, Dept. of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety & Sue Groth, MnDOT Office of Traffic, Safety & Technology*

Welcome to the first edition of the quarterly TZD newsletter. Ten years ago, Minnesota was facing a staggering loss of lives from traffic crashes, and many more citizens were being forced to live with debilitating injuries resulting from those crashes. In

2003, the state was looking at rising traffic-related fatalities and a projected trend of more than 700 annual fatalities by 2013.

As Minnesota enters its second decade of the TZD program, we feel that there are too many important strategies being

deployed across Minnesota to not share some of them with everyone. The TZD regional program has grown from a single southeast region with one part-time coordinator to eight regions fully staffed with five regional

*Story continued on pg. 2*

## Note from Co-Chairs Cont.

*Continued from pg. 1*

coordinators and one statewide coordinator. These coordinators, along with hundreds of partners at the state and local level, are contributing to our TZD success.

### **DPS – Changing Behavior With Education & Enforcement**

Fatalities resulting from impaired driving, one of the “fatal four” driving behaviors that continually appears in the DPS crash data, is on the decline in Minnesota. Today approximately 30 percent of all traffic deaths involve alcohol as opposed to 60 percent in the 1960s. Using technology such as DWI e-charging and ignition interlock for certain DWI offenders are just a couple of examples of how Minnesota is combatting this

complex issue.

Auto crashes are also the leading cause of death for young people under 30 in Minnesota. To mitigate this issue, DPS created the Point of Impact (POI) program, a parental component in driver education. Using the proven practice of combining education with enforcement, the program teaches parents Minnesota’s Graduated Driver Licensing laws and provides advice and strategies on how best to enforce those laws while their teens gain driving experience.

The POI program is growing and being used in more than 60 communities. Nearly 99 percent of parents surveyed would recommend the class to other parents.

Law enforcement statewide are

enforcing traffic laws by using high visibility enforcement campaigns throughout the calendar year that focus on seat belt usage, distracted driving, speeding and drunk driving. These campaigns, coupled with paid and earned media, are raising awareness and moving our numbers in the right direction.

### **MnDOT – Building Safer Roadways**

MnDOT focused their efforts on deploying systematic engineering solutions designed to make our roadways safer. More than 400 miles of cable median barrier were installed throughout the state — resulting in the reduction of fatal cross median crashes by more than 95 percent, and more are planned for future installation.

More than 5,000 miles of rumble strips have been installed on both state and local roads allowing drivers to both feel and hear when they are leaving a lane. This low-cost, high-benefit solution has proven to reduce fatal and life-threatening crashes from 15 to 44 percent on rural two-lane roads.

Additionally, more than 1,500 curves were improved through use of chevrons (signs with arrows). Several reduced conflict intersections and 115 roundabouts have been constructed, all of which reduce the number of dangerous broadside crashes at intersections.

Now, just more than a decade later, these efforts are paying off. Currently 388 fatalities (preliminary figure) from auto crashes were reported in 2013 — a far cry less than the predicted 700+ fatalities. But our work is still not done.

To keep us moving toward zero, TZD staff continues to search for new, effective ways to keep Minnesotans safe from auto crashes. We hope this newsletter will connect TZD Stakeholders across all 4 “Es” of the program and provide a resource for those who cannot attend a regional workshop or annual conference. We also hope that it will offer you ideas for TZD initiatives that can be implemented in your communities and workplaces.

Happy reading!



# Take Action & Stop the Distraction

Continued from pg. 1

stopping distracted drivers. In addition to distracted drivers, officers also stopped and arrested a motorist with a warrant out for his arrest.

Safety in numbers is the theme for Central Minnesota's distracted driving awareness wave with officers doubling-up in unmarked squad cars. This allows for one officer to safely watch for distracted drivers while the other officer can focus on driving.

In the Metro TZD Region, Ramsey County is once again utilizing school buses to assist in locating distracted drivers. A photo journalist from KARE 11 also rode along during their April 11 enforcement event. Their efforts resulted in 81 traffic stops with eight citations issued for distracted driving. Washington and Anoka Counties are also looking into this creative approach for their enforcement efforts while other Metro Counties are utilizing various raised vehicles.

Southern Minnesota Regions are taking their distracted driving awareness efforts one step further by coordinating an enforcement event called Operation D-Day, which features agency

coordination on county, state, and local levels. (See Operation D-Day on page 6 for more details on this unique, collaborative effort).

Additional distracted driving awareness activities including a law enforcement

distribution of distracted driving education cards and AT&T's "It Can Wait" campaign are also planned.

With these efforts taking place throughout April, Minnesota is definitely "Taking Action to stop the distraction!"

**The Lesson of the Purple Rock**

Shreya Dixit was excited about her first day of school in a senior. That day ended in tragedy when she ran into the back of a school bus while driving home after school. She was sitting and in the back without seat belts on. It took an hour to pull her from the wreckage. She died several hours later at an area hospital without ever regaining consciousness.

*From the family:*

"Cell phones are a distraction for many while driving. As parents, we need to educate and lead by example by limiting our phone use while in the car. Our beautiful Shreya was a good kid - with great grades, great friends, a perfect driving record and she loved life. She made a mistake like all teenagers do in the process of growing up. Larger this time, there is no growing up. We would much rather be providing her for this mistake than never hearing her laughter fill the house again. We can only pray that others can learn from her."

Shreya's three high school classmates painted a rock purple (her favorite color) as a permanent memorial to her and to remind students not to text and drive.

**TAKE ACTION STOP Distraction**

- It's illegal for drivers under age 18 to use a cell phone while driving. Turn ringer off and put phones out of reach to avoid the urge to answer or dial. Have passengers handle calls.
- Set ringer and music (not too loud) before driving.
- Don't eat or drink while driving.
- Know trip directions in advance. Park at a safe location to look at a map.
- Drive well rested. If you feel tired, find a safe place to rest. An open window or loud music won't help.

**Distraction Endanger Everyone's Safety**

Each year in Minnesota, distracted or inattentive driving is a factor in one in four crashes, resulting in at least 45 deaths and 250 serious injuries.

**Minnesota's "No Texting While Driving" Law**

It is illegal for ALL drivers to read/compose/send text messages and emails, or access the internet using a wireless device while the vehicle is in motion or a part of traffic - including when stopped in traffic or at a traffic light.

**Violations are up to \$300**

**All it took was one look**

Shreya Dixit, 23, a University of Wisconsin sophomore, planned to visit a boyfriend's family home for a weekend visit to her parents in the fall of 2007. But at the last minute, she was offered a ride from Madison to the Minneapolis area by an acquaintance.

She called to tell her parents of the change in plans. That was the last time her mother heard her voice. About 45 minutes later, the driver turned around to look in the back seat for a moment, lost control of the car and smashed the front end into a concrete pillar of an overpass.

Shreya, who was in the front passenger seat, died on the spot.

"She was the most warm, wonderful, happy person young women - full of humor, full of life." - View Dixit's story at [www.shreyadixit.org](http://www.shreyadixit.org)

To help prevent similar tragedies, and to raise awareness about distracted driving, View and Patrick Dixit and longtime family friend, "Distraction-Free Driver"™, an attorney, created memorial buttons for loved ones who were distracted drivers. The buttons serve as a permanent memorial and a warning to others.

The last is FREE. To access please visit [www.shreyadixit.org](http://www.shreyadixit.org)

## Changing Distracted Behavior – One Card at a Time

Shirley & Alexis Iverson & Debra Buhmann  
Killed in Lakerville, MN on December 12, 2009

The following excerpt was written by Carol Iverson, Daughter-in-law, aunt and sister-in-law to the victims.

Thanksgiving 2009 was another great holiday at the Iverson home. Before leaving that day to go back to our home in Mtshabi, we gave everyone hugs goodbye and said we would see them on Christmas Day. Two weeks later we got a phone call that would change all of our lives forever. Shirley, Deb and Lexi had been killed in a horrific car crash. Lexi was only 8 years old. Deb left behind a husband and two young children and Shirley was the glue that held our family together.

In the days following our loss, we found out that our family was on a short errand to Target and almost home. They were hit head on by a teenage inattentive driver who didn't have his lights on. To this day we still do not know why he crossed two lanes of traffic and was in the wrong lane approximately 8-10 seconds before crashing in to them, but know that our family couldn't have seen what was about to happen to them. All three died on impact.

I am telling our story in hopes that we all think before getting in a vehicle and driving. This crash was not caused by texting or drinking, but by inattentive and distracted driving. Please remember that by not paying attention to the road you are putting innocent lives in danger. The juvenile in our case moved on with his life while we are left with unimaginable heartache with the loss of three people who meant everything to us.

Using the best practice of the equation "Education + Enforcement = Changing Driving Behavior," law enforcement officers will be distributing distracted driving education cards on traffic violation stops during April throughout southern Minnesota and in the Metro Region. The cards promote distracted driving awareness and encourage motorists to *Take Action Stop the Distraction*.

The cards, which are about the size of a traffic citation, were initially used as an education tool that was given out by law enforcement in a speed wave project in 2010. Since then, Southeast Minnesota TZD has created and distributed speed, DWI and seatbelt cards during the corresponding enforcement waves.

In addition to the safety message and crash facts, the cards will relay the stories of Byron student Deianerah Logan who was killed when she crashed into the back of a school bus while texting and Shreya Dixit, an Eden Prairie young adult who was killed while riding home from college when the driver became distracted looking for an object in the back seat of the car.

The cards are also available for education awareness events in schools and in the workplace. If your school or workplace is holding a distracted driving event, and you are interested in distributing these cards, please contact Lisa Kons at the Minnesota Safety Council at 651-228-7330, or at [kons@minnesotasafetycouncil.org](mailto:kons@minnesotasafetycouncil.org).

## ***It Can Wait* No Texting While Driving Challenge**

Eleven high schools in southern Minnesota participated in a week-long campaign to encourage people not to text while driving. Among the schools participating were Hayfield, Kasson-Mantorville, Triton, Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton, Maple River and Sleepy Eye. AT&T's *It Can Wait* campaign creates a friendly competition between class levels and encourages them to pledge to NEVER text and drive. AT&T provides separate codes for participating classes, and the students use their phones to pledge by texting their code to AT&T. AT&T then tracks the number of pledges received by each class, and the class with the most pledges wins.

In conjunction with the *It Can Wait* campaign, Janesville Waldorf Pemberton High School conducted a school-wide distracted driving event on the last day of the campaign to provide further awareness of this deadly driving behavior.

Students were challenged to drive golf carts through a designated course while attempting to text a message and also heard from speaker Matt Logan, whose daughter was killed the first day of her senior year while texting and driving.

Posters and TXTING KILLS thumb bands will also be distributed to students during the week, and the winner of the *It Can Wait* campaign was announced during the event. Southwest TZD Regional Coordinator Annette Larson presented a certificate to the winning class.

In addition to local high schools, eight area businesses and Dodge and Fillmore Counties held their own pledge campaigns. MnDOT district offices also got caught up in the competitive spirit with District 6 competing against District 7, and in the Metro Region, battle lines were drawn between the Office of Traffic Safety and



***Students stamped their thumb prints and signed a pledge banner, which carried the message "I pledge to be a safe driver." The school plans to display the banner in the school.***

**"...A challenge has never hindered cops when it comes to creative ways to enforce the law."**

***Scott McConkey,  
TZD Law Enforcement Liaison***

Technology and the Metro Traffic Division.

At the end of the campaign, a total of 22 "teams" competed and more than 500 pledges were collected.

## **Help Stop the #1 Killer of Teens**

*Tom Nixon, West Central and East Central Regional Coordinator*

Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for Minnesota teens, and the Minnesota Highway Safety Research Center (MHSRC) is taking steps to stop this motorized killer. Through a grant provided by State Farm Insurance, the MHSRC is offering a Teen Crash Avoidance Skills and Parent Awareness Class at a significantly reduced cost. This four hour class addresses many of the factors cited in teen crashes including hazard recognition and avoidance, off road and skid recovery, and reaction time limitations.

At least one parent is also required to attend a safety presentation titled "The Real Risks of the Young Driver" and will then have a chance to see their teen in action driving vehicles in challenging maneuvers on a closed course under professional instructor supervision.

The State Farm grant allows MHSRC to offer these programs for a low-cost of only \$10. To register for the course, email MHSRC at [mhsc@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:mhsc@stcloudstate.edu) or call 320-255-3123.

## TZD Efforts on the Move in the Metro

*Susan Youngs, Metro Area Regional Coordinator*



**Drinkers were asked to perform field sobriety tests as part of Dakota County's controlled drink event.**

Changes are happening in the Metro Region! Last fall, the Metro area said good-bye to TZD Regional Coordinator Tom Nixon as he took his passion for TZD to the central regions of the state. Susan Youngs joined the TZD team as the new regional coordinator and continued with the efforts.

The Metro Region presents a unique set of challenges for TZD.

While containing only eight counties, the state's two largest cities, Minneapolis and St. Paul, represent slightly less than half of the State's total population. Crash data also indicates some divergences in types of crashes as compared to the other regions. Both rear end crashes and bike and pedestrian crashes are overrepresented in the Metro Region.

For these reasons, a different approach is needed. Instead of bringing the 4Es together region-wide, TZD leadership decided to tackle the Metro Region on a county-by-county basis and establish county-specific TZD coalitions, with representation by the 4Es within each individual county.

Organized TZD efforts begin in Ramsey County in 2013, and the Ramsey TZD coalition has met monthly since April 2013. Successful projects undertaken by the coalition include obtaining funding from the

National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration for signal light enhancements and regularly scheduled fatal reviews.

But soon Ramsey County will have a fellow TZD coalition in the Metro Region. An initial TZD meeting with Dakota County occurred in March to examine possible TZD partnerships and collaborations as well as discuss how best to further TZD efforts. Ongoing TZD discussions are also occurring in Anoka County and an Anoka County TZD coalition is hopefully not too far in the future.

But, regardless of a formal county TZD coalition, the Metro Region has already been conducting TZD efforts and doing its part to bring Minnesota closer Toward Zero Deaths.

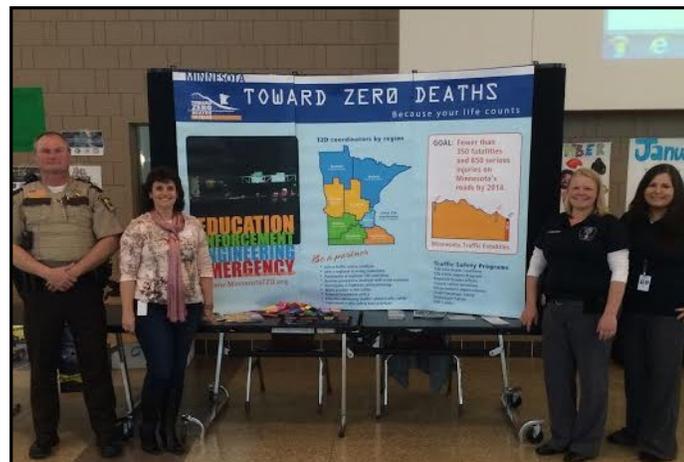
Law enforcement will be distributing distracted driving education cards throughout the area and recently, Susan Youngs, Metro Area Regional Coordinator assisted local law enforcement by hosting an information table at a distracted driving awareness event at Shakopee High School.

Also, in support of the St. Patrick's Day law enforcement wave, Dakota County coordinated a controlled drink event, where participants were able to learn their drinking limits and were also asked to complete a series of field sobriety tests as the event progressed.

Thank you to Minnesotans for Safe Driving, Ignition Interlock, the Minnesota Safety Council and DPS for providing resources for the event.



**Drinkers participating in Dakota County's controlled drink event in March. Event was conducted in support of the St. Patrick's Day law enforcement wave.**



**Representatives from the Shakopee Police Department, Scott County Sheriff's Office, and Susan Youngs, Metro TZD Coordinator at Shakopee High School's Distracted Driving awareness event. (Left)**

# Operation D-Day Comes to Southern Minnesota

*Kristine Hernandez, TZD Statewide Coordinator*

Southern Minnesota law enforcement will be out combating distracted driving this April 11-20 as several law enforcement agencies in southern Minnesota partner with their respective traffic engineers to initiate "Operation D-Day."

Enforcement will be using non-traditional vehicles to aggressively enforce the distracted driving law along with spotters who will identify texting drivers and then radio violations to waiting squad cars.

"...A challenge has never hindered cops when it comes to creative ways to enforce the law," stated Southeast Region's law enforcement liaison, Scott McConkey, and "...creative thinking is needed if we expect to have impact in changing dangerous behavior!"

Law enforcement agencies throughout southern Minnesota are encouraged to plan their own "Operation D-Day", by selecting time and date(s) within the enforcement period and partnering with their respective city, county or state engineer's office. Any elevated vehicle could be used or considered...unmarked SUVs, fire trucks, buses, etc.

A media event to promote Operation D-Day was held on April 10 at the Olmsted County Government Center in Rochester and featured speakers from the State Patrol, Dodge and Olmsted County Sheriff's Office, Matt Logan, State Farm, and AT&T. Distracted driving education cards are also available to be distributed to the public and on traffic stops (see page 3).

The results of drivers involved in distracted driving and not wearing seat belts impacts us all and the heartbreak and death, as Minnesota has seen recently with so many young adults, is so avoidable and unnecessary. To further quote Scott McConkey, TZD Law Enforcement Liasion, "We can do something about it!"



***Southeastern Minnesota hosted a media event to let everyone know they are on the lookout for distracted drivers.***



***Winona County Sheriff's Office used a unique way to spot distracted drivers via horseback.***



***Law Enforcement from the South Central Region are ready for the distracted driving enforcement wave. (Above)***



***Students at Maple River High School attempted to text and drive golf carts as part of a distracted driving awareness exercise. (Below)***



**Mac Adank receives his "Saved by the Belt" award from Trooper Cornish (Above).**

**Brenda, Collin, Mac and their extended family attended the award presentation (Below).**



## Adank Family Saved by the Belt

*Annette Larson, SW/South Central Regional Coordinator*

Brenda Adank and her two children know the importance of seatbelt use. Last August, Brenda and her two sons Collin and Mac were buckled in and traveling under the posted speed limit. A visitor to the community ran a stop sign and hit the Adank's car. Both cars went into a spin and crashed into a stopped third vehicle.

The seat belts worn by the Adank family kept them safe, according to State Trooper Gabe Cornish, "The Adank family avoided serious injuries by wearing their belts." Brenda Adank agrees with Trooper Cornish's statement, "I would have probably been thrown through the windshield if I hadn't been wearing my seatbelt." The driver of the other vehicle was not wearing her seatbelt and it could not be determined if the passenger was buckled in before the crash. Both had to be air lifted to a hospital for treatment.

In February, Trooper Cornish presented Brenda, Collin and Max the "Saved by the Belt" Award, as a way too recognize some of the positive things people are doing while driving - buckling up! Both Collin and Max say "always buckle up."

*The "Saved by the Belt" program has been honoring buckled-up crash survivors in Minnesota since 1999. Honoring traffic crash survivors who were buckled up is a positive method for agencies to show their communities that seat belt use is important, and that officers care that motorists obey the law. For more information on Minnesota's "Saved by the Belt" program, visit the Minnesota Department of Public Safety's website at [www.dps.mn.gov](http://www.dps.mn.gov).*

## 2014 TZD Regional Workshops – Register Now!!

### Southeast Region

May 1 – Rochester  
International Event Center

### West Central Region

May 7 – Detroit Lakes  
Holiday Inn

### Southwest Region

May 9 – Redwood Falls  
Redwood Area  
Community Center

### South Central Region

May 14 – Mankato  
Minnesota State University

### Northeast Region

May 29 – Duluth  
Spirit Mountain

### East Central Region

June 3 – St. Cloud  
St. Cloud Training Center

### Northwest Region

June 4 - Bemidji  
Sandford Event Center



**Visit our website at [www.minnesotatzd.org](http://www.minnesotatzd.org) for more information about the 2014 Workshops.**