



Quarterly

Newsletter

July 2014

Volume 1, Issue 2

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Minnesota TZD Speed Enforcement Waves
June 16-July 27



Drugged Driving — Minnesota's Next Big Thing?

Minnesota approves medical marijuana use

Minnesota has become the 22nd state to legalize medical marijuana use. Under the restrictions listed in the bill, the drug will be available in pill, oil and vapor form only and cannot be smoked legally or accessed in leaf form. Eligible medical conditions for receiving medical marijuana include cancer, glaucoma and AIDS. Patients will also need certification from a physician or advanced practice registered nurse.

State legislators believe that these restrictions satisfied concerns of law enforcement and medical groups, without whose support Governor Dayton would not sign the legislation. However, even with Minnesota having one of the nation's most restrictive legalization policies containing tight controls over qualifying conditions and administration, some remain concerned with the adverse effects the new legislation may still have on the Minnesota's driving public.

Marijuana is known to affect

reaction time, short-term memory, hand/eye coordination, concentration and perceptions of time and distance – all important factors when operating a motor vehicle.

Early data collected on drugged driving have produced mixed results. According to data from the Colorado State Patrol, 374 out of the 2,314 DUIs statewide already this year (12 percent) have been due to marijuana. Since 2004, California statistics have shown a "marked increase in driver fatalities testing positive for marijuana," according to Dr. Gouhua Li, director of the Center for Injury Epidemiology and Prevention at Columbia University Medical Center. Dr. Li further predicts that non-alcohol drugs, such as marijuana, will surpass alcohol in traffic fatalities around 2020.

Yet, in other states where marijuana has been legalized,

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From the TZD Leadership Team Co-Chairs

Donna Berger, Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety and Sue Groth, MnDOT Office of Traffic, Safety & Technology

For years, the Toward Zero Deaths program has emphasized "the 4-Es" – engineering, enforcement, education and emergency medical and trauma services – and how those Es working together get us closer to zero deaths rather than working alone in silos. Then 10 years later, another "E" was added to the list of traffic partners: Everyone – because reaching zero deaths will take everyone's involvement!

With the 2014 Minnesota legislative session behind us, we want to take a moment to acknowledge and highlight some traffic safety-related outcomes. The Minnesota legislature has been influential in the past by passing traffic safety legislation such as .08 BAC and the primary seat belt law. This recent session continues that trend.

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Minnesotans Click It or Ticket

Seat belt enforcement wave encouraged motorists to buckle up



TZD's southeast region is ready for enhanced seat belt enforcement.

In May, Minnesotans were encouraged to always wear seat belts. Law enforcement began its annual statewide "Click It or Ticket" seat belt and car seat enforcement campaign.

Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) regions across the state held news conferences to promote and support the enforcement wave and to acknowledge those who were "Saved by the Belt."

The northeast TZD region held its event on May 19th in

Hermantown with more than 20 traffic safety partners in attendance from across the region. Chris Wahwassuck, a teen driver who was ejected and injured from not wearing a seatbelt, spoke at the event. "It's important to buckle up no matter how far you're going, no matter if it's just 10 feet or more," said Wahwassuck. "I'm thankful to those who were there to save my life. So always remember if you don't click it, you risk it."



South central TZD region's "littlest trooper" reporting for duty at the Eagle Lake Safety Fair.

It's just not worth it, take the time to buckle up."

Minnesota State Patrol also honored two "Saved by the Belt" recipients given to lifelong best friends who were involved in a crash during a blizzard in Carlton County.

The campaign ran through June 1 and nearly 400 agencies across Minnesota increased patrols to encourage motorists to use their seat belts. "There are people not walking this earth today because last year they didn't get the message," said Scott McConkey, southern Minnesota law enforcement liaison.

"Even though most Minnesotans buckle up (nearly 95 percent), 587 people died and 9,739 were injured in the last five years on Minnesota roads as a result of not being belted," says Donna Berger, DPS Office of Traffic Safety director/TZD co-chair.

McConkey said his colleagues are passionate about keeping people safe, which is one of the reasons this program is so important to them.

"When they stop and



Chris Wahwassuck stresses the importance of always wearing a seat belt at the northeast TZD news conference.

write someone a seat belt ticket, it's one of the most compassionate things they can do," he said.

To promote the child passenger safety aspect of the enforcement wave, TZD south central region invited Tracy Brown, southern Minnesota child safety passenger liaison, to attend the Eagle Lake Safety Fair and provide the community with information about child passenger safety including the 5-step seat belt test to determine if a child is ready to ride in a seat belt or if a booster seat is still needed.

The enforcement wave resulted in 10,874 seat belt citations, according to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of

Traffic Safety (DPS/OTS) with results reported by 329 agencies and included 279 child seat citations. "The *Click It or Ticket*" enforcement and education campaign reminds motorists that buckling up not only is the law, it's your best defense in case of a crash," said Berger. "The key to stopping these preventable deaths begins with every motorist buckling up."

Minnesota's seat belt law is a primary offense, meaning drivers and passengers in all seating positions must be buckled up or in the correct child restraint.



I Can't Drive 55?

Legislature approves higher speeds on Minnesota roadways

As part of their 2014 budget bill, Minnesota lawmakers have passed a bill requiring MnDOT to study 2-lane state highways to determine if speed limits can be "reasonably & safely" increased from 55 mph to 60 mph. By 2019, state engineers must examine 6,771 miles of Minnesota roads with a current speed of 55 mph and see if the limit can be increased.

Traffic engineers will analyze crash history, road design, lane width, sight lines and ditch slope to see if the road is a candidate for a higher speed limit. "It's quite a bit of work," says Sue Groth, MnDOT state traffic engineer/TZD Co-chair. "We actually do have to pull crash data, go out and drive the roads, take a look at the geometry and the lane width."

Groth points out that just because a road is studied, does not mean that it will automatically receive an increased speed limit. Prime candidates are roadways with straight, wide-open stretches and clear sight lines.

"Speed limits will be identified that we believe are safe and reasonable; therefore, within their confines," said Peter Buchen, MnDOT assistant state engineer. "As long as drivers comply with posted speed limits, it shouldn't have any impact on Minnesotans, but if they choose to exceed the speed limit as they do today, the consequences can be very dire."

Engineers also say that there is a benefit to fostering more consistent speeds. Newer roads often contain built-in safety features such as broader shoulders and extra room for recovery.

It can take up to one year from the time the study begins to having a new speed limit sign installed alongside the road. The cost to cover those miles requiring study is approximately \$700,000. This price tag has some people asking is it worth it? "Well it's worth it if lives are involved. We want to make sure we make good decisions," says Groth.



Above: Best friends since childhood were "Saved by the Belt" during a blizzard in Carlton County.

Left: Tracy Brown, Southeast Minnesota Child Safety Passenger Liaison, measures children to determine proper child safety restraint.



Drugged Driving

Continued from pg. 1

overall traffic fatalities decreased as much as 11 percent in the first year after legalization. One theory for this deduction is that once legal, marijuana became a substitute for alcohol and caused a 13 percent reduction in drunk driving fatalities.

When asked his opinion on the new medical marijuana laws, State Patrol Lt. Don Marose stressed, "Drivers need to remember that, while there is no per se level for marijuana when it comes to DWI, any impairment detected by law enforcement could result in an arrest."

"Marijuana presents in very specific signs," continues Marose and "is detectable in both blood and urine."

All law enforcement officers in Minnesota are trained in the recognition and detection of drug impaired drivers. Further, there are 200 drug recognition evaluators from 92 agencies throughout the State who have received specialized training in drug impaired driving.

It still may take years to know marijuana's effect on the number of fatal crashes in Minnesota and nationwide. Even Colorado State Trooper Nate Reid is hesitant to claim the rising DUI percentages as an increase without data from years past to use as a comparison. Trooper Reid states in an article from The Daily Beast, an online news source, "It's too soon."

Point of Impact Makes an Impact at Minnesota Legislature

Thanks to efforts by State Representative Kim Norton and State Senator Susan Kent, a parental curriculum component for driver education is now a law in Minnesota, effective January 1, 2015. This parental

they need to help their children become safer drivers."

Under the new legislation, the parent component must contain the following requirements:

- Be at least 90 minutes in



Gordy Pehrson, presents information on Point of Impact: Parent Component to Teen Driving at the southwest regional workshop.

component is in addition to the current 30 hours of driver education classroom time and six hours of behind the wheel training required for drivers under 18.

While not required to use the Department of Public Safety's parental curriculum, Point of Impact, the amended legislation does mirror its structure. Gordy Pehrson, Teen & Tzd Safe Roads Coordinator, DPS/OTS, stated that this legislation, "provides driver educators the opportunity to reach the parents of every soon-to-be teen driver and gives them the information

length;

- Be provided by or in presence of a driving instructor; and
- Provide information on graduated driver licensing laws, safety risks for new drivers, influence of adults on driving behaviors for novice drivers and additional driving resources.

Requirements for a receiving a provisional license have also been amended. Applicants must now submit a supervised driving log that states that the applicant has driven a motor vehicle

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Note From Co-chairs....

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Parental Component for Driver Education Now Mandatory

Teen and novice drivers remain at high risk for crashes in Minnesota and statistics indicate that the number of crashes involving new drivers skyrocket during the first year after obtaining full licensure. Why? No experienced drivers in the car supervising and helping the new driver gain valuable experience. While the Graduated Driver License program has helped mitigate this issue, more work is needed. With this new legislation, driver education instructors are now required to include a parental component to their curriculum, which will help parents understand the current GDL laws, how they can enforce these laws at home and how they can best keep their teens safe while they gain driving experience. (See **Point of**

Impact Makes an Impact at Minnesota Legislature, pg 4)

Decreased Work Zone Speed Limits and Increase Fines

Beginning August 1, the fines for speeding through a work zone or violating a flagger's direction will increase to \$300. Speed limits are also reduced to 45 mph when a worker is present and a lane of traffic is closed. The original work zone bill also called for a ban on cell phones when driving through a work zone. While the work zone cell phone ban did not get passed, MnDOT and the TZD program are implementing a new work zone safety education campaign. (See **Orange Cones: No Phones**, pg 8)

Higher Speed Limits

Speed is a common contributing factor that is overrepresented in Minnesota

crash data. In addition, two-lane rural highways continue to be the primary roadways for serious injury crashes. The legislature has approved a bill requiring MnDOT to study two-lane state highways to determine if speed limits can be "reasonably and safely" increased from 55 mph to 60 mph. By 2019, MnDOT must study Minnesota roadways to determine which ones are able to safely meet this new speed limit legislation. MnDOT traffic engineers will be considering many factors when determining if a roadway's speed limit can be increased. Some factors include shoulder width, clear zone, current speeds, pedestrians and bicycle activity as well as crash history. (See **I Can't Drive 55**, pg 3)

Medical Marijuana

Minnesota is now the 22nd state to approve marijuana use for medical purposes. Even with many heavy duty restrictions on usage and distribution, Minnesota is poised to enter into what could be the "next big issue" in traffic safety. DPS will continue its effort to educate the public on the dangers of driving under the influence and promote the message of designating a sober driver. (See **Drugged Driving**, pg 1)

While the new legislation does raise some concerns for TZD and traffic safety partners, the 2014 session is considered largely successful.

Point of Impact

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accompanied by and under the supervision of a licensed driver at least 21 years of age, for no less than 40 total hours, at least 15 of which were nighttime hours. In addition, it identifies dates and lengths of driving time for each supervised driving trip and is signed by the primary driving supervisor. Previously, only 30 hours of driving time was required with 10 of those hours being at night.

While these are the new minimum requirements, Pehrson stresses that, "parents

need to spend many, many more hours practicing with their teens in varied driving conditions including bad weather to develop their driving skills and reduce crashes."

If parents are unable to complete the parent awareness class, the teen driver must log a minimum of 50 supervised behind the wheel hours, with 15 being at night.

For more information on amendments to the graduated driver licensing governing requirements, see Minnesota Statutes, Section 171.05 (Instruction Permit) and Minnesota Statutes, Section 171.055, Subdivision 1 (Provisional License).

Toward Zero Deaths Statewide Conference

**November 13-14, 2014
Duluth, MN**

TZD Regional Workshops Bring Traffic Safety Partners Together



Regional Coordinator Tom Nixon welcomes attendees to the east central regional workshop.

TZD partners across the state recently conducted their annual regional workshops to help support and facilitate the TZD activities in their local communities. Seven regions held workshops this past spring. Each workshop included the latest crash data for the region, contained a personal impact speaker, and afternoon breakout sessions where attendees learned about traffic safety topics that can be implemented regionally.

Crash Data Update

A data driven program, TZD keeps current trends in crash data in the forefront of its efforts. Each workshop provided the latest regional crash data including the preliminary number of fatalities and severely injured for 2013. The data was further broken down by individual counties and by common driving behaviors such as speed, distraction, impairment and seat belt usage. Stakeholders could then use the data to generate ideas for future TZD initiatives.

Beyond the Numbers – Personal Impact Presentations

Ultimately, TZD is about people and how best to keep them safe on our roadways. The personal impact portion of the workshops reminded all attendees that traffic safety is not just about numbers. It has a very human aspect and sadly, can have tragic results. The Jech family spoke at the southeast regional TZD



Matt Logan speaking at one of the regional workshops.

workshop and remembered Marvin Jech who was killed on Highway 14 on his 45th wedding anniversary. The remaining workshops featured Matt Logan, who shared the story of his 17-year-old daughter DJ who died while texting and driving the first day of her senior year.

Minnesota State Patrol also showed the *Gone Too Soon* video, which featured three stories of teens whose lives were forever changed by driving decisions.



Chris Ballard presents at the south central regional workshop.

Statewide Trauma System Updates & Engineering 101

Chris Ballard, Trauma Systems Coordinator, Minnesota Department of Health, provided information on the statewide trauma system. Since its 2005 implementation, the statewide trauma system has made a positive impact on



The Jech Family sharing their story at the southeast regional workshop.



West central workshop attendees listen intently.



State Engineer, Mark Visceky, provides Engineering 101 to workshop attendees.

the fatality rates for motor vehicle crash victims. Stakeholders were also taken through a case study, illustrating the effectiveness of the system.

At the request of law enforcement,

address teen driver issues. Attendees could then take ideas discussed in the breakout sessions back to their own communities for implementation.

The east central TZD region took a creative approach to their breakout session by dividing up attendees into their particular traffic "E" and sharing ideas of success stories or challenges in the region. The "Es" then rotated to different stations to learn more about specific challenges from other groups and how best they can work together. At the root of this exercise was generation of new ideas, information sharing, as well as networking opportunities.

MnDOT and county engineers provided an entertaining and enlightening look at recent engineering safety features being installed on Minnesota roadways. Attendees learned about mumbles, rumbles and roundabouts along with many other roadway improvements. While these features can be confusing, the designs make roadways safer and a working knowledge of them has proven helpful to law enforcement in responding to public questions and comments.

Breakout Sessions

Afternoon breakout sessions provided attendees with an opportunity to learn more about a particular topic. Sessions included topics on collaborative law enforcement efforts and innovative strategies to



Workshop attendees tested their driving skills on a distracted driving simulator at the northeast regional workshop.

TZD Says Thank you Captain Herrboldt

State Patrol Officer Captain Murray Herrboldt retires after 35 years of service



Kostrzewski presenting Captain Herrboldt with a commemorative sign at the northeast regional workshop.

At the northeast TZD workshop, State Patrol Captain Murray Herrboldt was honored for his 35 years of service and his dedication to the TZD program. "How do you say thank you to someone who has dedicated his life to protecting ours?" said Holly Kostrzewski, northeast region TZD coordinator, during opening remarks for the workshop. "The number of lives he has saved and the people he has helped cannot be measured."

In addition to his service for the State Patrol, Herrboldt was also a founding co-chair of the northeast TZD regional steering committee and was influential in establishing and promoting the TZD program throughout the region. Herrboldt was honored with a commemorative sign thanking him for his service and support and a special personal thank you by Kostrzewski, "Herrboldt is a legend within the State Patrol and will be missed."

In addition to Captain Herrboldt, State Patrol Captains Al Kutz, John Ebner and Bruce Hentges also recently retired. We thank everyone for their dedication and service in bringing Minnesota closer to zero deaths.

Orange Cones: No Phones

MnDOT unveils unique work zone safety campaign

Summertime means one thing for Minnesota's traveling public – construction season! With more than 300 construction projects scheduled for this season alone, it is now more important than ever for motorists to pay close attention and watch out for workers on roads, highways and bridges.

"There's a lot of roadwork out here because the infrastructure needs work and that means there are a lot of work zones," says Kevin Gutknecht, MnDOT communications director.

In June, MnDOT, partnering with the TZD program launched its work zone safety campaign **"Hang Up! Workers Lives at Stake. Orange Cones: No Phones"** to help motorists remember this important message. The campaign will run from



A preview of the message that soon motorists will see on billboards, window clings, and pump toppers at gas stations throughout the state.

June through October, utilizing a variety of communication.

"The campaign emphasized no phone use while traveling through a work zone — where lanes can change suddenly, become narrower and workers are present. This is not the time to be attempting to multi-task," said Kristine Hernandez, Statewide TZD Program Coordinator.

Sixteen billboards around the state will share this message and will run through late October. Locations were chosen based upon current construction projects.

In addition to the billboards, the message will be displayed on pump toppers and window clings at



A close call on I-694 & Silver Lake Road highlights the importance of paying attention in work zones. It is believed the driver was distracted when this crash occurred. Luckily no one was hurt in this work zone crash.

more than 40 gas stations. Radio spots will air on Minnesota News Network covering 77 radio stations around the state. Total Traffic Network will also run public service announcements on six Metro radio stations. The campaign is made possible through a grant from the Highway Safety Improvement Program.



Above: Cottage Grove Police Officer Torning is presented with a thank you "citation" of his own. (L to R: Sgt. Mike Coffey, TZD Law Enforcement Liaison Bill Hammes, DPS Enforcement Coordinator Bruce Johnson, Officer Torning and Chief Craig Woolery.

Below: Vehicle driven by motorist issued seat belt citation by Officer Torning and claimed he was "saved by the ticket."



Cross-Border Saturation Results in Zero Fatalities

Holly Kostrzewski, Northeast/Northwest TZD regional coordinator

Working together is the foundation of the TZD Program. Now that foundation has extended across the state border. In an unprecedented effort, enforcement agencies from both Minnesota and North Dakota worked together to provide extra enforcement during the July 4th holiday weekend along the U.S. Highway 2 corridor, which serves as the gateway between Minnesota's Lake County and North Dakota's Grand Forks area.

"These dedicated law enforcement officers will be focusing on the three driving behaviors that cause the majority of the crashes on our regions roadways: speeding, alcohol and drug impairment and distracted driving," stated Captain Mike Hanson of the Minnesota State Patrol. "Seat belt and occupant restraint violations will also be right at the top of the enforcement list because this is the one thing that everyone can do to protect themselves and their loved ones in the event that a crash does happen."

Involved in the cross-border enforcement

planning and wave were Minnesota and North Dakota State Patrol, Grand Forks County Sheriff's Office, Polk County Sheriff's Office, Crookston Police chief, East Grand Forks Police chief, Grand Forks Police, Altru Hospital, Polk County commissioner, Polk County engineer and the Polk County TZD Safe Roads coalition. Officers from both states were dedicated to making sure that this Independence Day did not become someone's "Memorial Day." The enforcement wave resulted in 558 traffic stops, 368 citations, and most importantly ZERO fatalities and serious injury crashes on US Hwy 2 corridor.



Northwest TZD partners show support at the May seat belt news conference.

Saved by the Ticket

Seat belt citation saves life

Police officers believe their traffic enforcements save lives, but when issuing a traffic citation to an angry motorist, that faith may be hard to find. This is not the case with Cottage Grove Police Officer Nils Torning.

On May 29th, Officer Torning issued a citation to a passenger for not wearing a seatbelt. The passenger was not happy receiving a ticket but obligingly put on his belt. Less than 24 hours later, that same passenger, now driving his own vehicle, was involved in a three-vehicle crash. Miraculously, the driver received only a broken arm and other non-life threatening injuries. He was wearing his seat belt at the time of the accident; most likely because he had received a citation from Officer Torning.

Members from the Office of Traffic Safety, including TZD Law Enforcement Liaison Bill Hammes, made a special visit to the Cottage Grove Police Department to surprise Officer Torning with a special award and thank him for a job well done.

"This is one of those events in which it is clear that the ticket saved a life. Officer Torning's actions on May 29th resulted in one less fatality here in Minnesota," said Hammes. "When you look at the damage to the pickup, it is evident the driver most likely would have suffered life ending injuries if not for the belt. This is a great example of how and why traffic enforcement can save lives. Congratulations to Officer Torning and the entire Cottage Grove Police Department for their commitment to traffic safety. You have made a difference!"



Officer Nils Torning with his "citation."

Coming in August — The I-90/94 Challenge



August 1-4, 2014

Enforcing more than 4,400 miles of roadway across the United States, the I-90/94 Challenge enforcement project will be the largest, single event, data-driven initiative to date on an interstate that runs across the nation. The goal of the Challenge is to have zero fatalities during the enforcement period from August 1-4. Agencies from coast-to-coast will be participating in this event including hundreds of local, county and federal partners. A news conference will kick off the effort on July 30 at the capitol in St. Paul.

Any agency with I-90 or I-94 in their jurisdiction is welcome to participate in the Challenge. Contact the State Patrol district captain in your region for more details. Agencies will also be supporting the effort on adjacent roadways.

Want to be part of the TZD Team?

Contact your regional coordinator to find out how.

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