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Message Mondays

A Creative Approach to Traffic Safety



Creative freeway messaging is just the latest effort by TZD to promote safe driving behavior and change traffic safety culture.

Toward Zero Deaths has launched another creative approach to traffic safety through its *Message Monday* program. MnDOT, with input from the Dept. of Public Safety, is using 180 electronic message boards statewide to broadcast lighthearted, more positive messages each week, hoping to change driver conduct and reduce the number of crashes that result in serious injuries or deaths.

"A reduction in fatalities and serious injuries will only occur if we continue to find new and innovative ways to educate motorists on traffic safety risks," says TZD State Co-Chair Jay Hietpas.

Program creators hope that these new messages will start conversations that could positively change the state's traffic safety culture. "We believe the

signs have potential to change driver behavior while people are driving," says Hietpas. According to a recent U.S. Department of Transportation report regarding the public perception of safety messaging, 45-68 percent of travelers indicated that safety-related messages changed their behavior.

Minnesota is modeling what other states such as Iowa and Wisconsin are already doing. Messages inform motorists about the importance of seat belt use, along with the risks of behaviors such as speeding, distraction and impaired driving. Minnesota's messages will focus on the emotional ties of traffic safety – with an emphasis on positive messages that stimulate safe and acceptable rules of driving behavior. Motorists can expect to see messages such as "Driving drunk could wreck the holidays," "Friends don't text friends who are driving," and "Turn signals – the original instant message" in the upcoming months.

MnDOT will be drafting slogans drawing on references from movies, TV shows, music and other slices of

Story continued on pg. 3

Current events, like the Vikings game, are just one of many places where MnDOT will be gathering materials for its new messaging.



Myth Busters — Alcohol #101 Edition

Common myths regarding alcohol are put to the test

TZD's Southeast Minnesota Region challenged the popular myths surrounding alcohol consumption to promote the fall DWI enforcement wave. Several myths regarding altering a person's Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) were put to the test at the media event announcing the wave. These myths included using mouthwash, sucking on a penny and eating/drinking peanut butter and water. Enforcement reports seeing motorists suspected of driving impaired try all of these myths in order to "trick" the breathalyzer.

To test the myths, three volunteers each drank two cocktails within one hour and were given a standard BAC test. Afterwards, each volunteer attempted one of the myths to try and alter their breathalyzer result.

Sucking on a penny – The drinker sucked on a copper penny for approximately one minute prior to the second administration of the BAC. The result was a slight increase to their blood alcohol content as the BAC went from .065 to .070.

Mouthwash – The most shocking result came with the myth of using mouthwash to change the blood alcohol content. The drinker rinsed their mouth with mouthwash after the first BAC. The result – the drinker's BAC increased significantly from .035 to .261.

"If you've been consuming alcohol, you can't mask it in any way by putting anything in your mouth," said Sergeant Troy Christianson with the Minnesota State Patrol. "What we are doing is a fair and accurate test."

To further promote the enforcement wave, Southeast TZD Regional Coordinator Jessica Schleck coordinated a controlled drink event with local DJs Duncan and Samm from KROC, 106.9 FM. During the event, the DJs were asked alcohol-related questions in a fact versus fiction style. The questions included:



SE Regional Coordinator Jessica Schleck and Minnesota State Patrol Sgt. Troy Christenson bust some common myths regarding alcohol consumption.

Beer before liquor, never been sicker; liquor before beer, you're in the clear

False. The amount you drink matters more than the type of drinks you consume or how you mix them. Drinking too much of any alcohol too quickly can make you sick, whether it is wine, beer, or liquor. No matter what you're drinking, pacing is key.

(Source: www.medicaldaily.com)

Women tend to be more affected by alcohol than men

True. Alcohol is distributed around the body in water. The female body has less body water and less of the enzyme which breaks down alcohol in the stomach and liver than the male body. So, alcohol concentrations are higher in females and

therefore girls tend to get drunk faster than boys (Source: www.healthstatus.com).

Underage drinking kills more youth than all illegal drugs combined

True. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, annually, alcohol is a factor in the deaths of approximately 4,300 young people under age 21 in the United States.



DJs Duncan and Samm from KROC, 106.9 FM leant their on-air talents for the controlled drink event. The event was organized to promote the fall 2016 DWI enforcement wave. Impaired driving is one of the top reasons for fatalities on Minnesota roadways.

Message Mondays cont.

pop culture to communicate the risks associated with these menacing behaviors on the road. The state also will be borrowing messages that have resonated with drivers in other states, including Iowa – where the notices that started appearing two years ago have developed something of a cult following.

“Since 2013, we have let motorists know that law enforcement was conducting extra enforcement for specific traffic behaviors, but now we are focusing on a second phase to change the culture around traffic safety in a more creative way,” says MnDOT’s Kristine Hernandez, who also serves as the coordinator of the state’s Toward Zero Deaths program.

Note: Messages may not be displayed as scheduled if weather or a vital safety message is needed.



Wisconsin, with its own clever roadside messaging (pictured above), is just one of several states that MnDOT has chosen to collaborate with for Message Mondays.

TZD Takes a JOYRIDE for the Holidays

Sober rides offered by TZD’s South Central Region

TZD’s South Central Region coordinated a controlled drink event in Mankato to promote their holiday DWI enforcement wave. Several local radio station on-air personalities participated in the event including Z-99, 105.5, 95.7, Hot 96.7 and 93-FM. Three representatives from a local business also participated.

Drinkers averaged an alcoholic drink every 15 minutes during the two hours of the event, while being monitored by law enforcement. They performed field sobriety tests including driving the TZD pedal kart through an indoor driving course. Each radio station broadcasted live from the event and provided information on how alcohol affects driving abilities in addition to reporting on the participants’ drinking progress.

The event’s main focus was to promote the South Central TZD Region’s JOYRIDE program, which offered free rides home the evening before Thanksgiving – one of the deadliest

evenings on Minnesota roadways. The free rides were available through Kato

Independent Shuttle Service and provided service from local establishments in Mankato, North Mankato, Madison Lake, Eagle Lake, St. Clair, Mapleton, Lake Crystal and Good Thunder.

The region offered the JOYRIDE program initially over the July 4th holiday, but this was the first time the region offered JOYRIDE for the holiday season. Additional live radio interviews were used to promote the JOYRIDE for New Year’s Eve. JOYRIDE again proved successful with 25 rides provided for the Thanksgiving holiday and with 28 riders given a safe ride home on New Year’s.



Above: South Central TZD Regional Coordinator Annette Larson explains the driving course to on-air personality Sara from Z99, who participated in the event with fellow morning show host Brad. Below Left: Spence from 95.7 The Rock Station broadcasted live during the event.

13th Annual State TZD Conference Held in Duluth

Millennials and drowsy driving top the list of conference topics

Millennials, drowsy driving and a direct call to action were some of the topics presented at the 13th Annual TZD State Conference, where TZD stakeholders and traffic-safety advocates gathered to obtain information on traffic safety and network with other like-minded individuals. State TZD Co-Chair Jay Hietpas opened the conference by welcoming attendees and highlighting examples of various TZD efforts across the state.

Hietpas also provided an update on Minnesota's year-to-date fatalities and explained how that number has plateaued in Minnesota during the past several years as opposed to continuing downward. Hietpas further added that fatalities nationwide are on the rise, while Minnesota's numbers have just plateaued and that is good news. However, he then encouraged attendees not to be complacent with this fact, but instead to use this "good news" to re-commit themselves and their TZD efforts to continue pushing



Nearly 1,000 traffic safety stakeholders attended this year's conference.

that trend line closer to zero.

Attendees were provided with an opportunity to do just that. Large banners were displayed in the back of the conference hall stating "TZD challenge: What Will You Do?" Attendees were encouraged to write a statement on the banner telling what they are committed to doing to help Minnesota move off of its plateau.

Featured speaker for the conference was Rodney Wambeam, senior research scientist at the University of Wyoming, who presented research on millennials and how their values and norms contrast with previous generations. Wambeam also discussed how these differences can inform traffic safety and prevention efforts (see page 10).

Opening speaker for the second day was Jana Price, senior human performance investigator at the National Transportation

Safety Board. Reducing fatigue-related crashes is on the NTSB's "Most Wanted List" of transportation safety improvements. Price discussed various high-profile crash investigations with common risk factors for sleep-related crashes and introduced the concept of the "micro sleep" – brief losses of consciousness that can last for four or five seconds. Oftentimes the person is not even aware of having a micro sleep. If a micro sleep happens while the person is driving 55 miles per hour, they have traveled more than 100 yards down the road while asleep, which is plenty of time to cause a crash.

Remaining time at the conference was filled out with numerous sessions highlighting each of the "4-Es" and a vendor hall provided an opportunity to network with fellow traffic safety advocates and see the latest in traffic safety resources.



Rodney Wambeam opened the conference by providing information on the millennial generation.

TZD Annual Awards Presented at State Conference

Ten individuals and organizations were honored with Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths awards at the statewide TZD conference for their efforts to reduce the number of traffic deaths and serious injuries in the state. The awards are given annually to individuals or organizations in Minnesota who show excellence in TZD's emphasis areas of enforcement, emergency medical and trauma services, education, engineering, child passenger safety and judicial/court systems. Other recipients have shown leadership, innovation and commitment to improving traffic safety throughout the state and building partnerships with others in the field.



Kathy Swanson Outstanding Service Award

Sue Porter, Transportation System Management and Operations manager for MnDOT, received the Kathy Swanson Outstanding Service Award for showing exceptional leadership in efforts to improve traffic safety in the state, build partnerships and mentor others in the field. Porter has actively promoted traffic safety throughout her career. During her time as MnDOT's state traffic engineer from 2008-2015, she worked to promote and implement TZD efforts within her department and with local, state and national partners. Porter was key in implementing the working group and task force for the 2014-2019 Strategic Highway Safety Plan as the TZD leadership committee co-chair.



Distinguished Public Leadership Award

Chief Gary Kroells, West Hennepin Public Safety Department, received the Distinguished Public Leadership Award, which recognizes public leaders who, through their vision, leadership and knowledge, have influenced traffic safety policy directions that benefit society. Kroells worked to improve safety conditions on Highway 12, helping to form the Highway 12 Safety Coalition and serving as its chair. Under his leadership, the coalition has installed rumble strips and turn lanes at the junction of County Road 92 and a concrete median barrier between County Road 112 and County Road 6.



Traffic Safety Innovation Award

Motorcycle Dial-a-Ride
This award recognizes non-governmental organizations for new and creative traffic safety solutions that help save lives on

Minnesota roads. This year's recipient is Motorcycle Dial-A-Ride, a non-profit volunteer organization throughout Minnesota that works to educate riders about ways to keep impaired motorcyclists off the road. They emphasize responsible driving to motorcyclists and encourage them to not drink and drive. When no other options are available, they provide a free ride for riders, motorcycles and passengers.



Emergency Medical and Trauma Services Star Award

Matt Jakubik, North Memorial Air Care, helped other EMS organizations find their role in the TZD program by presenting at internal conferences and TZD statewide conferences. He gained approval to decal 140 North Memorial ambulances and nine North Memorial helicopters with the TZD logo.

Mark Your Calendars

**2017 TZD
State Conference
October 26-27**

St. Paul, MN



Child Passenger Safety Star Award

Laura Owen, Duluth Fire Department, helped grow the child passenger safety program. She created monthly child safety seat checks and clinics, and instructs CPS classes. She is regarded as a knowledgeable figure in her community who supports traffic safety coalitions and creatively educates parents and their children about these topics.



Education Star Award

Officer Adam Gau, school resources officer with the Isanti Police Department, formed partnerships educating communities about the importance of traffic safety. As president of the Minnesota Juvenile Officers Association, he partnered with AAA to develop the Seatbelt Challenge, a competition instilling the effortlessness of buckling up to students in grades 6-12.



Enforcement Star Award Deputy Sheriff Tom Coulter

Deputy Sheriff Tom Coulter, Blue Earth County Sheriff's Office, has served as the Safe & Sober and the Blue Earth County TZD Enforcement grant coordinator since 1999. He leads by example as a road deputy who makes traffic enforcement a priority during his shifts and serves as a school resource officer for the St. Clair School District. He promotes the TZD mission through partnerships within his community through his personal efforts and as part of the Blue Earth Safe Roads Coalition and as a member of the South Central Minnesota TZD Steering Committee.



Engineering Star Award

Lou Tasa, Minnesota Department of Transportation assistant district engineer and state aid engineer, formed collaborative working relationships with counties in the Bemidji area. By forming the bridge between TZD and county board efforts, their common goals of improving road and safety conditions are placed at the forefront.



Judicial/Court System Star Award

Michelle Zehnder Fischer, Nicollet County Attorney, held an impaired driver accountable for his actions, which had resulted in the death of a co-worker when he crashed his vehicle. The two-year case rose to the Minnesota Supreme Court, showing her persistence and passion for traffic safety.



Media Star Award Dodge County Independent Newspaper

published front page stories and weekly columns on traffic safety and TZD efforts. Stories ranged from seat belt kick off events to highlighting how fatal and serious injury crashes affect law enforcement, EMS and those close to the people involved. The newspaper's support and coverage has helped spread the TZD message.

Minnesota TZD
Distracted Driving Extra
Enforcement
April 10-23

ONE TEXT OR CALL COULD
WRECK
IT ALL

Raising a Glass to Those Making the Right Choice for the Holidays

A special thank you to those making safe decisions

A "thank you" goes a long way, and that was the concept TZD advocates emphasized during the holiday season as several TZD regions utilized this positive approach to thwart drunk driving. Instead of emphasizing the consequences of driving impaired, law enforcement and various establishments across the state wanted to say "thank you" to the thousands of people making the right choice this holiday season by planning a sober ride home.

Starting the Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving and continuing through New Year's Eve, TZD stakeholders worked with enforcement and local establishments to leave thank you notes on windshields of motorists who gave up their keys and decided to take alternate transportation home. Messages on the notes ranged from a simple thank you for making a smart decision to offering a coupon towards a future visit or a discount on a future sober cab ride home. Once such establishment, The Happy Gnome in St. Paul, placed thank you notes on vehicles left overnight and also participated in the Department of Public Safety's news conference announcing the holiday DWI enforcement efforts and thank you note campaign. "It is way more valuable to us for our customers to be safe than to have an open parking space at our establishment," said Emily Brink, operations manager at The Happy Gnome.



Above and Right: Notes were placed on windshields of patrons of various locations throughout the state thanking patrons for making a safe holiday choice.

Similar thank you notes were handed out in Rochester and in communities across the Twin Cities as a way to encourage others to get home safely to their families. "Take advantage of them – If you find one on your vehicle we're just thanking you for choosing to take a safe ride home and offering a little discount for the next visit," said owner of Rochester's Legends Bar-n-Grill, Jeff Fieseler. "They can come here and have a good time and know that we are in the background looking to make sure they get home safely too."

All five Metro locations of Willy McCoy's also participated in the thank you campaign, and in addition to leaving notes on cars left in their parking lot, Manager Conrad

Ennen also passed along the notes to the local sober cab service to distribute to patrons who took advantage of the safe ride home from their establishments. "We are more than happy to help get our customers home safely and encourage them to take a sober ride," said Ennen.

Christmas and Thanksgiving are among the top holidays with the highest percentage of drunk-driving-related fatalities in Minnesota, according to the Department of Public Safety. In the last five years, 13 of the 48 people killed in crashes during the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year holiday periods died from drunk-driving-related incidents. More than 300 law enforcement agencies participated in the holiday 2016 DWI extra enforcement campaign, resulting in 2,407 drivers arrested for DWI, compared with 2,502 DWI arrests during last year's holiday period campaign. Highlights of this year's campaign included an impaired driver crashing into a garage, a squad car being struck by another motorist while on a drunk driving stop, and a driver and passenger switching seats to avoid getting a citation and resulting in two drunk drivers in one vehicle.



Thank you!

Thank you
for deciding
not to drink
and drive.



Saved by the Belt Takes a Scholarly Turn

Seat belts save lives of school bus passengers

In TZD’s Southwest Region, a recent *Saved by the Belt* presentation added a scholarly twist. On the morning of July 13, 2015, a Tri-Valley Opportunity Council school bus was transporting children to school when another motorist crossed over the centerline and hit the bus head on. What could have been a very tragic outcome was thankfully avoided as all occupants were wearing seat belts or properly buckled into child safety seats. In fact, all occupants survived the crash with almost no injuries due to these life saving devices.

The 13 occupants of that bus, both young and old, were recently honored at a ceremony in Granite Falls, where Yellow Medicine County Sheriff Bill Flatten and Lt. Bruce Erickson, Minnesota State Patrol, presented each rider with a *Saved by the Belt* award.

According to Minnesota’s Department of Public Safety, in 2015, 91 people who were unbelted



Young occupants of the Tri-Valley Opportunity Council school bus received their "Saved by the Belt" awards last November.

died on Minnesota’s roadways and 77 percent of vehicle occupants who were ejected, or partially ejected and died, were not wearing a seat belt.

TZD’s seat belt and child passenger safety seat extra enforcement efforts are scheduled twice a year.

If you are interested in supporting an upcoming seat belt/child passenger safety seat wave, please contact your TZD regional coordinator (see contact information on back page).



Lieutenant Bruce Erickson of the Minnesota State Patrol presenting Saved by the Belt award to a school bus passenger.

Minnesota Seat Belt Enforcement Wave:
May 23-31
Buckle Up!

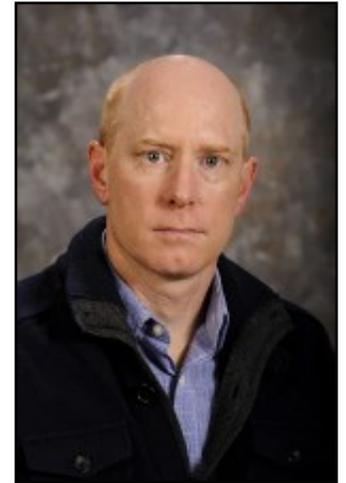
Millennials — A Necessary Target for TZD Efforts

TZD risk takers include millennial generation

Currently millennials are the largest age group with an estimated 80 million of them in the United States. They are also using Minnesota's roadways whether by driving, walking or bicycling. The millennial generation, representing those born between 1982 and 2002, presents unique challenges for TZD traffic safety efforts, but they remain a major target audience for our stakeholders.

Minnesota crash data indicate that some of TZD's greatest risk takers on our roadways are millennial males between 21-25 years of age, and they also are the group with the highest number of fatalities.

However, effectively reaching and influencing this vast audience with traffic safety messages will require some insight into this generation. Rodney Wambeam provided some insight to millennials during the state conference's opening presentation.



Rodney Wambeam, senior research scientist at the University of Wyoming.

Common Characteristics of Millennials

Male vs. Female – Gender differences are largely irrelevant to millennials. What is relevant to them is being free to do something meaningful and to express themselves in a way that makes them happy and fulfilled. Additionally, empowerment for women is a strong trait among millennials, with popular singers such as Beyoncé and Taylor Swift promoting this message.

Establishment Disconnected...but... Millennials often do not feel connections to commonly established institutions. For instance, many millennials claim that they are spiritual, but do not connect to any specific church.

...Technologically Connected...leading to... Millennials are the most connected generation today. The world is literally in their hands with the smartphone, tablet or laptop being an inseparable part of their lives. This almost constant connection has made them open to different cultures and more understanding and sensitive to various kinds of discrimination.

Increased Social Consciousness – Millennials are more environmentally conscious than previous generations, more conscious about all kinds of injustices and are more engaged in fighting them.

Story continued on pg. 11

What You Can Do...

Stay the course. "The stuff we're doing is working. Things are getting better. We need to keep doing it. We're not at zero deaths yet," Wambeam stated.

Really use technology. Citing an example of a smartphone app developed by a millennial for a 12-step recovery program, Wambeam said the way we've done technology in the past has not been as effective as it could be, and technology is constantly changing. "We need to use it better, because frankly we're terrible at it."

Involve parents more. "These are young people who really look up to their parents. They see their parents as mentors," Wambeam said. "We need to leverage that."

Take advantage of teamwork. "This is a generation of young people who collaborate to a fault... millennials get most of their work done in a coffee shop. If we can leverage that need for teamwork we might be able to do something good."

Tie services to the social good. "Millennials volunteer at higher rates than past generations. They really care about the social good," Wambeam said. "If we're somehow able to tie what we do to the social good it could have positive impacts as well."

TZD Flies with Delta's Reservations Center

Delta Airlines looks to TZD for winter driving advice

While TZD's primary focus remains roadway safety, once in a while, it stretches its wings, so to speak. Winter's first snow storm in November struck northern Minnesota hard and left many of the roads ice covered, making for treacherous driving. During that same time, Delta Air Lines Reservation Center in Chisholm received new employees recently transferred from Atlanta, Georgia.

It did not take long for Delta Management to realize that their new employees needed some assistance driving on the icy roads. So they reached out to MnDOT's District 2 Offices, hoping to obtain some safe winter driving brochures to distribute to their employees. Their request eventually crossed TZD Northeast/Northwest Regional Coordinator Holly Kostrzewski's desk. Kostrzewski knew that a handful of flyers was not going to be sufficient. "Minnesotans are having trouble driving on the icy roads," she said. "There is no way that drivers not accustomed to winter driving will be able to drive safe by just reading a brochure."

Kostrzewski pulled in representatives from the Minnesota State Patrol and organized a training class for the newly transferred employees. The class covered all aspects of winter driving – from vehicle maintenance to safely maneuvering on icy roads.

The training was a success, with future training sessions being coordinated. Just another example of TZD collaborative efforts in action.



Newly transferred Delta Airlines employees learn tips on how to navigate Minnesota's icy, wintery roads.



Millennials cont.

Overall, millennials also tend to behave better than the preceding generations in nearly every area of risky behavior including driving. "This generation's rebellion has been to behave better than their parents and grandparents did," Wambeam said, pointing out that alcohol use, impaired driving, bullying and violence in school are all down for this generation "partly because we've been doing the prevention for them with measures such as [graduated driver licensing]."

Conversely they are more in favor of the legalization of marijuana, in general, which could impact traffic safety. "For the longest time we didn't really think of drugged driving the same way we think of driving under the influence of alcohol," Wambeam said. States where the drug is legal are seeing increased interest in its impacts on driving. This could be an area where millennials wield influence as well.

TZD Regional Workshops – Registration Now Open

Registration is now available for the 2017 Toward Zero Deaths Regional Workshops, scheduled for April and May in eight Minnesota TZD regions. These workshops help facilitate Minnesota TZD's goal of creating a collaborative, comprehensive, and regional approach to reducing traffic deaths and severe injuries.

Workshop goals include encouraging traffic safety as a priority for policymakers, providing a method to bring traffic safety programs into local communities, and offering a networking opportunity for traffic safety advocates.

There is no cost to attend, but registration is required. Registration information is available on each workshop's web page:

April 19—[Metro Minnesota TZD Regional Workshop](#), Radisson Hotel Mpls/St. Paul N, Roseville
(register by April 5)

April 21—[Southwest Minnesota TZD Regional Workshop](#), Redwood Area Community Center, Redwood Falls (register by April 7)

May 3—[Southeast Minnesota TZD Regional Workshop](#), International Event Center, Rochester
(register by April 19)

May 4—[South Central Minnesota TZD Regional Workshop](#), New Ulm Conference Center, New Ulm
(register by April 19)

May 11—[West Central Minnesota TZD Regional Workshop](#), Thumper Pond, Ottertail
(register by April 26)

May 23—[Northwest Minnesota TZD Regional Workshop](#), Sanford Center, Bemidji (register by May 9)

May 24—[East Central Minnesota TZD Regional Workshop](#), The Woods, Brainerd (register by May 9)

May 31—[Northeast Minnesota TZD Regional Workshop](#), Northland Country Club, Duluth
(register by May 16)

Exhibitor Registration

To register as an exhibitor for any of the regional workshops, please complete the [online exhibitor registration form](#). Registration deadlines for exhibitors are the same as the participant registration deadlines listed above.

There is no cost to exhibit. However, in order to attend the workshop, you must also register as a participant. Completing the exhibitor registration form **does not** register you as a participant at the workshop.

Want to be part of the TZD Team? Contact your regional coordinator to find out how.

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