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Drugged Driving

A new deadly trend?

U.S. Senator Cory Booker is proposing new legislation that would both legalize marijuana at the federal level and encourage states to legalize it locally through incentives. While the bill, called the Marijuana Justice Act, has little chance of passage in Congress, it does highlight a new trend – one that could negatively affect motorists for years to come.

Last November, four states voted in favor of legalized use, sale and consumption of recreational marijuana: California, Nevada, Maine and Massachusetts. This trend is expected to continue as more states legalize marijuana for both medical and recreational use, and Minnesota is not exempt. These legalization efforts present unique issues for Minnesota motorists and TZD stakeholders.

Marijuana impairs short term memory functions, a person's judgment and distorts perception – all of which make driving more challenging. Specifically, research shows that THC in marijuana negatively affects driving abilities in the following ways: difficulty in maintaining attention, slow reaction times, harder to stay in traffic lane, harder to judge distances, slower decision-making, reduced peripheral/side vision and reduced coordination. If alcohol is added into the mix, more lane weaving is expected.

Yet, even with these known detriments, marijuana use is still on the rise. Reports show an estimated 2.4 million new marijuana users in the past few years. In Minnesota, the

number of drugged driving convictions has risen from 681 in 2004 to 1,342 in 2014.

However, marijuana usage is difficult to enforce as there currently is no legal limit to the amount of pot that can be found in a person's system, like .08 blood alcohol content for drunk driving. Some states have adopted a limit of two or five nanograms of active THC, but unlike BAC, these limits are not based on decades of research showing at what level impairment occurs such as with alcohol.

Additionally there is also no scientific consensus regarding marijuana use and crash risk as it is difficult to determine a standard level of impairment and then relate it to crash risk. THC concentration may drop, but the impairment may last for hours. Also, marijuana can be detected in your system weeks after consumption. For a data-driven program such as TZD, this lack of data is troublesome.

Drugged driving story continued on pg. 3

During a traffic stop in April, a State Patrol search located 17 pounds of marijuana in the trunk and nearly \$6,000 cash.



Freezin' for a Reason—Hwy 23 Crash Reduction Initiative

Despite recent fatality, Hwy 23 initiative moves forward



Four crashes resulting in five total fatalities on Highway 23 since January prompted the Stearns and Benton Counties TZD Coalition to join forces with Minnesota State Patrol and begin the Highway 23 Crash Reduction Initiative. The campaign will utilize the TZD "4Es" to reduce fatalities and serious injuries. The coalition has

A cold day, but a good turnout for the Highway 23 Crash

also built partnerships with local business to further expand its traffic safety education and programs.

"We simply want to curb the behaviors that contribute to crashes," stated Melissa Hjelle, trauma services injury prevention specialist at St. Cloud Hospital. Highway 23 data shows driving distracted as the biggest factor in crashes, accounting for 16 percent. The highway runs through Stearns and Benton Counties while continuing through Mille Lacs County from Richmond to Milaca.

The coalition announced its campaign in late-April at an event in St. Cloud. Despite the cold spring temperatures, attitudes of attendees remained positive. "We're freezin' for a reason," read one of the campaign's social media posts on Facebook. The event provided information about the initiative and included several traffic safety exhibits — impaired driving simulator, rollover simulator, car seat education, emergency vehicles and LifeLink helicopter.

The campaign began with a goal of zero fatalities on Hwy 23 through the end of 2016; however, a fatality in May cut those chances short. But the coalition remains steadfast in its efforts. Motorists will still see increased law enforcement along



East Central TZD Regional Coordinator Tom Nixon is interviewed by KNSI Radio.



"Freezin' for a reason." Highway 23 Crash Reduction supporters take time to pose for a picture.

5 Key Messages for the Hwy 23 Campaign

- Scan ahead 12-15 seconds when driving to identify potential hazards early.
- Check all intersections early and often.
- Drive at a safe speed.
- Do not pass on the shoulder.
- Always wear your seat belt.

Highway 23 and signs reminding them that they are in a crash reduction area. Enforcement will also hand out education cards to motorists on traffic stops. "Rethink what you are doing and realize your actions have consequences, and these consequences are lives," stated Lt. Brad Quart, Minnesota State Patrol.

Drugged driving continued from pg. 1



Last June, Troopers Cory Johnson (left) and Cody Kisor (second from right) completed the classroom portion of Drug Recognition Evaluation training. Next they will begin the certification portion of training to be certified as Minnesota DREs.

Compounding these issues, there is also no solid roadside test for drugged driving. Law enforcement does not generally test for drug use if a driver's BAC is high enough for DWI. Many times drivers have both drugs and alcohol in their systems, making it hard to tell which has the greater effect. Don Marose, Minnesota State Patrol, encourages enforcement to "arrest them if there is impairment. We can sort out the causal substance later."

But the news is not all bleak. Research is being conducted that addresses marijuana use and driver safety. One such study examines the frequency of crashes of drivers with THC in their systems before and after states legalized marijuana. This new research will start shaping laws related to marijuana use.

Lt. Marose also encourages officers to take the Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement class, which teaches enforcement to better identify

specific signs of drug impairment. Officers will learn the observable signs of seven major drug categories, medical conditions that mimic drug influence and what they will see when they encounter drivers under the influence of specific drugs.

Finally, Minnesota can benefit from information gathered from other states where marijuana use is already legalized in some form and use this time to prepare if marijuana use is legalized. Enhanced education campaigns can be developed that teach people that drugs do affect driving and impact traffic safety. Enforcement can take advantage of information learned in courses such as ARIDE and consider further training to qualify as a Drug Recognition Evaluator helping others to spot drug use behind the wheel and in other areas. Minnesota may not be able to stop the onset of legalized recreational marijuana, but it can be prepared.

Driving Home the Message—Distracted Driving Wave

Snapchat and a chicken among distractions

More than a thousand drivers made the choice to focus on activities other than driving during April's statewide extra distracted enforcement wave. Police officers, sheriff deputies and State Patrol troopers participated in the campaign, handing out 1,017 citations to drivers for texting while driving and 1,517 seat belt violations.

Drivers choosing texting over safety jeopardize the lives of others on the road, but any potential distraction can lead to dangerous results.

Violations observed included:

- In Elk River, police stopped three juveniles for reading text messages from their parents.
- Many stopped for Snapchatting.
- A driver who failed to stop for a pedestrian admitted to being distracted by a chicken he was holding in his lap.
- A trooper stopped a person near Eveleth for shopping for cars on his phone while driving.
- A trooper near Lengby found a driver making an NBA fantasy draft list on his phone while driving.



TZD Regional Workshops Roundup

Teenage brain and highway "blame game" top the list of topics

Eight TZD regional workshops were held this past spring, with each region providing an opportunity for its stakeholders to come together, review crash data and strategize how best to reduce crashes in their regions. Attendees also heard from Statewide TZD Program Coordinator Kristine Hernandez, who stated that while fatalities seem to have plateaued in Minnesota, they are on the rise nationwide. Hernandez used this information to encourage stakeholders to continue with their TZD efforts.

Highlights for the workshops included speaker Erin Walsh, M.A., who connected the dots between the latest in brain science and risk-taking behaviors in teens as it related to traffic safety. Walsh discussed the role of "emotional accelerators" in the brain, impacts of technology on the developing brain and practical strategies for engaging young people in risk reduction, such as using hands-on learning tools to share messages about traffic safety.



Erin Walsh speaking on the teen brain at Southeast's regional workshop.

The hands-on learning lessons remain with teens longer than messages provided other ways, such as a presentation or lecture. Current TZD resources, such as the pedal karts and fatal vision goggles, are a

perfect fit for this strategy.

At the East and West Central regional workshops, attendees played the Blame Game where a panel of "4-E" representatives presented a case study on a particular roadway or intersection.

Attendees were then challenged to offer suggestions on how to resolve the issues in the case study. The exercise provided all attendees additional insight into the challenges each individual "E" faces in finding



Rylie Langer, personal impact speaker at the West Central workshop, was reunited with the trooper who responded to her brother's drunk driving crash.

traffic safety solutions and into the reasoning behind why ideas need to be developed and vetted. A simple solution is not always available.

Everyone has heard about self-driving cars, but how best to prepare for their arrival on Minnesota's roadways? TZD's Northeast and Northwest regions tackled this timely topic. Attendees learned what was happening both nationally and in Minnesota regarding these technological developments as well as how current safety



Workshop attendees "gather intel" on various traffic safety resources.

features found in automobiles can affect TZD efforts.

Attendees at the South Central and Southwest regional workshops were given a hands-on opportunity of their own as part of an interactive TZD 101 breakout session. The session was geared toward helping attendees who were thinking about developing a coalition or looking for ideas of what other areas have done. Attendees used the time to "gather intel" on free resources and learn how to use tools available in the regions. Representatives from the Minnesota Safety Council, MADD, local coalition coordinators and communication experts shared their expertise and experience.

Personal impact stories remain a memorable element for the workshops. Stories this year included a teen driver who is facing vehicular manslaughter charges for killing his best friend in an impaired driving crash just two weeks after high school graduation and a sister discussing the effects of her brother's drunk driving crash, as her brother now requires full-time help for the most basic of tasks. Planning has already begun for the 2018 workshops. More details and information to follow as TZD efforts continue!

TZD Takes to the Skies

Surveillance from the air may be newest TZD resource

Did you know that the Minnesota State Patrol has had an active flight division since 1957? The fleet consists of two helicopters and four fixed wing planes and is used for traffic enforcement, transport of law enforcement personnel and surveillance. Most flying is done during nighttime hours and the pilots wear night vision goggles. Pilots are also trained to fly firefighting and rescue missions in conjunction with a Patrol special response team.

Now there is a new surveillance addition to the Patrol's flying fleet — Trooper 5 — a fixed wing plane with new technology that can help TZD reach its goals by providing better surveillance enforcement from the air. The new plane can fly over work zones, fly around festivals and help with the TZD enforcement waves. The plane would look for the same driving behaviors from the air as troopers look for on the ground – weaving, excessive speed, driving too slow and other out-of-the-ordinary events, but this time with a better vantage point of the roadway than from a patrol car alone.

The new plane comes with advanced video equipment including extended range cameras that can record clear digital footage up to five miles away. The new equipment also provides GPS and street information, so the camera operator can provide officers on the ground with street names as opposed to just

changes in travel direction for a suspect. The GPS points can further determine the approximate speeds of vehicles, eliminating the need for markings on highways to enforce speed violations from the air.

Another advantage of Trooper 5 is the height at which it can fly and still successfully track motorists on the ground. The plane flies at 3,500 feet, providing no noticeable trace to those still on the ground. By contrast, the Patrol helicopters fly at a lower level where they can easily be spotted by those trying to escape arrest. The new plane is also more fuel cost effective versus the helicopters. Trooper 5 is currently housed in St. Paul, but once another plane is acquired, it will also fly out of the Brainerd location.

Since this technology is very new, the State Patrol Flight Section is working on gathering accuracy information to have it court certified. With the updated technology and equipment, the aviation troopers are also going through extensive training to become familiar with the new plane. Once fully trained and staffed, pilot Lt. Benz hopes to have daily air patrols during afternoon, evening and late night hours.



Trooper 5 is the latest addition to the Minnesota State Patrol's Flight Section. Its new technology makes surveillance from the air more effective.

What Enforcement Should Know About the Flying Fleet:

- If you call for assistance from the flight station, expect the pilot to directly contact you.
- Please provide the last known visual sighting and direction headed of assailants, as this is a huge help to the pilots in locating them from the air.
- Call the flight station as soon as possible to get them up in the air quickly.
- Flight works especially well with K-9 officers, as the dogs are good at sniffing out what is seen from the plane.
- The helicopter in the Metro Region is currently faster in regards to launch capabilities due to longer runway taxi time needed for the plane.

A Hands-on Approach to Teen Driving Safety

Hands-on tools help teens learn

Prom and graduation remain a highlight of the school year, but can also be one of the deadliest times of year for teen drivers. Efforts to prevent underage drinking, particularly at prom and graduation time, is critical with many high schools organizing various events that encourage teens to make safe choices.

TZD advocates chose to utilize the best tactics and resources during this critical time and selected tools such as the pedal kart and fatal vision goggles



Students at Henry-Sibley High School braved a cold spring day to try the pedal kart. Overheard comments from students in the drivers seat included: "OMG! There's two roads?" and "Which one is the real cone?"



Above: This teen driver not only ran over the cone, but managed to suspend the front wheel of the kart over the cone. He did not manage much better with the other cones on the course.

to stress their safety messages. These interactive resources are excellent learning tools for teens, as hands-on experiences for teens are a more effective learning tool than just a straight lecture or presentation. The overlying message stays with the teen longer.

During the weeks leading up to prom, several high schools in the metro area conducted safety weeks where a different traffic safety message was provided each day during the lunch hours. Popular messages included awareness for drunk driving, distracted driving and seat belt use. The students enjoyed steering the pedal kart through the driving course while wearing the drunk goggles, signed a banner pledging not to text and drive, received wrist bracelets and had the opportunity to purchase CELLslips printed with their high school logo. A rollover simulator was displayed outside the lunchroom on Friday, and the students watched the State Patrol video "Gone Too Soon."

Realism is Key to Mock Crashes for Northeast TZD Region

While not a hands-on learning tool for everyone, mock crashes remain a popular teaching tool for teens. Realism is key to the mock crash. High school senior Teddy Mosqueda-Beaudoin, Denfeld High School, stresses the importance of realism during a recent mock crash. "We don't want kids coming out there giggling and laughing. We want to let them know what really happens when you're on the road, what really goes down."

The weather provided extra realism at another mock crash at Cloquet High School. It was a cold and rainy day, but the crash took place as scheduled. "Kids will remember that crashes and emergency workers work in ANY type of weather," said TZD Northeast Regional Coordinator Holly Kostrzewski. Even more realism was provided to this mock crash as the students gathered in the gym afterwards to listen to a presentation from Matt Logan, whose daughter was killed while texting and driving in 2012. "It really hit hard. Knowing that I could be affected because I've been distracted while driving. It's really scary to think about. It could affect anyone," said Rosalie Lundquist, a senior at Cloquet High School.

The crashes at Denefeld and Cloquet were only two of several mock crash events that took place across Minnesota this past spring.

A Mighty Seat Belt

Spring seat belt campaign results in more than 6,000 citations



Just how strong is a seat belt? Well, in the metro region, a seat belt was attached to a tow truck and used to pick up a car to demonstrate just how powerful that seat belt can be in keeping people safe.

"Those seat belts are little miracle workers that keep drivers and occupants in their seats instead of moving around in the vehicle, or worse yet being ejected," said Colonel Matt Langer, Minnesota State Patrol.

Minnesota's "Click it or Ticket" seat belt campaign resulted in 320 agencies reporting 6,771 seat belt citations and 184 child seat citations.

Commissioner's Award Winners

Spring seat belt campaign results in more than 6,000 citations

Congratulations to the Ramsey County TZD Enforcement grantees who received the TZD Commissioner's Award for their outstanding enforcement and education efforts for 2016.

The Ramsey County Sheriff's Office (right) is the lead agency on the grant, and it collaborates with the following departments:

- Maplewood Police
- Minnesota State Patrol
- Mounds View Police
- New Brighton Police
- North St. Paul Police
- Roseville Police
- St. Anthony Police
- St. Paul Police
- White Bear Lake Police



Efforts included pedestrian safety enforcement; distributing treat coupons to children wearing safety helmets while on a bike, scooter, skateboard or in-line skates; coordinated extra enforcement and reporting follow-up for high-visibility DWI enforcement on specific roads; and billboard messaging on safe driving behavior. Their work focused on all traffic safety issues with an emphasis on impaired driving, occupant protection (seat belts and child seats), speed and distracted driving.

TZD Statewide Conference – Registration Now Open

The conference provides a forum for sharing information on best practices in engineering, enforcement, education, and emergency medical/health services and for identifying new data driven approaches to reducing the number of traffic fatalities and life-changing injuries on Minnesota roads.

October 26-27, 2017

[Saint Paul RiverCentre](#)

Saint Paul, MN

Register online at www.minnesotatzd.org/events/conference/2017/index.html

Register by mail or fax: [Download the registration form](#)

Cost: \$95 (includes breakfasts, lunch and a reception)

Deadline: Friday, October 13, 2017

Location and Accommodations

The conference will be held at the [Saint Paul RiverCentre](#) in Saint Paul, MN. Parking is available in the [Saint Paul RiverCentre parking ramp](#) as well as at nearby facilities.

For transit information, please visit the [Metro Transit website](#).

Rooms are available at special conference rates at the area hotels listed below. Conference attendees are responsible for making their own reservations. Please call your selected hotel directly by **September 28, 2017**, and identify yourself as an attendee of the Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths Conference to receive the special rate.

- [Holiday Inn St. Paul Downtown](#), 175 7th Street West, 651- 225-1515
- [Intercontinental Hotel](#), 11 East Kellogg Boulevard, 651-292-1900
- [Best Western Plus Capitol Ridge](#), 161 Saint Anthony Avenue, 651-227-8711
- [Hampton Inn and Suites St. Paul Downtown](#), 200 West 7th Street, 651-224-7400

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

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