



# Minnesota TZD Program Highlights 2014



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## Message from the Co-chairs

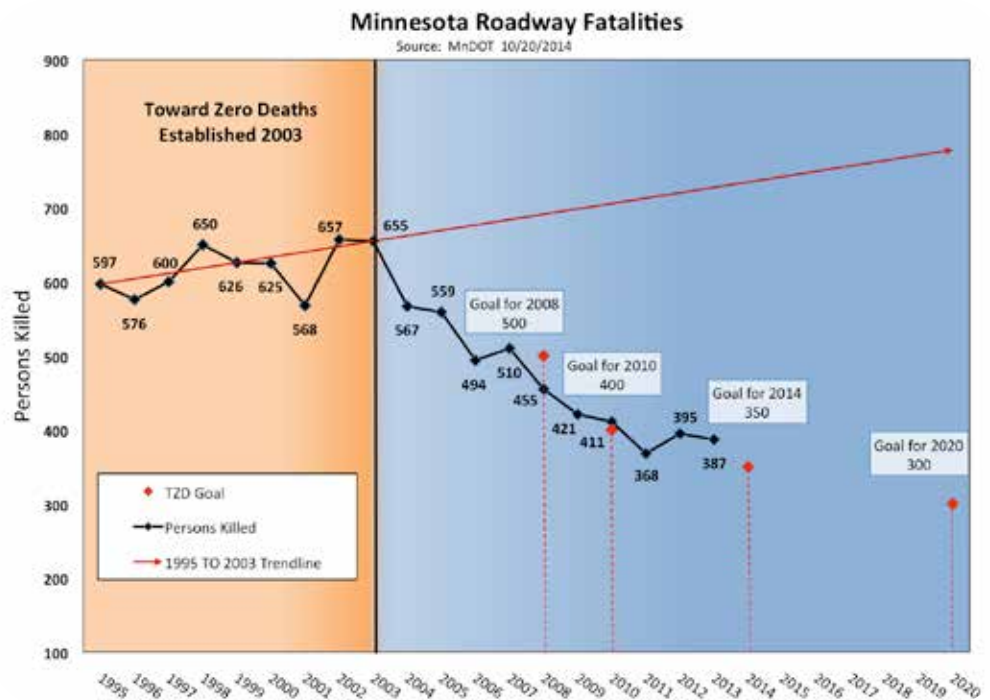
*Donna Berger, Department of Public Safety, Office of Traffic Safety  
Sue Groth, MnDOT Office of Traffic, Safety & Technology*

Last year marked the lowest number of traffic fatalities since 1944, according to preliminary data from Minnesota’s Department of Public Safety. For 2014, DPS is projecting a final number of 361 people who lost their lives as a result of traffic crashes.

To keep Minnesotans driving toward zero deaths, TZD leadership has announced new traffic safety goals: 300 or fewer deaths and 850 or fewer serious injuries by 2020. The new goals were established after evaluating fatal and serious injury trends, which were part of the update to the Strategic Highway Safety Plan, reviewing previous goals and the rate at which the goals were met, and considering recent and ongoing traffic safety accomplishments.

The new goals might seem daunting, but a breakdown of the numbers reveals this is attainable. The year 2020 is less than 60 months away, and Minnesota needs to reduce its fatalities by 60. This is less than one death per month during those 60 months.

The new goals seem even less daunting when we consider the contributions of our safety partners in the 4 Es: Education, Enforcement, Engineering, and Emergency Medical and Trauma Services.



Our efforts in 2015 will focus on the initiatives in the Strategic Highway Safety Plan. More than 500 safety strategies are identified in the plan. The success of many safety strategies implemented during the past decade can be attributed to the formation of TZD. As we look ahead, the plan’s primary focus areas during the next several years are traffic safety culture and awareness, intersections, lane departure, unbelted occupants, impaired roadway users, inattentive drivers, and speed. The plan will guide the efforts of our safety partners in the future as we work toward zero deaths.

Another focus in 2015 will be overhauling the state’s legacy crash records system. Going forward, all crashes causing damages in excess of \$1,000 or involving an injury will be reported to DPS to be used in crash analysis by multiple users statewide. A pilot of the new system will begin July 1, 2015, with statewide training in the fall. Since TZD uses data-driven approaches, better data means safety initiatives will better target the riskiest areas, conditions, and behaviors.

Finally, let’s remember one additional “E”—everyone! Traffic safety is everyone’s responsibility and everyone needs to do their part to help us reach zero deaths.

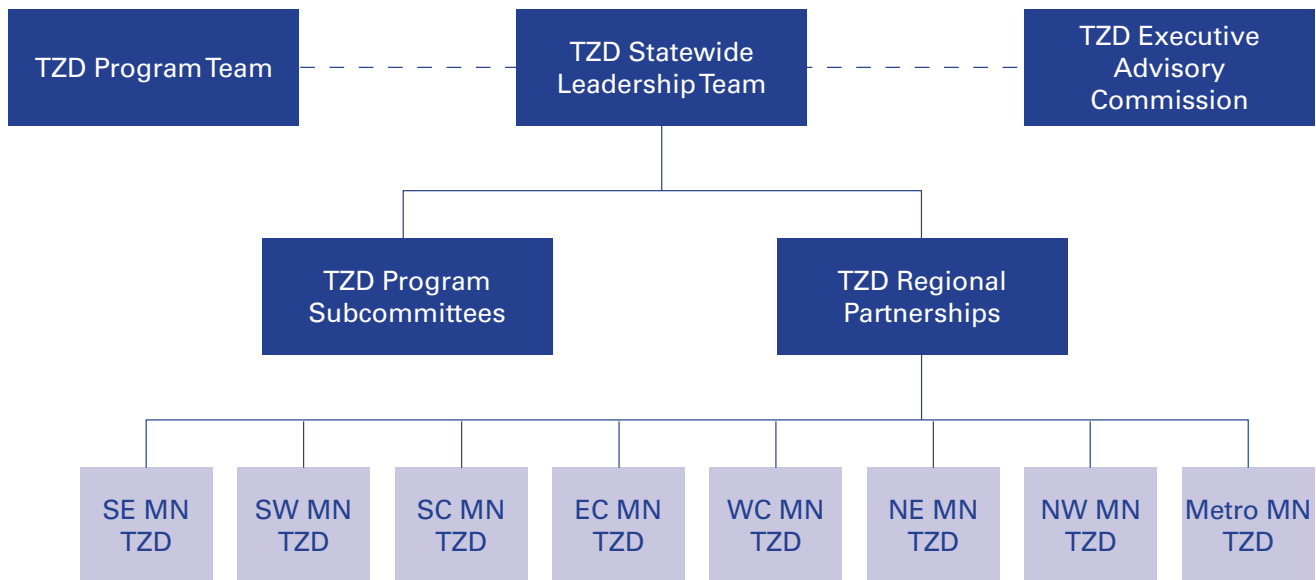
## What is TZD?

Minnesota TZD is the state's cornerstone traffic safety program, employing an interdisciplinary approach to reducing traffic crashes, injuries, and deaths on Minnesota roads. The program's vision is to reduce fatalities and serious injuries to zero.

Although individual disciplines have a long history of successful traffic safety programs, TZD aims to tie these individual efforts together with a common vision and mission for even greater success. The TZD program uses data to target areas for improvement and employ proven countermeasures.

TZD is a partnership led by the Minnesota Departments of Public Safety, Transportation, and Health, the University of Minnesota, and others.

## Program Structure



The **TZD Executive Advisory Commission** strengthens the role and influence of TZD efforts by providing top-level, visible agency leadership.

The **TZD Leadership Team** is responsible for providing strategic direction and overseeing the implementation of TZD initiatives.

The **TZD Program Team** is made up of stakeholder interest groups focusing on all four Es. These members bring their experience and expertise in traffic safety to ensure a balanced perspective on Minnesota's traffic safety challenges as well as solutions to address them.

**TZD Regional Partnerships** engage traffic safety stakeholders at the local level by implementing effective traffic safety countermeasures for safety problems identified through crash data. Partnerships were established beginning in 2005 with Southeast Minnesota TZD; the most recent, Metro, was created in 2014.

**TZD subcommittees** are also formed as needed to work on initiatives related to the TZD program, such as annual conference planning, communications, and award recommendations.

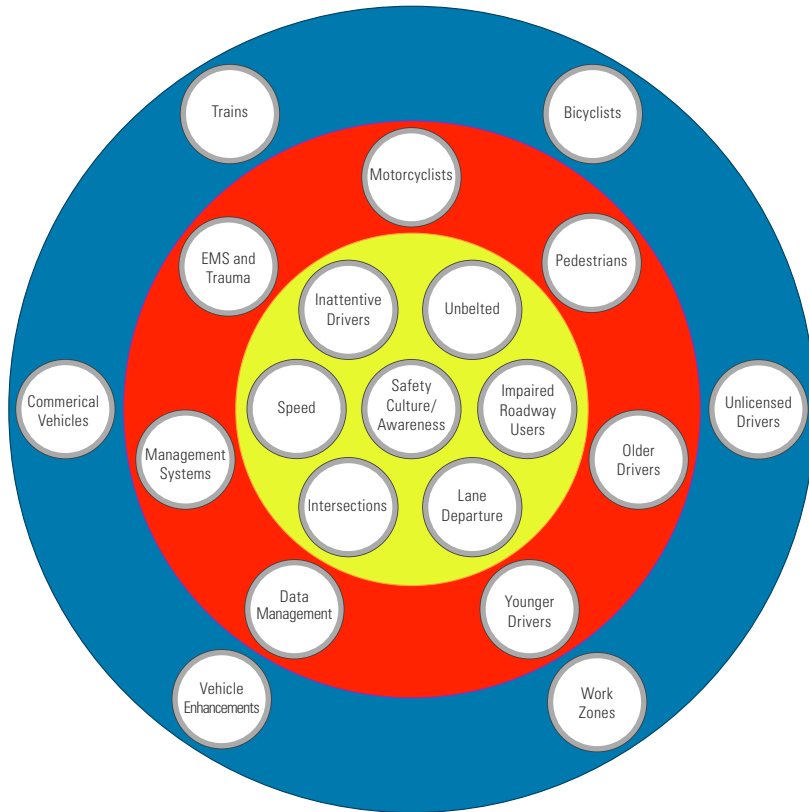
Finally, many **existing programs**, although not directly overseen by TZD, work in collaboration with TZD program efforts, sharing information and coordinating activities when possible to ensure that Minnesota has a united effort for improving traffic safety.

To see a map showing local TZD initiatives and programs throughout Minnesota, visit [www.minnesotatzd.org/network/index.html](http://www.minnesotatzd.org/network/index.html).



# Strategic Highway Safety Plan

In 2014, the Strategic Highway Safety Plan was updated. The plan provides insight and direction on how to reduce traffic-related crashes that involve motor vehicles. The plan presents a view of the statewide crash record and the focus area priorities and strategies to keep the state moving toward a goal of zero deaths. Developed in consultation with safety stakeholders from education, emergency medical and trauma services, enforcement, engineering, and other disciplines, the plan highlights opportunities for collaboration and provides targets and performance measures to chart progress.



## About the SHSP target graphic

The image of a target conveys the need to consider the impacts of *all* the focus areas as priorities in the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). The target shows that some focus areas will naturally require higher priority than others during the next several years. And addressing all of the focus areas in the SHSP ensures an area won't be excluded simply because it has fewer crashes.

The combined information from crash data, trends, and stakeholder feedback shows the need to continue emphasizing behavioral and roadway focus areas at the center of the target. Although notable reductions have been made in recent years, a majority of the fatal and serious injury crashes on Minnesota roadways still fall into these focus areas.

## Traffic Safety Culture

Analyzing traffic crash data and evaluating traffic safety initiatives helps the TZD program determine which strategies work and target areas for improvement. A study conducted in 2014 assessed Minnesota's safety culture—its beliefs and values. Key findings:

- 40 percent of Minnesotans do not regard traffic safety as the most important transportation issue—but most Minnesotans think zero traffic fatalities is an acceptable goal for family and friends. As a result, strategies that focus on concern for the safety of family and friends could be used to promote safer driving behaviors.
- Misperceptions of how often Minnesotans drink and drive or do not wear their seat belt negatively impact the choices drivers make. When individuals believe that most Minnesotans drink and drive or do not wear a seat belt, they are significantly more likely to engage in those same behaviors. Addressing these behaviors through positive social messaging is an area that will be developed in 2015 and 2016.



## 2014 Highlights in the “4 Es”

The TZD program team has identified **four major focus areas** for communities working to reduce traffic injuries and fatalities: **education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency medical and trauma services**. The program recognizes that a combination of strategies from different focus areas is often most effective for solving a particular problem.

**Education** efforts aim to give drivers the knowledge they need to avoid hazardous driving practices and choose responsible driving behavior. Recent accomplishments in this area include:

- A new State Patrol video, *Gone Too Soon*, was created and shown to high school students and community groups throughout Minnesota to illustrate the toll of teen-involved traffic crashes. Thousands of parents and students throughout the state have viewed the video and presentation.
- **Point of Impact**, DPS’s parental curriculum for driver education, involves parents and teen drivers in the training. Parents are key to teaching new drivers, and pre- and post-class surveys show a more than 100 percent increase in parental knowledge of teen driving laws.
- MnDOT, partnering with TZD, launched a **work-zone safety campaign** “Hang Up! Workers Lives at Stake. Orange Cones. No Phones” to help motorists remember this important message. The message was shared on 16 billboards and on pump toppers and window clings at more than 40 gas stations throughout the state.



High school students in Byron were among many statewide to view the *Gone Too Soon* presentation.



MnDOT’s work-zone safety campaign used billboards across Minnesota.

**Enforcement** efforts ensure that traffic controls, driver licensing requirements, drunk-driving laws, and other safety-related regulations—known to be effective countermeasures—are obeyed by all drivers. Enforcing compliance with traffic laws plays a significant role in changing driver behavior and reducing unsafe driving practices. Some highlights:

- In 2014, Minnesota agencies joined together for the **I-90/94 Challenge**, a 15-state initiative led by the Minnesota State Patrol. Their goal was to record no traffic deaths and to cut in half the number of crashes in what has been the most dangerous period of the summer. The I-90/94 Challenge was part of a national effort by the International Association of Chiefs of Police called “The Drive Challenge,” which aims to reduce traffic fatalities across the nation by 15 percent.
- Another notable achievement in TZD enforcement was the implementation of an electronic charging service—**eCharging**—developed by the BCA in conjunction with the Office of Traffic Safety. The result is more accurate and timely reporting to Driver and Vehicle Services and prosecutors. Currently, eCharging is reporting 90 percent of DWIs across the state.



A press conference for the I-90/94 Challenge was held at the state capitol.

**Engineering** efforts focus on evaluating road characteristics to ensure wise investments for modifying roadways and implementing engineering countermeasures. Efforts are ongoing as new technology, designs, and improved systems become available.

- Low-cost, high-benefit strategies for intersection and lane-departure crashes help maximize the number of locations receiving a safety treatment. Deploying **highly visible pavement markings** and **rumble strips** can help prevent lane-departure crashes. Installing **chevrons/signs** at high-risk curves contributes to reducing crashes where they are overrepresented. Pavement **markings and messages** assist drivers in their movements when they approach intersections.
- Safety is also improved for nonmotorized users by installing **pedestrian countdown timers**, deploying **signal timings** that allow pedestrians to begin their crossing while all traffic is stopped, and installing devices such as high-intensity activated or rectangular **rapid flashing beacons** to alert drivers that nonmotorized traffic is using the transportation facilities.



*Rumble strips can help prevent lane-departure crashes.*

Fast, efficient **emergency medical and trauma services** are critical to reducing fatalities and serious injuries whenever a crash does occur. This means having the appropriate equipment in place and staff members trained to be able to rapidly respond to trauma events, assessing severity and transporting patients to the appropriate facility for treatment.

Accomplishments in this area to date:

- The **trauma system** has grown from six designated hospitals in 2005 to 129 hospitals in 2014.
- **95 percent** of trauma admissions now occur at hospitals participating in the statewide trauma system.
- Physicians and nurses working in designated hospitals have completed **trauma-specific training**.
- Each trauma hospital has committed to evaluating and improving the care it provides through a structured **quality-improvement process**.
- Six **Regional Trauma Advisory Committees** have formed to evaluate and improve trauma system performance—from injury prevention to EMS response to resuscitation and interfacility transfer—in their respective regions. These efforts are already affecting positive change.



*Fast, efficient medical response to traffic crashes plays a critical role in reducing fatalities.*



## Legislation

TZD stakeholder efforts play a major role in the passage of traffic safety legislation in Minnesota, such as the primary seat belt law in 2009. In 2014, these efforts led to:

- Stronger state **Graduated Driver Licensing** (GDL) requirements. A parental curriculum component for driver education became law on January 1, 2015. This component is in addition to the current 30 hours of driver education classroom time and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training required for drivers under 18. The provision 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.
- An increase in the **finest for speeding** through a work zone or violating a flagger's direction, to \$300. Speed limits were also reduced to 45 mph when a worker is present and a lane of traffic is closed.



*Fines for speeding through a work zone were increased in 2014.*

## Courts

Minnesota's judicial system and courts support TZD program efforts in numerous ways. One significant success is in the area of **DWI courts**. In 2014, the Office of Traffic Safety added four additional DWI courts and now provides NHTSA grant funds to a total of 16 DWI courts. An evaluation of nine DWI courts in Minnesota completed in 2014 showed DWI courts reduce repeat offenses and save taxpayers money. The evaluation also noted that Minnesota DWI courts have completion rates well above the national average. From their inception in 2008 to the end of 2014:

- 935 participants were admitted into the program
- 594 graduated, completing the entire program

In 2014:

- More than 20 participants graduated from the court
- Of the remaining 53, more than 30 have had valid driving privileges restored

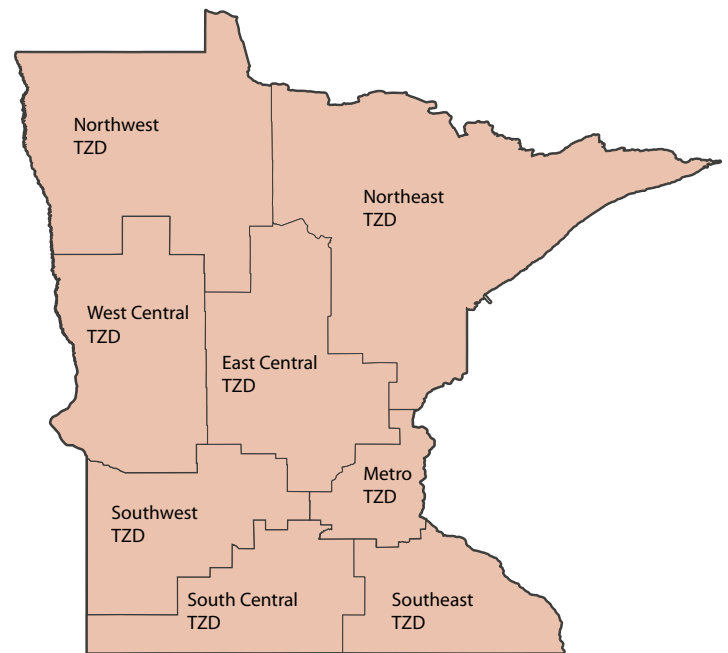


*The St. Louis County DWI team is made up of a judge, probation officers, court coordinator, treatment personnel, law enforcement, public defender, and prosecutor.*

## Regional Partnership 2014 Highlights

To complement statewide TZD efforts, partnerships in eight geographic areas of Minnesota coordinate regional efforts. Regions are encouraged to look at data specific to their areas to identify factors leading to fatal and serious injury crashes, then work with their traffic safety partners to implement proven countermeasures.

Each partnership has a local steering committee, led by the MnDOT district engineer and the State Patrol captain in that area and made up of local traffic safety stakeholders.



### Northwest Minnesota TZD

- Greater Northwest EMS received a \$25,000 grant from State Farm Insurance to purchase a distracted driving simulator for the northwest region. Thousands of people have learned about distracted driving through this simulator at local community events, boat and home shows, high schools, county fairs, churches, volunteer groups, and workplaces.
- In an unprecedented effort, enforcement agencies from both Minnesota and North Dakota worked together to provide extra enforcement during the Independence Day 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. The cross-border enforcement wave and news conference included the 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 Polk County TZD Safe Roads coalition. The wave resulted in 558 traffic stops, 368 citations, and most important, zero fatalities and serious injury crashes on the corridor.



*Employees attending the Digi-Key Health Fair in Thief River Falls tried the distracted driving simulator with the Minnesota State Patrol.*

### Northeast Minnesota TZD

- In Northeast Minnesota, several media ride-alongs were held featuring a pilot distracted driving enforcement project with State Patrol districts 2700, 2800, 3100, and 3200. The State Patrol and local agencies worked together in pairs (one driving, one observing) to find drivers who were texting.
- More than 13,000 fans saw impaired driving messages at University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD) hockey games in December. TZD partners that included UMD, Northeast Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths, and Driving 4 Safe Communities coalition collaborated to have these messages on the Jumbotron at the UMD Bulldog hockey games during the impaired driving waves. The relationship with UMD promotes safe driving during the holiday season.



*UMD hockey fans saw safety messages on the Jumbotron at home hockey games.*



## West Central Minnesota TZD

- During the West Central region's distracted driving campaign in April, a nontraditional approach to enforcing inattentive driving received significant media attention—more than any other event in the past. The event, held in Moorhead, convened local partners to bring awareness to distracted driving occurring near school buses.
- In Wheaton, an event held in May aimed at educating area young drivers gathered local attention and appreciation from the community. The event began with local EMS and law enforcement greeting cars as they entered the school parking lot. Drivers wearing their seat belt received a locally sponsored Subway gift card, and those who weren't received information and a Dum Dum sucker. Later, the State Patrol showed the *Gone Too Soon* video and answered questions. Following that, students watched a demonstration by the Wheaton Fire Department that used a rollover simulator to show why drivers should wear their seat belts.



*From the vantage point of school buses, law enforcement watched for texting and other distracted driving behavior during an enforcement wave in Moorhead.*

## East Central Minnesota TZD

- In the East Central region, a teen driver event was held in July at the Minnesota Highway Safety Research Center. State Farm Insurance sponsored the event, which communicated to teens and their parents the need for parental involvement in developing drivers and behind-the-wheel experience with instructors to perform challenging tasks such as crash avoidance, off-road recovery, and controlled skidding.
- To demonstrate the risks of driving impaired, the Stearns County Sheriff's Office offered an event in September where drivers of pedal carts, wearing impaired-vision goggles, tried to navigate a course created with cones. Then participants, ranging from county staff to passersby, took part in a field sobriety test and attempted to complete tasks while they were driving and distracted.



*An impaired-driving course in Stearns County*

## South Central Minnesota TZD

- In the South Central region, EMS representatives from child passenger safety, law enforcement, the TZD regional steering committee, and MnDOT came together to educate the community during a "Ride the Roundabout Fair." The idea was to help area drivers be prepared for the region's first roundabout. A replica of the Adams Street roundabout was set up in the parking lot of Gander Mountain, and city engineers helped community members navigate their way on golf carts through the roundabout. Nearly 500 people attended the event.
- A joint distracted driving enforcement effort forged a new way of partnering in the South Central region. State Patrol spotters rode in MnDOT trucks, while other law enforcement agencies rode in city and county trucks, in order to sit up higher to observe drivers who were texting or surfing the web.



*At South Central TZD's Roundabout Fair, participants drove golf carts through a staged roundabout.*

## Metro Minnesota TZD

- Metro Minnesota was the final TZD region to form a regional partnership. In April, law enforcement officers distributed driving education cards promoting driving awareness during traffic violation stops. In addition to the safety message and crash facts, the card relayed the story of Shreya Dixit, an Eden Prairie young adult who was killed in a distracted driving crash. The cards were also made available for education awareness events in schools and in the workplace.
- In August, Metro TZD also participated in Pedestrian Safety Week, a citywide, week-long enforcement and education campaign highlighting awareness for pedestrian safety in St. Paul. For this year's campaign, the TZD program collaborated with the St. Paul Neighborhood Associations, St. Paul Walks, and the St. Paul Police Department. Volunteers from various neighborhood associations distributed educational materials during the week and the St. Paul Police Department provided additional crosswalk enforcement at key city intersections.



*Volunteers participated in St. Paul's Pedestrian Safety Week in August.*

## Southwest Minnesota TZD

- In the Southwest region, the Kandiyohi County Safe Communities worked on bringing the JOYRIDE sober cab program to the community in 2014, providing 248 rides during the summer months of operation. JOYRIDE's tagline is "Good Times Delivered" because the goal is for people to go out and enjoy their community bars and restaurants, then get home safely.
- Three new "4 E" coalitions were created in the Southwest Region in 2014—in McLeod, Meeker, and Renville counties. The coalitions have a variety of focus areas including teen drivers, unbelted and impaired drivers, and rural roadways.



*The JOYRIDE sober cab*

## Southeast Minnesota TZD

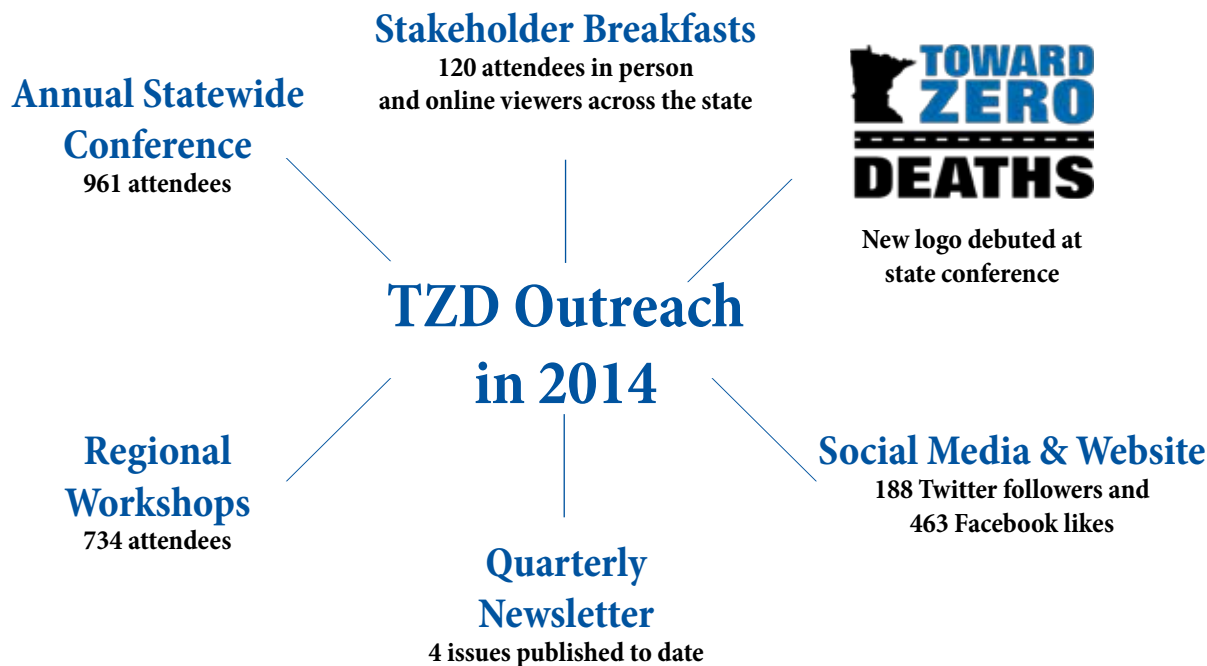
- Together with local law enforcement, the Southeast TZD region held a news conference in August to announce a one-day extra enforcement effort reminding motorists to adhere to the Ted Foss Move Over Law. The law was created to help keep emergency service workers safe on Minnesota roadways. The event was held at the eastbound I-90 Enterprise Rest Stop, which is near where Trooper Foss was struck and killed by a passing vehicle while conducting a traffic stop in August 2000.
- Southeast Minnesota TZD held a DWI news conference in November at Apache Mall in Rochester to provide awareness of the statewide DWI enforcement wave. Then, community members got a hands-on experience of how alcohol affects their driving abilities. Mallgoers were invited to drive a pedal car through an obstacle course wearing different levels of "drunk driving" goggles and to participate in a field sobriety test. Even Santa took time out of his busy day to attempt the course. Law enforcement, EMS, engineers, and educators from around the region participated.



*Participants, including Santa, wore "drunk driving" goggles while navigating an obstacle course in Apache Mall.*

## Outreach

The TZD program communicates with and engages its stakeholders in a number of ways:



## Awards

At its annual conference in November, the Minnesota TZD program recognized the contributions of individuals and organizations working toward zero deaths with several awards.

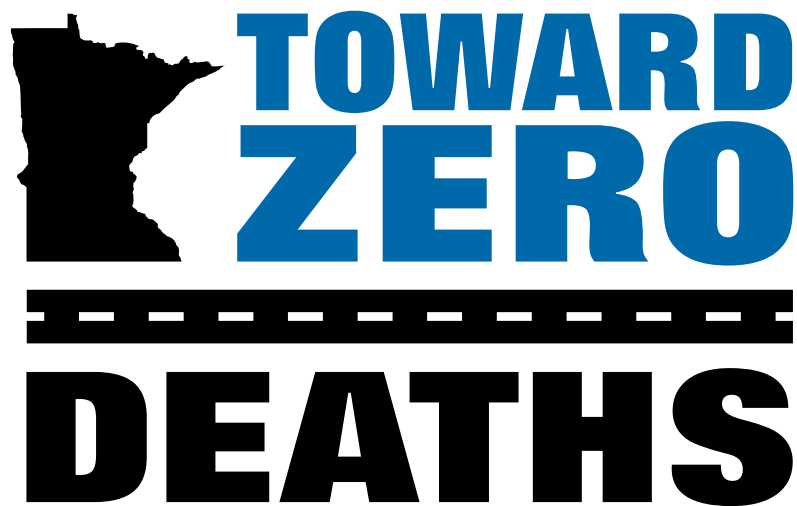
The **Kathy Swanson Outstanding Service Award** recognizes an individual who has shown exceptional leadership in efforts to improve traffic safety in Minnesota, build partnerships, and mentor others in the field. The Toward Zero Deaths **Star Awards** recognize excellence in enforcement, emergency medical and trauma services, education, engineering, child passenger safety, judicial/court systems, and the media. The Distinguished Public Leadership Award is given to public leaders who, through their vision, leadership, and knowledge, have influenced traffic safety policy directions that benefit society.

The TZD program also gave its first **Traffic Safety Innovation Award** to recognize non-governmental organizations for new and creative traffic safety solutions that help save lives on Minnesota roads. The award went to AT&T Minnesota for its work educating the public—especially teen drivers—about the dangers of texting and driving. AT&T Minnesota participated in the **It Can Wait** initiative, a national campaign aiming to reduce crashes caused by texting while driving. To enhance the national campaign, AT&T Minnesota joined forces with Minnesota TZD and numerous stakeholder organizations to spread the word and launch challenges for high school students that encouraged them to participate in competitive pledging campaigns, and hundreds of teens made the pledge not to text and drive.



*TZD 2014 award winners and presenters at the statewide annual conference*





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