

# WISCONSIN TRAFFIC SAFETY REPORTER

Vol. 19, No. 2  
2016

## Summertime safety news



David Pabst,  
Director  
WisDOT  
Bureau of  
Transportation  
Safety

Summer is knocking at the door, and the 42nd Annual Governor's Conference on Highway Safety will be held Aug. 23-25 at the KI Convention Center in Green Bay. This year's theme is *Driving Fatalities Toward Zero through Visibility, Partnership and Innovation*. The sessions are shaping up nicely, and I look forward to seeing you there.

This issue of the *Wisconsin Traffic Safety Reporter* includes news on:

- the Governor's Conference
- crash fatality trends in Wisconsin and steps being taken in response
- upcoming training on how to use the new crash report form
- progress fostering motorcyclist safety
- NHTSA's recent assessment of the Wisconsin Bike/Ped Safety Program, along with their recommendations

As we enjoy summer, we must all remember to stay focused and

[continued on page 2](#)



## In Wisconsin

### Rising crash fatalities ... boosted safety efforts

For decades, crash fatalities in Wisconsin have been trending downward. They peaked at 1,142 in 1969, when baby boomers were teenagers, and by 2014 they had dropped to 498, the lowest number since World War II.

Since then, the trend line has taken a wrong turn. Last year, 555 people were killed on Wisconsin's roadways, an increase of 11 percent from the previous year. So far in 2016, this worrisome trend has continued. As of June 26, the loss of lives had reached 261, 13 percent higher than the 2011-15 average of 230.

Designing and implementing effective traffic safety programs require careful analysis of traffic crash data. At the national level, federal agencies such as NHTSA and FHWA gather and analyze a wide range of crash data, helping shape the safety policies and programs they fund.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation makes extensive use of crash data to help with all the four "E's" of traffic safety: **engineering, enforcement, EMS and education**.

The WisDOT Bureau of Transportation Safety (BOTS), the publisher of this newsletter, coordinates a statewide behavioral traffic safety program. It targets such problems as impaired driving, speeding and distracted

[continued on page 2](#)

## Mark your calendar!

### Governor's Conference on Highway Safety

August 24-25 • KI Center, Green Bay  
Pre-conference trainings on August 23

*Driving Fatalities Toward Zero* is the theme for this year's conference. It reminds us that every facet of traffic safety must be united and focused on the goal of zero preventable deaths on Wisconsin's roads.

As noted in the article above, crash fatalities have recently turned upward after decades of decline. Last year, the loss of life increased by 11 percent from 2014. So far this year, Wisconsin's toll is even worse.

[continued on page 8](#)

## Crash fatality trends



## Important update!

### Trainings on using new crash report forms

A major revision of the MV4000 Crash Form (MV4000) and database will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2017. The new system will provide additional crash details to WisDOT and local agencies to improve opportunities for data-driven strategic efforts to improve traffic safety. Beginning on Jan. 1, 2017, all crashes must be submitted electronically using the TraCS10 format. The MV4002 Driver Report form will be digitized too. Neither the MV4000 nor the MV4002 will be available in paper for 2017 crashes.

WisDOT wants to make sure that all law enforcement agencies are trained on the new crash forms and are ready to use them beginning Jan. 1, 2017. Training dates and locations statewide, along with other registration details, are available in the May and June documents [here](#). **Must register by July 8.**

See [page 8](#) regarding two training sessions at the Governor's Conference.

**Safety news ...**  
from page 1

continue to strive for *Zero in Wisconsin*. We must continue to spread the word and walk the talk about buckling up, driving sober, wearing your gear, and paying attention. Distracted driving, especially texting and smart phone use, is still a growing problem. Smart phoning and texting are ultimate distractions since they take your eyes off the road, your hands off the wheel, and your brain off the driving task. It is dangerous for anyone, but, if you combine texting or smart phoning with a new driver's inexperience, or the vulnerability of motorcyclists, pedestrians and bicyclists, then you've got a recipe for disaster. Make sure you talk with your family and friends about this menace and encourage them to *Drive Now, Text Later*.

Find more information on distracted driving [here](#).

**Rising fatalities ...** from page 1

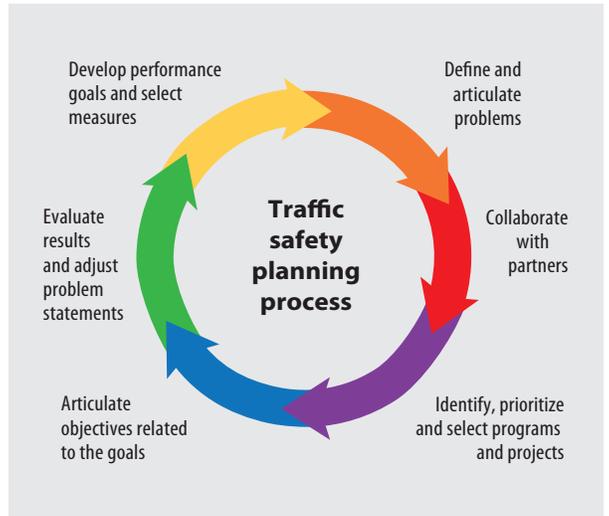
driving, and aiming to improve occupant protection and safety for all travelers, including motorcyclists, bicyclists and pedestrians. For BOT'S, the traffic safety planning process is continuous, as illustrated at right.

**Preliminary review of 2015 crash fatality trends**

By April of each year, preliminary crash data for the previous year are available for analysis. County profiles are developed, including demographic information and details on county-specific crash problems.

BOT'S then uses this data to generate targeting lists for law enforcement grants. BOT'S also develops a preliminary review of crash fatality trends. The review is used by BOT'S staff, including the regional program managers (RPMs) who share it, for example, with the county Traffic Safety Commissions in their regions. It is also passed along to the WisDOT Office of the Secretary.

What follows are key details from this year's review, together with examples of steps BOT'S is taking,



along with its traffic safety partners, in response to these crash trends.

The review provides details for the counties (see map below) where crash fatalities in 2015 were higher than the 2010-14 average. One example is Milwaukee County, which had 81 traffic fatalities in 2015, dramatically higher than the 2010-14 average of 57.



The *Wisconsin Traffic Safety Reporter* is published by the Bureau of Transportation Safety, Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Its purpose is to promote transportation safety, recognize worthwhile programs, and to educate and share ideas with safety professionals.

WisDOT SECRETARY  
**Mark Gottlieb, P.E.**

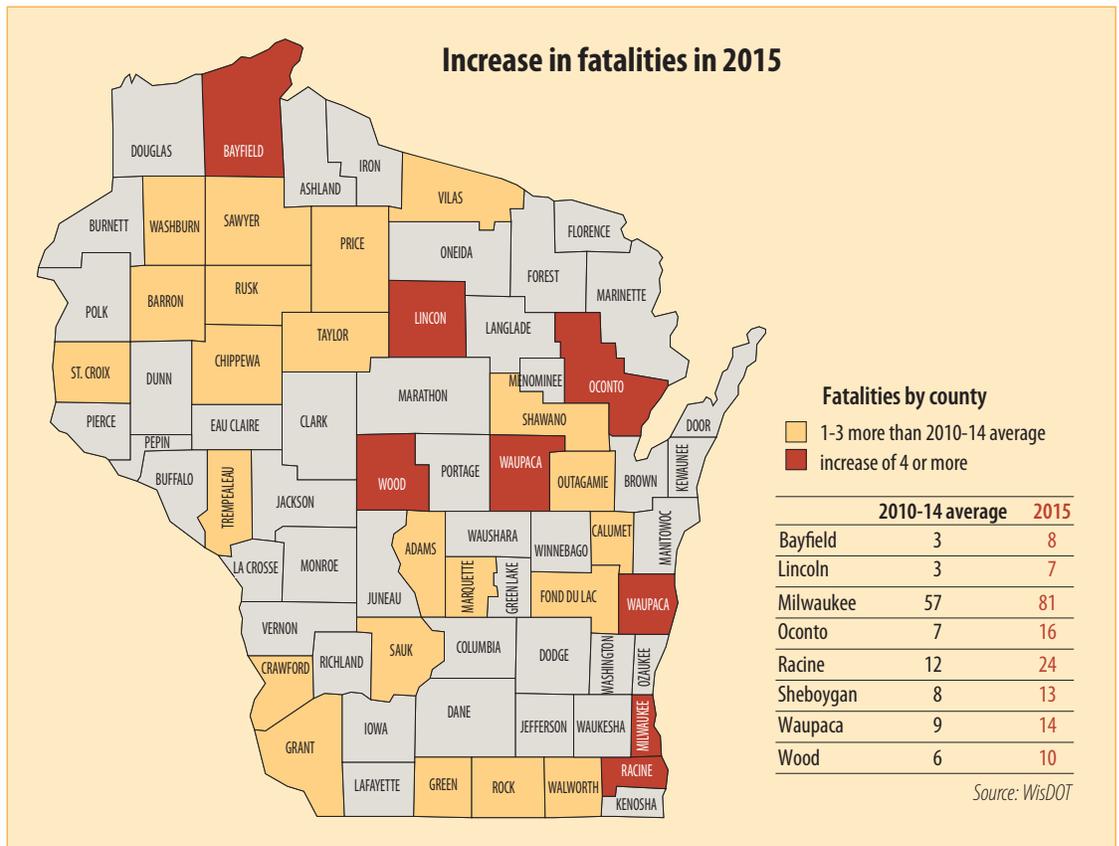
DIRECTOR-BOTS  
**David Pabst**

TSR COORDINATOR  
**Steve Olson**

Comments/questions invited: (608) 261-5896  
[steve.olson@dot.state.wi.us](mailto:steve.olson@dot.state.wi.us)

Funded by WisDOT and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

[wisconsindot.gov](http://wisconsindot.gov)



### Statewide trends

One key issue in analyzing crash trends is identifying influencing factors, and many factors at the national level are also important in Wisconsin. One example is the effect of gas prices.

The number of miles people drive is influenced by long-term trends in gas prices. Research has established a model for how gas prices affect how much people drive and how much this affects crash fatalities. Gas prices have been low recently, and there were 57 more fatalities on Wisconsin's roads in 2015 than 2014. The model indicates that about 23% of this increase can be attributed to lower gas prices.

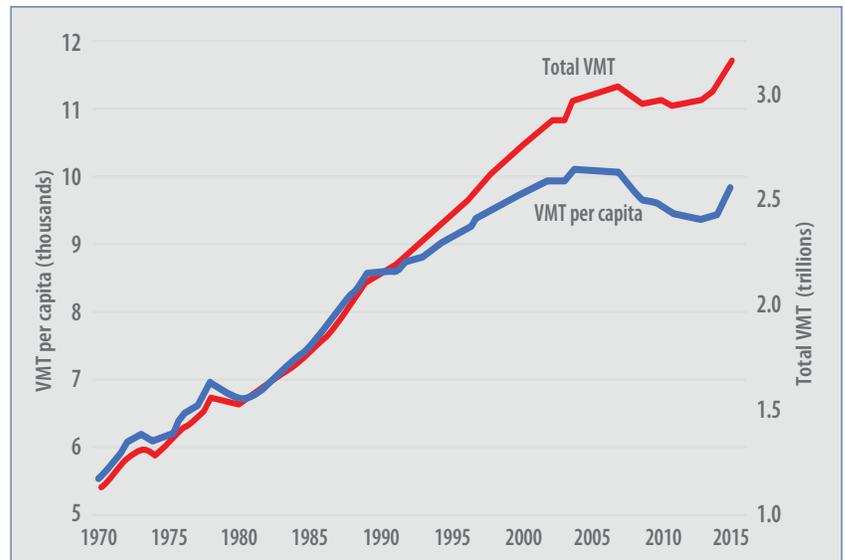
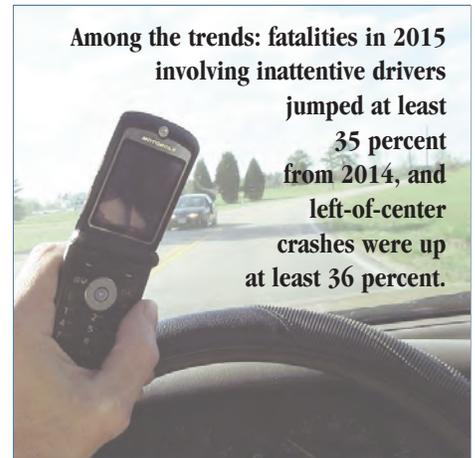
Along with gas prices, another factor that influences how much people drive is how well the economy is doing. In 2015, the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the United States increased by 4.4 percent (see graph at right), setting a new record of 3.1 trillion miles. VMT per capita increased by 3.6 percent.

This data shows the effect of the recent recession and then the slow economic recovery. As total VMT has risen, both nationally and in Wisconsin, so have crash fatalities.

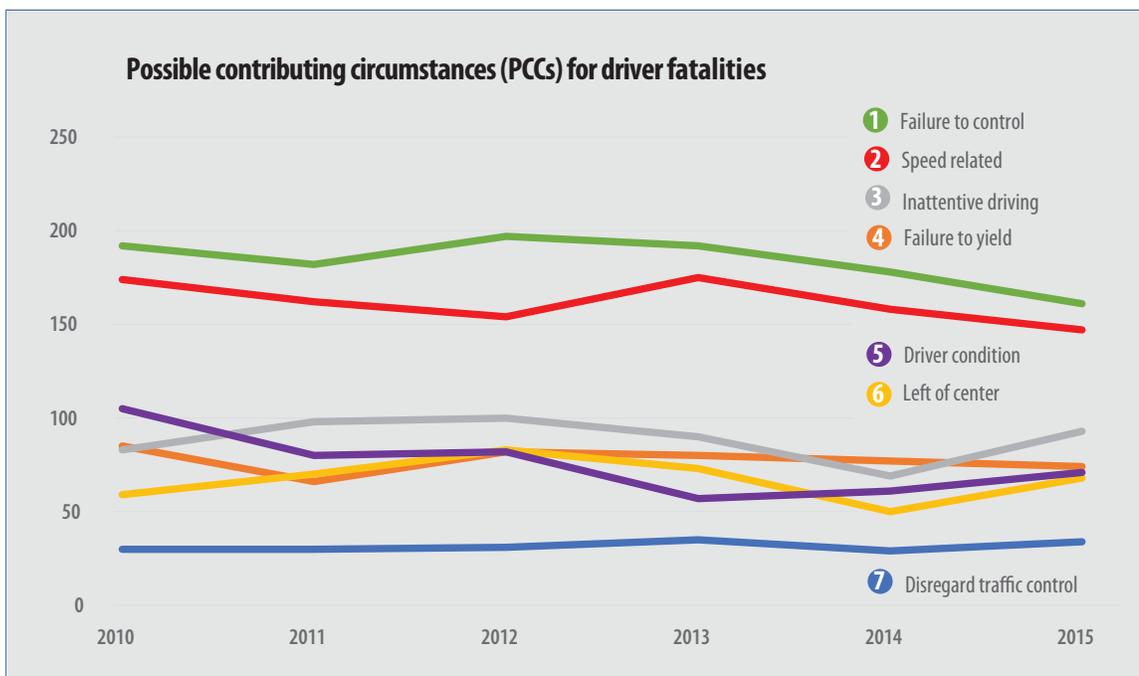
The BOTS 2015 preliminary crash trend review takes a detailed look (see graph below) at driver Possible Contributing Circumstances (PCC) in fatal crashes during 2010-15.

In recent years, BOTS has been ramping up efforts to combat distracted driving. For example, the [Zero in Wisconsin campaign](#) has developed a wealth of videos, TV spots and interviews. Also, at this summer's [Governor's Conference on Highway Safety](#), one of the keynote speakers, Professor David Strayer from the University of Utah, is an expert on distracted driving.

*continued on page 4*



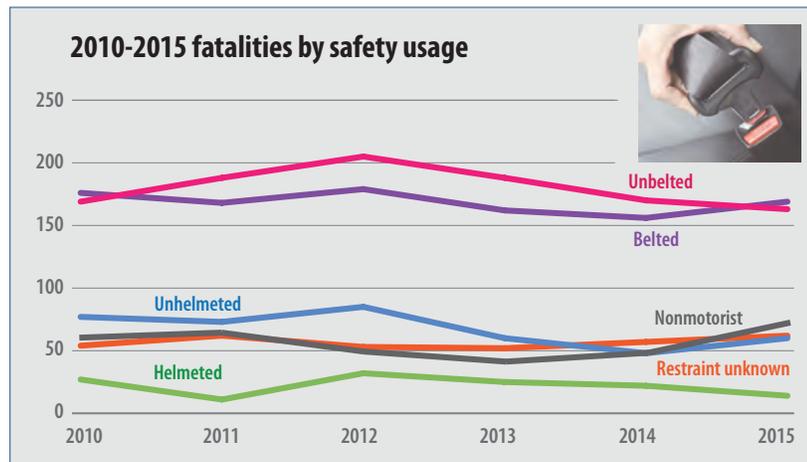
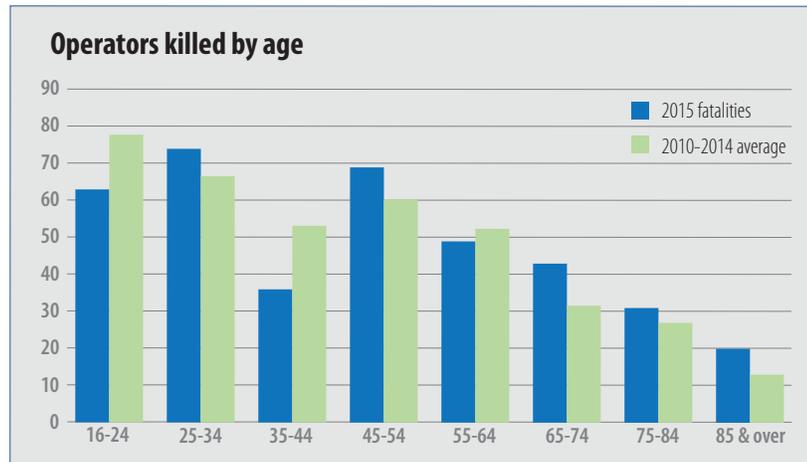
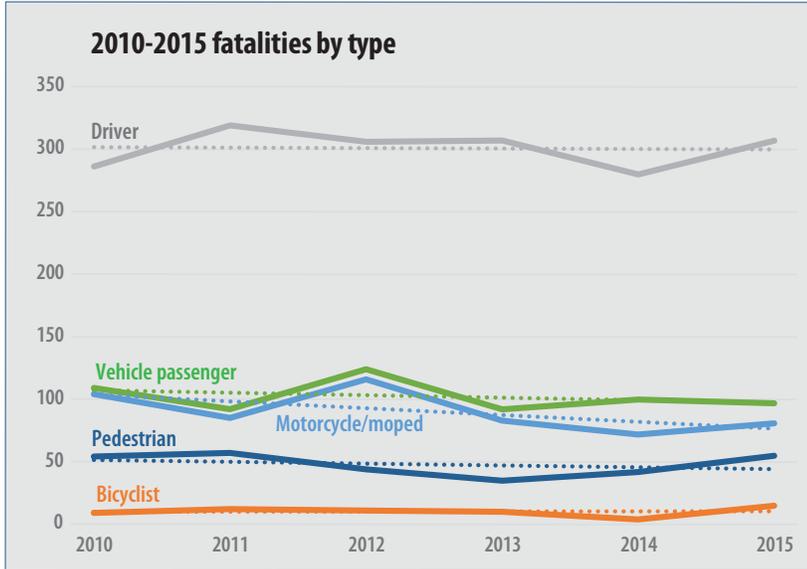
Source: State Smart Transportation Initiative



**Rising fatalities ...**

from page 3

The review also examines the fatality trends for the various modes of transportation. Among the dramatic recent changes: 55 pedestrians died in 2015, up 20 percent from the 2010-14 average. Also, 15 bicyclists died, a 67 percent increase from this average. (See page 7 for more pedestrian and bicyclist safety news.)



The review also shows several large age-related changes.

In recent years, crash fatality rates among drivers ages 16-24 have been dropping, with one factor being the success of [Graduated Driver Licensing \(GDL\) programs](#).

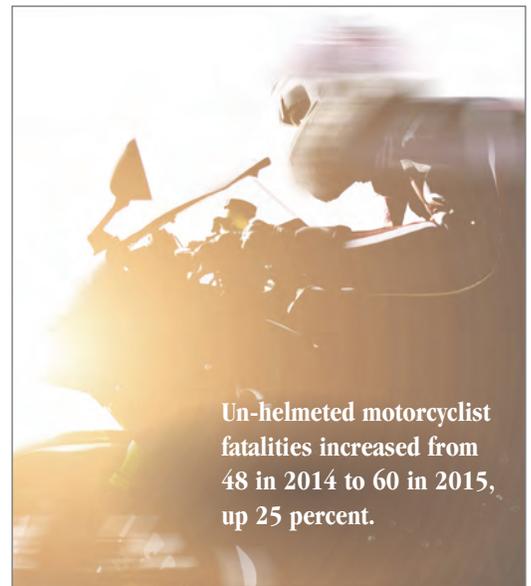
The United States population is aging, bringing a “silver tsunami” of older drivers. In 2013, the population ages 70 and older was 30 million; by 2030, this will surge to 54 million. As the graph shows, crash fatalities for several age groups of older drivers rose substantially in 2015 compared to the 2010-14 average.

Wisconsin Traffic Safety Reporter, [Vol. 18, No. 4 \(2015\)](#) provides a close look at how aging affects driving performance and also at the wide range of programs and resources aimed at helping the elderly stay safely mobile.

Fatalities of belted motor vehicle occupants rose 8 percent in 2015 compared to 2014, mirroring the statewide increase in total fatalities.

Fatalities of unbelted occupants continue to decrease as the safety belt usage rate increases, but they remain high, with unbelted fatalities far overrepresented among traffic fatalities. The safety belt usage rate in Wisconsin rose to 86 percent in 2015; only 14 percent of occupants are unbelted. However, unbelted fatalities are 49 percent of the total fatalities in crashes where safety belt usage is known.

Safety belts reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passenger car occupants by about 45 percent (*Source: NHTSA*). Efforts by BOTS to encourage buckling up include funding support for [Click It or Ticket mobilizations](#) and also raising public awareness as part of the [Zero in Wisconsin](#) campaign.



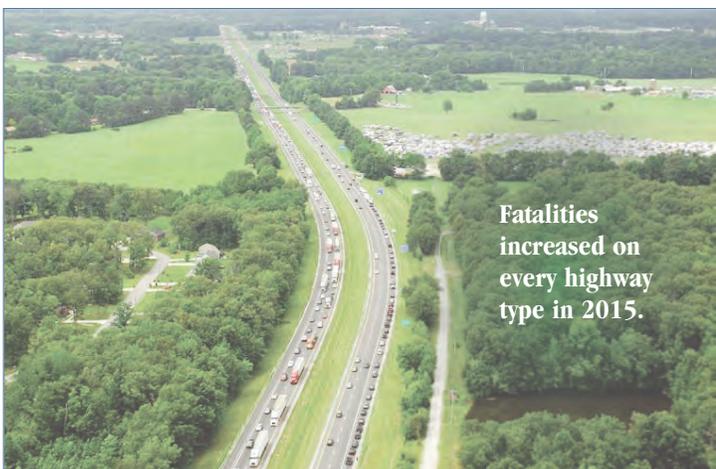
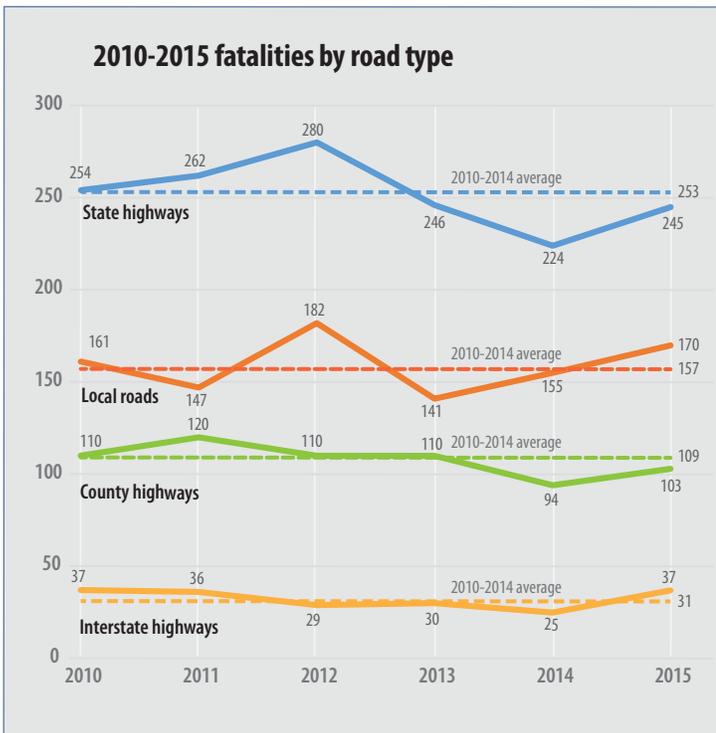
Un-helmeted motorcyclist fatalities increased from 48 in 2014 to 60 in 2015, up 25 percent.

See [page 6](#) for motorcycle safety news.

## Conclusion

Careful crash data analysis by WisDOT is helping foster traffic safety in Wisconsin, and the BOTS staff encourages its partners to continue improving how they use both statewide and local crash data. Many law enforcement agencies are making more comprehensive and efficient use of crash data, and BOTS Regional Program Managers are working with county Traffic Safety Commissions to make use of [Community Maps](#).

At BOTS, the ongoing traffic safety planning process continues, and at this stage its staff welcomes your input to help them update WisDOT's three-year traffic safety planning document, the [Strategic Highway Safety Plan](#).



## BOTS welcomes ...

### Randy Wiessinger

Statewide Law Enforcement Liaison



After 29 years in law enforcement — the last 26 with the Dane County Sheriff's Office — Randy retired in June 2015. He was a member of the Dane County Traffic Safety Commission (TSC) for almost 13 years and served as the TSC coordinator. He is also former president of the Wisconsin Traffic Safety Officers Association.

His primary focus now is on working with TSCs statewide, including:

- assessing TSCs' functionality
- developing new, comprehensive TSC guidelines
- developing a toolbox of resources for TSCs to use in reducing traffic crashes in their respective counties and communities

Contact Randy at [rpw@wiessinger.com](mailto:rpw@wiessinger.com).

## Pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities rise ... *from page 7*

### BOTS is currently helping support a wide range of pedestrian and bicyclist safety programs.

Wisconsin is [rated](#) as one of the top 10 bicyclist-friendly states in the nation. The [Share and Be Aware](#) program educates roadway users. Also, a two-day class trains law enforcement officers on how to more effectively enforce pedestrian and bicyclist safety laws. [Teaching Safe Bicycling](#) is offered at five locations every spring.

Wisconsin has pedestrian high-visibility enforcement projects in Green Bay, La Crosse, Madison and Milwaukee, with a data-gathering component to evaluate effectiveness. A two-day training course, [Designing for Pedestrian Safety](#), is offered to planners and engineers. Two were held last year (see photo on page 7), and two this spring, in Wausau and Waukesha.

More Americans are walking and biking for health, economic or environmental reasons. This underscores the need to create safe, walkable and bikable pathways. People who drive and people who walk and bike must all understand and follow the rules of the road, so everyone arrives at their destination safely.

## Motorcycle safety

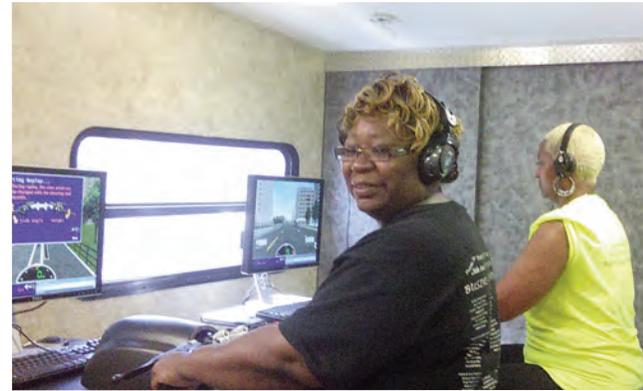
# Wisconsin is making life-saving progress

Nationwide in 2015, motorcyclist deaths surged **10 percent**, and motorcyclists are now nearly 15 percent of all motor vehicle fatalities. Per mile driven, motorcyclists have a fatality rate 26 times higher than passenger vehicles.

But there is some important good news; in Wisconsin the recent trend has been encouraging (see graph on page 4). The 2010-14 annual average of fatalities for motorcyclists and moped riders was 92, but the more recent average, for 2013-15, is down to 79.

This riding season, the **Wisconsin Motorcycle Safety Program** continues to improve rider education opportunities and bring motorcycle safety awareness and education to the general public and to motorcyclists themselves.

**THE REF** mobile training facility travels the state, educating and encouraging formal rider training. Last year, THE REF was at 54 events statewide and had about 6,500 visitors.



Trying out the SmartTrainers in THE REF

New for this year: during September 1-5, the Milwaukee Rally and the H.O.G. Rally will run concurrently, with all five major metro Milwaukee Harley-Davidson dealers participating.

WisDOT provides funding to boost public awareness with billboards, dynamic message signs, and TV and radio PSAs. Messages include: *Ride Legal, Ride Safe* and *All the Gear, All the Time*.

A broad range of rider-ed courses is **available**, from the Introductory Motorcycle Experience, to give non-riders the feel of a motorcycle, all the way up to the Ultimate Bike-Bonding RiderCourse Plus (UBBRC-Plus), for the most experienced riders. During last year's riding season, about 7,500 students attended a total of 872 classes.

Now, in a pilot program, a team of 12 RiderCoaches (including RiderCoach Trainers) can visit sites around the state that want to host courses, such as the UBBRC-Plus, to gauge local interest. This approach might help "seed" interest in these courses, which could then be offered regularly if there's enough demand.



Brushing up on those rusty skills

Bucky visits THE REF and tries out a Suzuki GSX-R600 sport bike. It was donated to the Wrightstown Police Department, converted into a patrol motorcycle, and is now used for traffic enforcement and community outreach.



To schedule an appearance  
[THEREF@ZeroInWisconsin.gov](mailto:THEREF@ZeroInWisconsin.gov)  
 or (800) 368-967

## Pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities rise

# NHTSA provides BOTS with program assessment and recommendations

In 2015, pedestrian fatalities spiked 10 percent nationwide, according to the [Governor's Highway Safety Association](#). During the 10-year period 2005-14, pedestrian deaths as a percentage of total motor vehicle crash deaths have increased steadily from 11 to 15 percent.

Many factors could be contributing to this increase, such as more motor vehicle travel—fueled in part by improved economic conditions and lower gas prices—coupled with the growing use of cell phones among both walkers and drivers.

In Wisconsin, 55 pedestrians died in 2015, up 20 percent from the 2010-14 average (see page 4). Also, 15 bicyclists died, a 67 percent increase from this average.

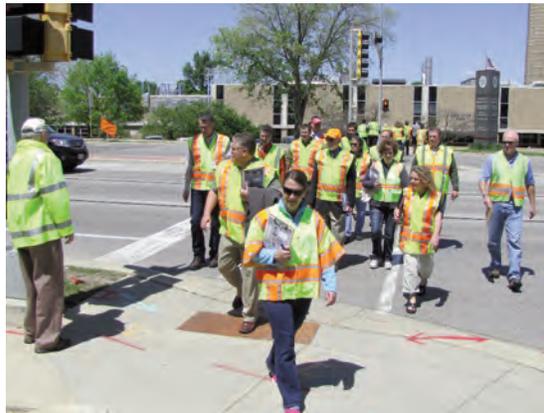


To help with its efforts to improve pedestrian safety statewide, the WisDOT Bureau of Transportation Safety (BOTS) asked NHTSA to take a close look at Wisconsin via its [Pedestrian Program Training and Assessment](#). A team of outside experts is available to conduct this comprehensive assessment of a state's pedestrian and bicyclist safety program. This assessment:

- Produces an overview of the program's current status in comparison with pre-established standards
- Notes the program's strengths and weaknesses
- Provides recommendations for improvements

In April, the team met with a wide range of people involved with pedestrian and bicyclist safety in Wisconsin, including representatives from WisDOT, Wisconsin DPI and DNR, the University of Wisconsin, law enforcement, municipal government, metropolitan planning organizations, driver education, advocacy groups, and the bicycle businesses Trek, Planet Bike, and Saris.

Assessment team members said they were impressed by the fact that BOTS is trying to improve what team members already recognize as a model program.



During the *Designing for Pedestrian Safety* course last summer, instructor and participants examine busy intersection in Madison.

The team provided its priority recommendations in the following areas: multi-disciplinary involvement; legislation, regulation and policy; law enforcement; highway and traffic engineering; communication and outreach; driver ed and licensing; and evaluation.

Examples of their recommendations include:

- Amend 346.23 of Wisconsin's vehicle code to change the wording from "yield" to "stop, if need be," for pedestrians in the crosswalk
- Designate a single agency in the state with authority over all driver education training. This agency should require strict standards in class length, curriculum, behind-the-wheel, and observation requirements
- Require all driver education providers in the state include the curricula required for school district driver education classes

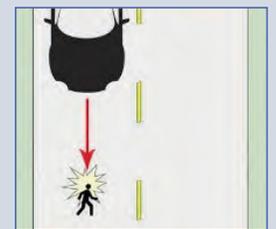
The team's full recommendations are available [here](#).

*continued on page 5*

With funding support from BOTS, Robert Schneider, Ph.D., AICP, and Joseph Stefanich of the UW-Milwaukee School of Architecture and Urban Planning led an analysis of pedestrian and bicycle crashes reported to police in Wisconsin during 2011-13. The study focused on fatal and severe injury crashes.

Analysis highlights include: the highest concentrations ("hot spots") of these serious crashes tend to be along signalized, multi-lane, arterial roadway corridors in urban and suburban areas with moderate to high levels of pedestrian or bicyclist activity.

The full report is now [available](#).



During NHTSA's assessment in April, the team of pedestrian and bicyclist safety experts (facing camera) meet with (left) Brian Porter (state traffic safety engineer) and Jill Mrotek-Glenzinski (state bike-ped coordinator).

## Highlights

# 2016 Governor's Conference on Highway Safety from page 1

*Distracted driving is an increasing concern. A driver is four times more likely to crash while speaking on a cell phone, and texting while driving raises the crash risk 25-fold.*

*Almost all crash deaths are preventable, and we must remember that traffic safety has an impact far beyond the statistics. Serious-injury crashes devastate individuals, families and entire communities.*

## FREE Pre-conference trainings include

### New Crash Forms Training (2 sessions)

**Tuesday, August 23**

A sweeping revision of the MV4000 Crash Form (MV4000) and database will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2017. The new system will provide additional crash details to WisDOT and local agencies to improve opportunities for data-driven strategic efforts to improve traffic safety.

Beginning on Jan. 1, 2017, all crashes must be submitted electronically using the TraCS10 format. The MV4002 Driver Report form will be digitized too. Neither the MV4000 nor the MV4002 will be available in paper for 2017 crashes.

WisDOT crash database project members will present the new crash form and provide hands-on demonstrations to train departmental representatives on the new crash form. Also, 25 laptop computers will be available for 50 participants.

## Keynote speakers

**Wednesday, August 24**

**9:30-10:15 a.m.**



**James Hedlund**, who spent 22 years at NHTSA in various research and management positions, will focus on various behavioral traffic safety subjects, including having every vehicle occupant wear a safety belt every trip, every time.

**Wednesday, August 24**

**10:15-11:00 a.m.**

**Professor David Strayer**, from the University of Utah, is an expert on distracted driving. He will discuss the latest research and dealing with the increased crash risk due to smart phones and texting. His work ranges from



David (left) and a colleague use driving simulator.

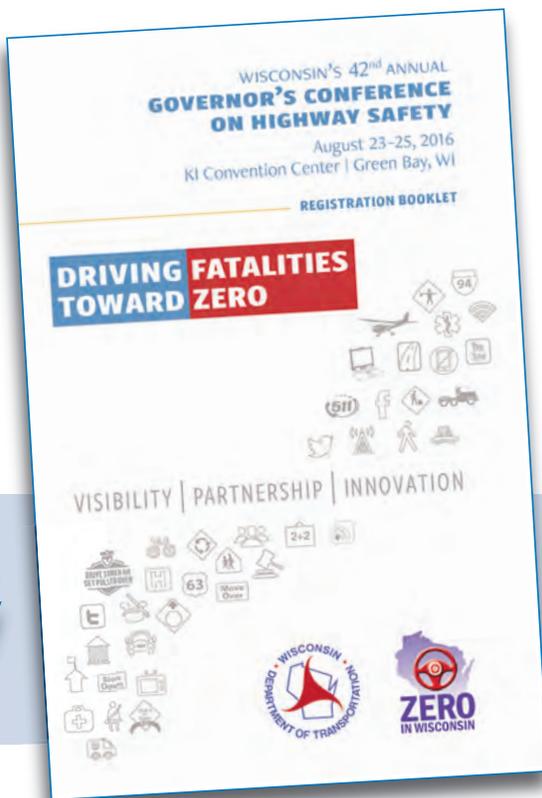
assessing the limits of human multi-tasking ability while performing complex tasks, such as driving, to studying how our attentional capacities can be restored by interacting with nature.

**Thursday, August 25**

**7:30-8:30 a.m.**



**David Perlman**, assistant attorney general, will provide updates on current legal topics.



**Sign up  
NOW**

## 2016 Governor's Conference on Highway Safety

**August 24-25**

**KI Convention Center  
Green Bay**

**Registration  
brochure**

**Online  
registration**

## Advanced driving skills for teens

# Car Control Class

Teen driver inexperience, coupled with immaturity, often result in risk-taking behavior such as speeding, alcohol use and not buckling up—all of which contribute to an increased death rate. Per mile driven, teen drivers have crash rates three times those of drivers age 20 and older. In 2014, 1,678 drivers 16 to 20 years old died in crashes nationwide.

Most states' Graduated Driver License (GDL) programs advocate post-license driver training after the initial driver education course, but most do not mandate it. In Wisconsin, several of these training opportunities are available.

Since 2010, Mayo Clinic Health System, Chippewa Valley Technical College, and Chippewa Valley Sports Car Club have teamed up to offer [Car Control Class](#), a daylong event that allows teen drivers to experience real-world emergency situations in a safe environment and then learn how to correct them.

The class, open to ages 16 through 19, costs \$30 per teen. The day includes classroom instruction and behind-the-wheel coaching. Trained professionals coach the teens from the passenger seat. The teens drive their own cars, and at least one parent or guardian must attend for the whole day with each teen.

Teens are coached on how to be safer drivers while experiencing situations — hydroplaning, skidding, heading toward a ditch, or avoiding a deer in the road —



Teen driver learns safe vehicle handling on wet pavement.

that frequently cause panic and over-correction resulting in crashes. Exercises include:

- Emergency braking techniques
- Slalom course to demonstrate weight transfer of the vehicle
- Car handling during wet road conditions using a skid pad
- Sudden lane changes simulating accident avoidance
- Recovering when a tire goes off the road

Contact Wayne Street, RN, director of nursing trauma, Mayo Clinic Health System, at: [Street.Wayne@mayo.edu](mailto:Street.Wayne@mayo.edu). The CCC team would be happy to share their experiences with other communities interested in starting similar programs.

**Other advanced-skills courses offered in Wisconsin include:**

**Ford's Driving Skills for Life**  
(also see [TSR v18 n3](#))

**Defensive Driving for Teens**  
offered by the Waukesha County Technical College



Learning how vehicles behave during cornering.



Instructor explains key vehicle components and safety features.