

# WISCONSIN TRAFFIC SAFETY REPORTER

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2015

## Good news ... Life-saving progress



David Pabst  
Director  
WisDOT Bureau  
of Transportation  
Safety

Wisconsin ended 2014 with 498 traffic fatalities, according to preliminary statistics. This is the lowest number—and the first time below 500 fatalities—since 1943, when 417 people died in crashes. Back then, the number of vehicles and the miles traveled were a small fraction of what they are today. The national speed limit was 35 mph, and, due to the war effort, rubber for tires was scarce and there was gas rationing.

No single factor has led to the encouraging decline in traffic fatalities. Most serious crashes are caused by driver's irresponsible decisions, so motorists deserve credit for helping save their own and others' lives. Along with this, engineering advances have made the vehicles we drive and our roadways much safer.

Another important contributing factor in this progress is the ongoing reduction in alcohol-related fatalities: see articles at right.

We must and will continue to invest funding and other resources to improve traffic safety enforcement, education, engineering and emergency response—investments that are all clearly helping to prevent fatalities.

Traffic fatalities are more than just statistics. Each number represents a person whose tragic death is mourned by family and friends. We all must do everything we can to reach the ultimate goal of zero preventable traffic deaths in Wisconsin.

## Reducing harm done by OWI

Since 1980 (see graph), dramatic progress has been made in Wisconsin in reducing alcohol-related crashes, fatalities and injuries. In 1983, there were 417 alcohol-related fatalities, or 56.7% of total crash fatalities. By 2013 these numbers had dropped to 185 and 35.1%.

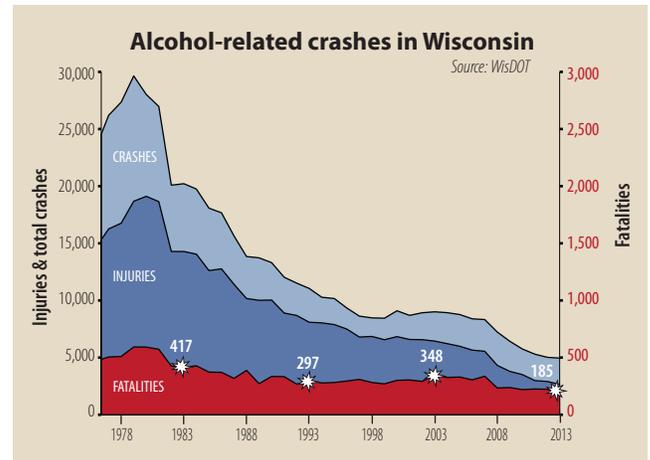
Many factors have contributed to this improvement, including strengthened laws, more vigorous law enforcement, and less public tolerance for the often tragic results of drunken driving.

In recent years, further progress has been made using effective new strategies. For instance, OWI task forces utilizing high-visibility enforcement (HVE) are cropping up around Wisconsin—there are now

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Officers from several agencies participate in Southeast Wisconsin Multi-jurisdictional OWI Task Force enforcement on St. Patrick's Day, 2013



## Wisconsin's Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor

### Strengthening OWI prosecution and deterrence

Tara Jenswold has served as Wisconsin's Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor (TSRP) since 2003. She works for the Wisconsin Department of Justice and is also an assistant attorney general in the Criminal Litigation Unit.



Jenswold prosecuting OWI homicide case

Her main responsibility is to facilitate a coordinated, multidisciplinary approach to the prosecution of impaired driving and other traffic crimes. She provides training and technical support for prosecutors and law enforcement agencies on investigations, pre-trial procedures, trial practices and appeals.

The success of law enforcement activity depends on having an effective adjudication system, and, to enhance OWI prosecutions, NHTSA has established TSRP positions nationwide. TSRPs help law enforcement and prosecutors successfully pursue OWI cases,

*continued on page 4*

Save the Date!  
August 25-27

41st annual  
Governor's Conference on  
Highway Safety, Kalahari  
Resorts & Conventions,  
Wisconsin Dells

### Brown County alcohol-related crashes

	killed	injured	crashes
2010	11	214	293
2011	9	122	226
2012	5	121	177
2013	3	115	161
2014*	2	99	141

\* preliminary



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.

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### Reducing harm done by OWI *from page 1*

16 operating in both urban and rural communities—and they are achieving impressive results. One example is the Brown County OWI Task Force, which started out in February 2011 (see results at left).

These task forces use federal funding administered by WisDOT Bureau of Transportation Safety (BOTS), which encourages law enforcement statewide to contact their BOTS regional program manager (RPM) to learn more about task forces.

Further help has come from statewide law enforcement mobilizations, such as *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over*, and the increasing use of ignition interlock devices (IIDs), screening and brief interventions (SBI) in emergency settings, and *OWI and drug treatment courts*.

Wisconsin's Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor, Tara Jenswold (see page 1) provides valuable training and technical assistance for law enforcement and prosecutors in dealing with OWI crash cases.

However, as in the 1990s, the alcohol-related crash fatality toll in Wisconsin has plateaued over the last few years. In 2008, the number was 234 and in 2012 it was down to 223.

Both nationwide and in Wisconsin, other drugs, such as heroin, are contributing to more crash fatalities. In Wisconsin in 2013, 45.7% of all crash fatalities were alcohol and drug-related.

But on the encouraging side, important gains have been made among young drivers.

#### 15–24 year-old drivers: crashes involving alcohol

2008–2012 average	231 per 100,000 population
2013	188 per 100,000 population

Source: 2014 Annual Report, Wisconsin Highway Safety Program

WisDOT and its traffic safety partners are pursuing a wide variety of proven OWI counter-measures, and these are part of the recently updated Wisconsin Strategic Highway Safety Plan.



Officers at roll call for the Town of Brookfield Police Department, part of the Southeast Wisconsin Multi-jurisdictional OWI Task Force of 25 agencies from Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties



Other states and other countries are also making strong progress against drunken driving. Increasingly effective strategies and technologies will help further reduce the harm it causes, and boost Wisconsin's progress toward zero fatalities on its roadways.

Public attitudes toward drunken driving are also crucial. "We know that the majority of serious crashes are caused by bad driving habits and irresponsible decisions," says WisDOT Secretary Mark Gottlieb. "Therefore, motorists deserve a great deal of credit for saving their own lives and lives of others by slowing down, paying attention, buckling up and driving sober."

### Nationwide trends

In the United States 10,076 people were killed in alcohol-impaired driving crashes (NHTSA) in 2013, which was 31% of overall crash fatalities. In Wisconsin, this figure was 33%.

Of alcohol-impaired drivers in fatal crashes, 24% had a previous license suspension or revocation, within the last three years, for alcohol- and non-alcohol-related offenses.

#### Impaired drivers kill themselves . . . and others too

*Crash fatalities involving at least one driver with a BAC of .08 or higher United States (2012)*

role	number	% of total
Driver with BAC = .08+	6,688	65%
Passenger riding w/driver with BAC = .08+	1,654	16%
Occupants of other vehicles	1,170	11%
Nonoccupants	810	8%
<b>Total fatalities</b>	<b>10,322</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: NHTSA

### Proven counter-measures

In the battle against drunken driving, a wealth of proven strategies and resources is available. NHTSA has published the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of *Countermeasures That Work: A Highway Safety Countermeasure Guide for State Highway Safety Offices* (2013). Chapter 1 provides evidence-based strategies to reduce alcohol and other drug-impaired driving. The main methods are: deterrence, prevention, communication and outreach, and alcohol treatment.

*continued on page 3*

## Some nations progressing faster

Crash deaths have fallen to their lowest levels on record, but other high-income countries now have lower fatality rates per vehicle mile traveled, according to a report from the Transportation Research Board. Moreover, deaths in most other high-income countries are dropping much faster than in the United States.

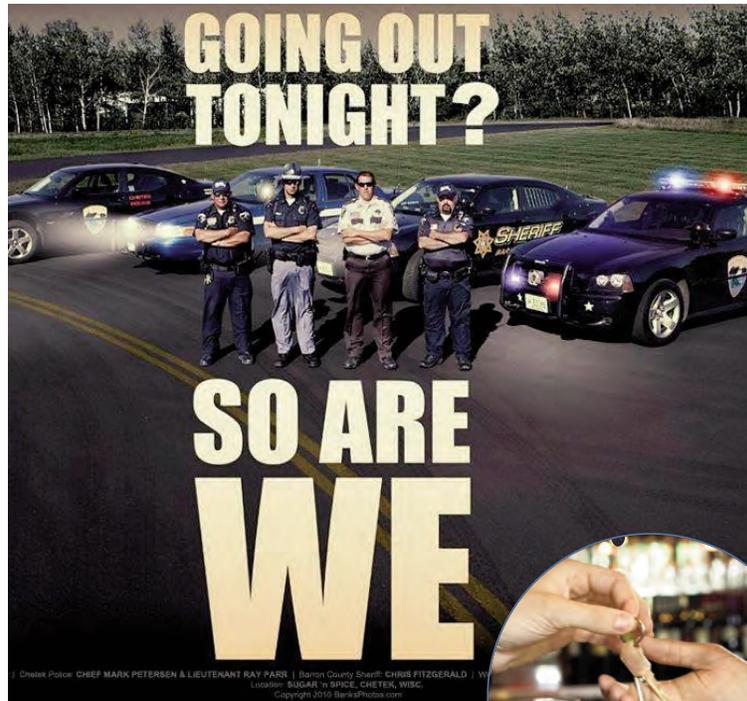
The report, *Special Report 300: Achieving Traffic Safety Goals in the United States: Lessons from Other Nations*, reviewed traffic safety strategies in high-income countries around the world and compared them with those in the United States. From 1995 to 2009, fatalities dropped 52% in France, 38% in the United Kingdom, 25% in Australia, and 50% in total in 15 high-income countries for which long-term traffic data are available. But they dropped only 19% in the United States.

The report cites better enforcement of OWI laws and speed limits as being among the reasons

these countries have been so successful in reducing highway fatalities. Roadway design measures such as roundabouts also have helped. More broadly, the report credits good management of safety programs and political support for their goals.

The report notes some differences between the United States and other countries that make comparisons difficult. Much of Europe, for instance, is more urbanized than the United States, and fatal crashes are more common on rural roads. Another difference is the large number of agencies—federal, state, and local—involved in road safety in the United States. Other countries have just one central road safety agency.

Nevertheless, the report identifies several safety measures in the other countries that are probably having an impact. Regarding drunken driving, frequent roadside sobriety testing is the norm in many other countries. A lower illegal blood alcohol concentration threshold also may play a role: the threshold in most European Union member nations, Australia, Canada and Japan is at or below .05%, compared with .08% in the United States.



Poster used by Barron County Sheriff's Department to raise public awareness.

PHOTO: JOSH BANKS



A wide variety of proven strategies are available. “Although we’re making significant progress in reducing drunken driving,” says David Pabst, WisDOT BOTS director, “too many people are still getting behind the wheel when they’re impaired. Unfortunately, law enforcement officers cannot find and arrest every drunken driver. We need all motorists to take personal responsibility for their safety and the safety of others. Everyone must be courageous enough to stop a friend or loved one who’s impaired from driving. Motorists also can report drunken drivers by calling 911. We all must do our part to prevent drunken driving.”



Several Wisconsin convenience stores are promoting a timely safety message at their gas pumps. It asks motorists and snowmobilers to drive sober this winter season. The campaign is a collaborative effort by WisDOT, Wisconsin DNR and the Wisconsin Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Store Association. Learn more at the [WisDOT website](http://WisDOT website).

CREDITS: SUSAN KUMMER



Clear message from the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) of the state government of Victoria, Australia

## Prosecution and deterrence *from page 1*

and this, in turn, provides positive incentives to law enforcement and helps deter impaired driving.

TSRPs from around the country regularly attend trainings together and share expertise. For an excellent, detailed account of how Tara and the Dane County Critical Traffic Investigation Team prosecuted a texting while driving case, see her article, *Uncharted Territory: the Anatomy of a Texting While Driving Vehicular Homicide Case*, in the journal of the National Traffic Law Center. This case was the first time in Wisconsin history that a texting driver was convicted of homicide by negligent operation of a motor vehicle, and the prosecution team received valuable help from prosecutors in other states in finding a widely respected expert from the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute to testify about distracted driving.

### How TSRPs help

OWI crash cases involving fatalities and serious injury are often complex. As Tara observes, “Anybody who has any experience investigating or prosecuting a vehicular crime case knows that crashes are very rarely, if ever, unavoidable accidents. More often than not, crashes are far more complicated than they appear at first glance.”

But in many jurisdictions, these cases are often assigned to inexperienced prosecutors. Moreover, the turnover rate among prosecutors is often high. Nationwide surveys of prosecutor offices find that it is often difficult to recruit and retain staff attorneys, and, according to a study by the Traffic Injury Research Foundation, many prosecutors feel that the training they received prior to assuming their positions was inadequate.

Early in her career, Tara was an assistant district attorney in Walworth County, where she prosecuted traffic-related offenses. As a young, inexperienced prosecutor, she was struck by the following, particularly regarding OWI offenses:

- How large her caseload was
- How technical the cases could be, often involving toxicology, testing devices, physiology of alcohol consumption, and interpretation of results
- How complex (and often changing) the laws are

“What is so rewarding about my current position,” she says, “is that I can work to change this for other prosecutors by providing them with the necessary training and technical assistance.”

She now splits her time fairly evenly between

- providing training/technical assistance to law enforcement and prosecutors
- trial work

“I train officers and prosecutors on subjects relating to the investigation and prosecution of serious OWI offenses, and I provide updates on the laws,” she says. “I always try to emphasize that vehicular crimes—homicide or serious injury cases—should be treated like other crimes. I try to impress upon them that a crash in their jurisdiction isn’t always just a horrible accident, but instead is often the result of someone’s criminal behavior.”

Most inquiries come from prosecutors and law enforcement, but she is also contacted by people from other state agencies and occasionally members of the legislature. She is also asked to provide feedback and occasionally formal testimony on proposed legislation as a representative of the Attorney General’s office.

Her trial work is almost exclusively in vehicular homicide cases. She assists the local prosecutor in handling the case, serving as a special prosecutor. “In a few cases, I serve as the prosecutor, or the AG’s office is counsel of record, but this is less common, as it only happens when a local prosecutor has a conflict of interest. When acting as a special prosecutor, the level of assistance I provide varies from case to case. At a minimum, I serve as co-counsel in the trials, but often I’m the lead prosecutor handling most aspects of the case. I get involved because the local DA’s offices do not always have the time or resources to devote to these cases. Vehicular crime cases can be complex and overwhelming. There is crash reconstruction evidence, toxicology, medical testimony, and sometimes DNA evidence. When a case does go to trial, there are often upwards of 30 witnesses that testify. Many prosecutors in smaller jurisdictions just do not have the time or experience to handle these cases, mainly because they don’t see enough crash cases. It’s not every month, or even every year that a crash case goes to trial in most counties.”

“I have the luxury of specializing in these cases and so I’ve been able to get a lot of experience handling them,” she observes, “and I have a great working relationship with the State Patrol’s Technical Reconstruction Unit (TRU), which does the crash reconstruction in many of the cases I prosecute.”

### Teamwork achieves effective prosecution

Tara’s most recent trial was in May 2014 in Lincoln County. An OWI homicide case with two fatalities, it was complicated because it was a rollover crash with three occupants ejected, and there was a dispute over the key issue of who was driving.



Tara Jenswold, Wisconsin's Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor (TSRP)

“Anybody who has any experience investigating or prosecuting a vehicular crime case knows that crashes are very rarely, if ever, unavoidable accidents.”

Contact Tara Jenswold at [jenswoldtm@doj.state.wi.us](mailto:jenswoldtm@doj.state.wi.us).

## Prosecution and deterrence *from page 4*

At around 2 am on the night of June 7, 2012, four women left a Merrill tavern after bar-hopping following a softball game. A crime lab toxicologist would later testify that the BAC of the driver, Ashley Baumann, 24, was about 0.24, three times the legal limit. Flying along at about 90 mph in a 25 mph zone, her 2005 Pontiac Grand Prix started to skid and, in the ensuing crash, three individuals were ejected, two of whom were killed. The only passenger who was buckled up stayed in the vehicle but was severely injured.

A key challenge in prosecuting this case was that Baumann said she couldn't remember the moments before the crash. Her defense was that perhaps someone else had been driving just before the crash, even though photos taken on a passenger's cell phone shortly before the crash showed her driving.

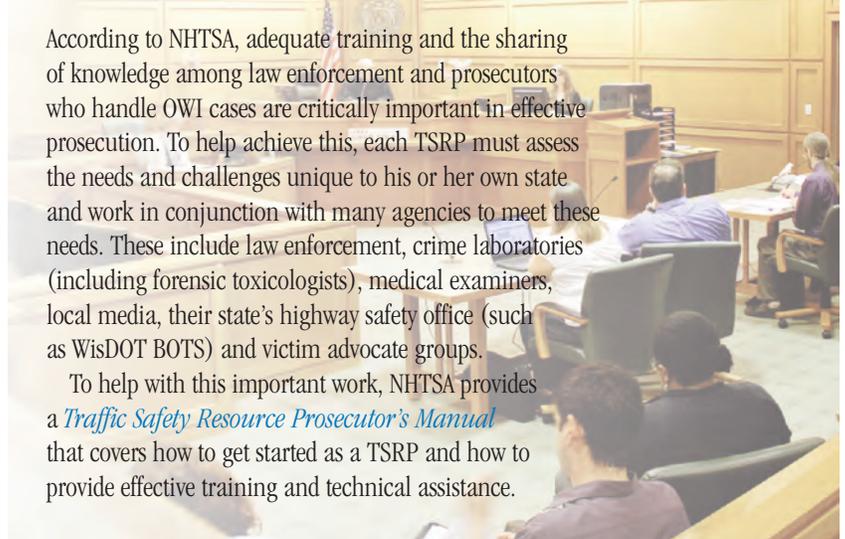
Careful investigation, including crash reconstruction by the State Patrol's TRU, along with DNA evidence, conclusively showed that Baumann was indeed the driver at the time of the crash. In sentencing her to seven years in prison, the judge noted her high BAC and speed, along with her history of alcohol problems and pattern of dangerous behavior. From the wreckage of the fatal crash along that road in Merrill, a paper written by Baumann was recovered, titled, "What I learned from underage drinking."

Last year, Tara teamed up with Emily Thompson, the Dane County special prosecutor on traffic crimes, to provide training and technical assistance to hundreds of prosecutors and law enforcement officers statewide. They have worked together prosecuting serious crash cases, including the texting while driving case noted earlier and also the fatal crash case covered in an earlier issue of this [newsletter](#).



According to NHTSA, adequate training and the sharing of knowledge among law enforcement and prosecutors who handle OWI cases are critically important in effective prosecution. To help achieve this, each TSRP must assess the needs and challenges unique to his or her own state and work in conjunction with many agencies to meet these needs. These include law enforcement, crime laboratories (including forensic toxicologists), medical examiners, local media, their state's highway safety office (such as WisDOT BOTS) and victim advocate groups.

To help with this important work, NHTSA provides a [Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor's Manual](#) that covers how to get started as a TSRP and how to provide effective training and technical assistance.



TAYLOR CHASE / WISCONSIN CENTER FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

## Get to know ...



### Bob Bott

WisDOT BOTS Regional Program Manager (RPM) for Southwest Wisconsin

Contact Bob at [Robert.Bott@dot.wi.gov](mailto:Robert.Bott@dot.wi.gov)

Since November 2013, Bob has been the Bureau of Transportation Safety (BOTS) RPM for the 19-county Southwest Region of Wisconsin. He works closely with law enforcement agencies, BOTS law enforcement liaisons, county Traffic Safety Commissions (TSCs) and other traffic safety partners, promoting traffic safety initiatives and administering BOTS grants.

A native of La Crosse, Bob began his undergraduate studies at UW-La Crosse intending to major in accounting, but a class field trip to the La Crosse Police Department got him interested in a career in law enforcement. In 1975, he joined the La Crosse PD, and his interests have always been traffic-related, ranging from traffic enforcement to crash reconstruction, technical writing, management, and implementing the department's first computerized record system. He retired from the department in 2006.

Since joining BOTS, an important responsibility has been attending quarterly county TSC meetings throughout his region. He notes that each TSC is different, and how effective they are depends largely on local buy-in.

Each TSC is required by law to maintain a spot map of serious crashes. Bob administers [Community Maps](#), an online interface for mapping crash data. This valuable resource provides accurate and timely crash maps, enabling TSC members and others to make well-informed decisions about ways to improve safety on local roads. He hosted the first-ever Community Maps user's group meeting, helping users get more benefit from the maps.

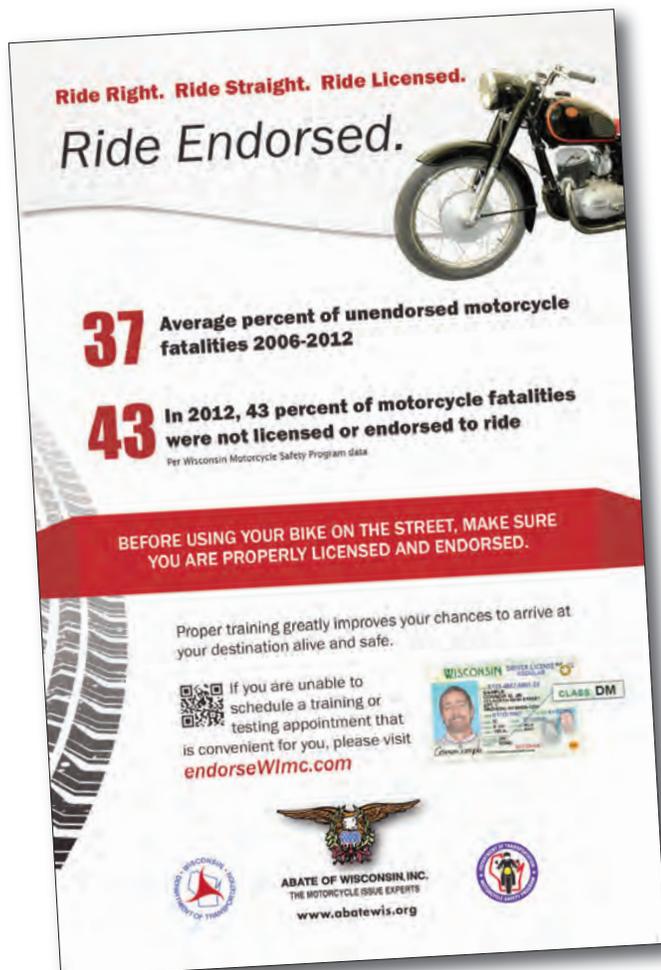
He has also helped implement seven new county-wide enforcement task forces in a region that previously had none. In recent years, an important BOTS focus has been on fostering high-visibility enforcement (HVE) along with the formation of task forces to enhance traffic enforcement (see page 1). These task forces are effective at enhancing cooperation among law enforcement agencies, raising public awareness and deterring dangerous driving. Community Maps is a useful tool for helping these task forces make decisions based on up-to-date crash data.

## Ride endorsed!

# WMSP and ABATE of Wisconsin partner to help save lives



(l-r) From ABATE of Wisconsin: John Reblin, deputy director, Tim Tomann, board member, and Dave Charlebois, executive director; and from WisDOT BOTS: David Pabst, director, Greg Patzer, WMSP manager and Randy Romanski, section chief



Among the keys to reducing motorcyclist fatalities is boosting the numbers of riders who are properly trained, licensed and endorsed. As recently as 2012 in Wisconsin, 43% of motorcyclists killed in crashes were not licensed or endorsed to ride.

WisDOT's Wisconsin Motorcycle Safety Program (WMSP) works toward this goal with many partners statewide, says WMSP manager Greg Patzer. It teams up, for instance, with the state's technical college system to provide a wide variety of [rider ed classes](#).

One important recent success is WMSP's partnership with ABATE of Wisconsin to raise awareness of the importance of getting properly licensed and endorsed. Together they developed an 11" x 17" *Ride Endorsed* poster, which encourages motorcyclists to get properly trained and licensed. WMSP funded the printing, and ABATE of Wisconsin members, from April through mid-January, distributed about 8,000 of them at numerous places statewide where motorcyclists congregate.

ABATE of Wisconsin is a motorcyclist rights and safety organization with a strong record of providing safety education and raising "share the road" awareness. John Reblin, their deputy director, describes how the poster was developed:

“ We came up with the idea of the poster in response to the 2012 Motorcycle Fatality Summary that Greg provided. We were trying to come up with a way to inform people that an endorsement was needed to ride. Also, through the [www.endorsewimc.com](http://www.endorsewimc.com) website, we wanted to document problems people were running into getting endorsed: for example finding a convenient class or getting an appointment at the DMV. The ABATE of Wisconsin Highway Safety Committee thought the poster might work and came up with a design that was good looking and conveyed the needed message.

With a rough draft in hand, we showed Greg a prototype of what we were working on. He just had had a long conversation with Michigan DOT, discussing their almost 55% unendorsed fatality rate and trying to come up with a solution. Greg saw the poster and immediately gave us some direction to improve language and some other details. He agreed to have the DOT pay for them if we could distribute them.

At ABATE of Wisconsin, when a new member wants to help at an event, we often ask the person to bring some potato chips. If he brings them, great, and, if he doesn't show or forgets, then it's no big loss. But this is a way to start building trust that the person will do what he says. We feel that we were asked to bring the potato chips to the DOT, and we succeeded by getting the poster designed and distributed. We as an organization knew we could do this task but we needed to prove our effectiveness to the DOT. We often tell members and other organizations of what we did in this public/private partnership, and we're proud of our work and the relationship we've built along the way with members of DOT and BOTS on reducing unendorsed fatalities in Wisconsin. ”

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WMSP and ABATE from page 6



Hangtags on motorcycles at dealerships encourage discussion of rider ed opportunities and the importance of riding endorsed.

The unendorsed fatality rate declined from 43% in 2012 to 33% in 2013. Final figures for 2014 aren't available yet, but there is already some good news for last year. In 2012, 116 motorcyclists died in crashes, and this number dropped to 84 in 2013 and 74 in 2014.

ABATE of Wisconsin is working on further efforts to educate riders, including showing the Share the Road DVD to driver ed students, and, as part of MoSAC (Motorcycle Safety Advisory Council), looking at issues such as possible skills testing of moped operators.

WMSP is considering further outreach methods, such as direct mailings with the *Ride Endorsed* poster's message.



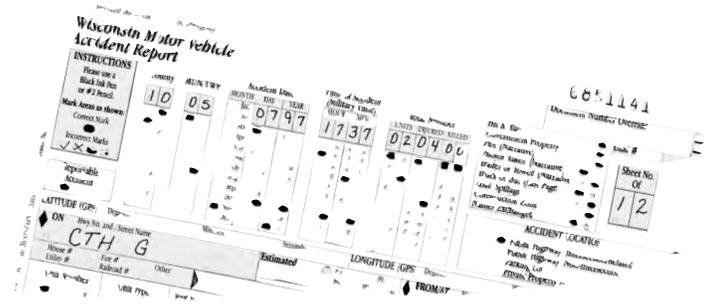
## Crucial crash data Upgrading the MV4000 form

The Wisconsin Motor Vehicle Accident Report (MV4000) form is being upgraded to improve how it captures crash data.

At the national, state and local levels, thorough, accurate and up-to-date crash data is fundamental to improving traffic safety. Many agencies, including the WisDOT Bureau of Transportation Safety (BOTS), strive to make data-driven decisions based on the best possible crash information.

Starting in July, a committee began the process of identifying possible new elements to add to the form. This group included people from WisDOT DMV and BOTS, engineers from WisDOT and the UW Traffic Operations and Safety (TOPS) Lab, and law enforcement officers from agencies large and small statewide.

After a series of monthly meetings, they had compiled a spreadsheet of possible new elements, such as latitude-longitude of the



crash site, information on type of intersection, and new checkboxes to capture, for instance, when a driver was using a cell phone.

Now BOTS will form a new committee to review and refine these possible new elements, which will be scrutinized more carefully to determine, for example, if they meet federal MMUCC (Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria) standards.

This committee will then contact a wider range of law enforcement agencies to solicit their input and work together toward an upgraded form that will have their buy-in.

Goals include harmonizing the form with the *Badger TraCS* system and encouraging law enforcement to utilize TraCS.

Contact Neil May, WisDOT BOTS, at [Neil.May@dot.state.wi.us](mailto:Neil.May@dot.state.wi.us).

## BOTS welcomes ...



### Bernard "Bud" Coxhead

Manager, Grants Management Unit of the Safety Programs Section

Bud supervises the Bureau of Transportation Safety (BOTS) state program managers in the central office. He provides analysis and projections of current and future budget needs and availability to ensure that safety partners can be reimbursed for their programs. He works closely with the supervisor of the BOTS Program and Policy Unit to help develop a cohesive overall strategy on traffic safety programs for Wisconsin.

Bud started in his new position in August. Previously he served for 12 years as state-wide program supervisor of the Investigation Unit in the State Patrol's Motor Carrier Enforcement Section. This mixed unit of sworn and civilian investigators is charged with the education and investigation of commercial motor carriers to ensure compliance with federal and state safety regulations. He has been involved in code enforcement and emergency services for more than 35 years.

"My key goal this year is learning about the intricate workings of the many traffic safety programs here in Wisconsin," he says. "I will be looking at every program and process to determine if we're working in the most efficient way to ensure timely grant processing and effective cost controls. BOTS's mission is to provide optimum resources in order to have the maximum impact on meeting the *Zero in Wisconsin* goal."

Contact Bud at [Bernard.Coxhead@dot.wi.gov](mailto:Bernard.Coxhead@dot.wi.gov).



## Boosted aerial enforcement

Last year, the State Patrol's Air Support Unit (ASU) stepped up its traffic enforcement missions. A total of 87 these missions, aimed at cracking down on speeding and other dangerous driving, yielded:

### 2623 traffic stops

#### 2102 citations

- 1821 for speeding

#### 1300 warnings

- 558 for speeding

### Arrests

- 15 drug
- 4 felony
- 24 misdemeanor
- 8 warrant

During the previous summer, the ASU made 2,040 traffic stops which led to 1,306 speeding citations.

On average, ASU missions result in about eight traffic stops per hour.

To raise public awareness and enhance deterrence, WisDOT experimented last summer with announcing in advance the dates and locations of many of these missions on Twitter @WisconsinDOT, #WisDOT. For example, on the morning of one deployment, @WisconsinDOT tweeted: #StatePatrol aircraft looking for speeders on #I94 in #KenoshaCounty late morning/afternoon, weather permitting. #SlowDown!

In recent years, the ASU has improved the way pilots and ground cars collect data. The old worksheets are out, and their new method leverages the TraCS Traffic Stop Data Collection form and yields current and verifiable data for grant reporting and program evaluation.

Pilots are valuable partners for officers on the ground; they can see traffic violations over an extended expanse of roadways. By using VASCAR (Visual Average Speed Computer and Recorder), they can easily and accurately check a vehicle's speed. This 30-second "VASCAR, not NASCAR" [video](#) explains how it works.

Along with improving traffic safety, ASU missions help the citizens of Wisconsin in many other life-saving ways. They provide, for instance, drug activity surveillance, covert surveillance and tracking of criminal suspects, VIP escort support, searches for missing persons and downed planes, aerial photography, and emergency organ transport.

In one recent case, on September 19, a pilot was in the last hour of his speed detail when he was called to assist Dane County Sheriff's Office with a search for an elderly man with Alzheimer's disease who had left his residence and disappeared into a cornfield. After about 20 minutes, the pilot spotted the elderly man and helped deputies find him.

ASU is also an important partner in responses to major emergencies such as large fires, tornadoes and floods.



**BOTTOM ROW (L-R):** Sgt. Steve Tape, Sgt. John Jones, Trooper John Vernon.  
**TOP ROW:** Sgt. Gary Helgerson, Inspector Derek Schuette, Sgt. Ryan Chaffee and Trooper Gary Markowski (December 2012)



Large fire at Waste Research and Reclamation on south side of Eau Claire, caused when a boiler exploded (2007)

### Updating Trans 309

## In an emergency ... is the ambulance itself ready?

Wisconsin's ambulance [inspection program](#) is managed by the Investigative Unit of the State Patrol's Motor Carrier Enforcement Section. Just one person, Paul Schilling, is responsible for inspecting, every two years, all the state's 1,200 ambulances.

Inspection standards are prescribed by Wisconsin Administrative Code, [Trans 309](#), which covers minimum vehicle and medical equipment specifications and administrative procedures.

Since 1999, Trans 309 has received few significant updates. "This document is now pushing 16 years old," says Jim Austad, Oshkosh Fire Department battalion chief and a member of the state's Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board. "It would be like buying a car today that meets 1999 safety standards."

In April 2013, state lawmakers requested an update for Trans 309, and, since then, the process has been moving forward, led by the State Patrol along with the [EMS Section](#) of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

Most recently, on February 12, Schilling met with legal staff from WisDOT's Office of General Counsel (OGC) and a representative from the DHS EMS Section to discuss process issues. He and the person from the EMS Section will now work through the medical equipment side of the revision, and he and an OGC representative will address the process side. They will develop a working draft of Trans 309 revisions to be shared with all key stakeholders for input.

As in other medical fields, emergency medicine is evolving rapidly. The result, EMS providers explain, is that the long-standing Trans 309 regulations require them to keep buying equipment that is less useful for patients and/or more expensive than other options. The code, for instance, requires ambulances to carry sanitary burn sheets, which expire and have fallen out of favor with some medical associations. A dry dressing or clean cotton sheet, Austad says, can affordably serve the same purpose, keeping air, dirt and dust off a burn.

Schilling checks each ambulance against a 150-point list of required vehicle standards and medical equipment. [Watch him](#) describing an inspection.



Contact Paul at  
[Paul.Schilling@dot.wi.gov](mailto:Paul.Schilling@dot.wi.gov).

The most common violations, Schilling says, include problems with lighting (e.g., turn signals), having enough tire tread depth, and mechanical issues, such as a parking brake that doesn't hold. When violations occur, Schilling can render a vehicle out-of-service until the deficiency is fixed. Monetary penalties can be assessed, and proof of registration is required for a complete inspection. Severe violations—such as a faulty exhaust system or battery, malfunctioning fuel system, inadequate oxygen system, or unsafe structure—can require an out-of-service declaration.

Describing his work with diverse EMS services statewide, Schilling observes, "The way I look at it, EMS services are running 911 calls every day. It should be easy for me to come in, and the inspection should be pretty good. I have the mind-set that my family could be in the back of that ambulance ... just like their families. I think a lot of them realize that."



## The Mad Rollin' Dolls will get even madder if you drink and drive



### Start rollin'

(TOP LEFT) In December, State Patrol Sgt. James Kicmol blew the whistle to start the team's first bout of the season. (BOTTOM) Team members try out WisDOT's upgraded [Drive Sober mobile app](#).

In August, the popular female roller derby team, the **Mad Rollin' Dolls**, based in Madison, starred in the latest installment of WisDOT's *Daredevils Dare Not* campaign. The high-energy TV spot conveys the message, "It would be crazy to skate in a roller derby bout while intoxicated, but even crazier to drive drunk." It was part of the statewide *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* mobilization from mid-August through Labor Day.

The [Zero in Wisconsin website](#) includes the TV spot along with an interview with participants and a behind-the-scenes segment.

Roller derby has changed a lot since its previous surges of popularity in the 1940s and 1960s. The sport originally grew out of Depression-era dancing marathons and banked-track roller skating marathons. Back then, the

staged, theatrical elements tended to overshadow the athleticism.

Then, in the early 2000s in Austin, Texas, the sport was reinvented by grassroots, all-female amateur teams with a strong "do it yourself" ethic, combining athleticism with camp elements. It has since blossomed and is now played by about 1,250 leagues worldwide, nearly half outside the U.S.

The *Daredevils Dare Not* campaign has featured other high-energy sports, including skateboarding, snowboarding and BMX bike riding, and the target audience has been mostly young males, who generally are the least safe drivers. Roller derby, on the other hand, is increasingly popular with both females and males.

Mad Rollin' Dolls team members were happy to partner with WisDOT. Becky Turpin, aka Slayhound, is an adult injury prevention coordinator at UW Hospital & Clinics.

Turpin explains her motivation:

“ At UW Hospital & Clinics Level I Trauma Center, far too often we see the devastating consequences of drunken driving. As trauma surgeon Amy Liepert says, “The tragedy of drunken driving is that it affects not only the person who made the poor choice to drink and drive but also the innocent victims we treat as patients, as well as their family and friends.

I work with community partners to find life-saving solutions. We work with law enforcement, health care providers and community groups, so being part of this campaign was a perfect fit. Being a Mad Rollin' Doll myself, this was a great opportunity to combine the work I do professionally with my passion outside of work, in a creative and fun way. Being part of the commercial expanded the Mad Rollin Dolls partnerships with the community and gave our league one more way to give back. We are serious about the message and look for opportunities to promote it every chance we get.

Making the commercial was a blast and it was cool to see how a professional commercial is made. Who knew a 30-second spot would take all day to film? It was a challenge to be true to our sport while also making our actions work for the camera. The crew was great at taking feedback from us and adjusting when we told them, ‘that’s not how it works in real play.’ They kept telling me not to smile when I was getting hit, but this is what we do for fun, and it’s hard to suppress that. ”