

WISCONSIN TRAFFIC SAFETY REPORTER

Vol. 11, No. 1
2008



Our challenges this year

Major Daniel Lonsdorf
Director, Bureau of
Transportation Safety

They died on rural highways and city streets. They died while walking, biking, driving or riding. And, in most instances, their deaths were entirely preventable.

Wisconsin ended 2007 with 741 deaths in 659 traffic crashes, according to WisDOT preliminary data, which will be final this spring. Traffic fatalities last year were 29 more than in 2006 but 47 fewer than the five-year average of 788 deaths in 709 crashes.

Much of the increase in fatalities for 2007 can be attributed to more motorcyclists' deaths. Last year, 111 motorcyclists (106 drivers and five passengers) were killed in crashes compared with 93 motorcyclists (91 drivers and two passengers) in 2006. Although the number of fatal crashes was the same in both 2006 and 2007, there were more people killed per crash last year. In 2006, we had an unusually low number of crashes with multiple fatalities while in 2007 the number of such crashes stabilized closer to the average.

Based on years of data analysis, we know how, why, and to whom crashes are likely to occur. Since fatal and serious injury traffic crashes are predictable, then they also are preventable. We will strive in 2008 to implement countermeasures to change behavior that causes deaths and injuries. And we will intensify our efforts to reduce motorcycle crashes as motorcycling continues to increase in popularity.

We face an array of challenges in 2008 and for years to come. But we must take action today to end the inevitability of more than 700 traffic deaths on our roadways every year.

Red-light cameras

Can they help reduce red-light running?

"Study after study has found reductions in both signal violations and crashes," says one of the nation's leading experts on the use of red-light cameras, Richard Retting, senior transportation engineer with the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety [IIHS].

Ten years ago, only a few places were using these cameras, such as New York City and San Francisco, but now they are in 15 states and about 325 communities. Wisconsin law doesn't allow their use, but now legislators are considering a measure, Assembly Bill 528 which, if passed, would specify how they could be used.

Critics worry about Big Brother watching us. They say red-light running can be dealt with in other ways, such as lengthening the yellow-light period. Proponents point to well-designed studies that show cameras as effective, economical, objective and also a better use of officers' time in resource-stretched police departments.

continued on page 2

Badger TraCS is catching on

Badger TraCS is, well, making tracks in helping law enforcement agencies statewide submit a wide variety of data.

TraCS (Traffic and Criminal Software) was initially developed by the state of Iowa in partnership with FHWA, and it serves as a national model for the development of automated reporting systems. TraCS, which is free, runs on laptop computers in squad

continued on page 3



Red-light cameras in Philadelphia

INSURANCE INSTITUTE FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY



View from a red-light camera in El Paso, Texas

REDFLEX TRAFFIC SYSTEMS, INC.



Failure to adjust to weather conditions

On January 6 about 100 vehicles were involved in a smash-up on fog-bound I-90 east of Madison. Two people were killed and many injured—three critically. The local media said, "Fog is blamed for a series of crashes ..." but the real cause was drivers' failure to adjust to conditions, to slow down ... and you don't need a sign to know where that leads. This is a recurring tragedy. A similar foggy crash, the worst in Wisconsin's history, occurred October 11, 2002 on I-43 in Sheboygan County with 49 injured—10 fatally.

PHOTOS: HEATHER DEININGER & DANE OLSEN; CHANNEL 3000.COM



INSURANCE INSTITUTE FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY

Red-light cameras

from page 1

Red-light running

According to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), red-light running in 2005 caused about 165,000 crashes, 176,000 injuries and 800 fatalities. About half the people who are killed in such crashes aren't the signal violators. The cost to society is estimated at \$14 billion per year. Red-light running frequency is estimated at three to five vehicles per 1,000. As traffic volume at a given intersection increases, so does the frequency.

How the cameras work

Connected to traffic lights and sensors that monitor traffic, the cameras automatically photograph vehicles entering an intersection after the light has turned red—not just as the light changes but a specified amount of time after. They often focus on the rear license plate and not the driver.

But what about their effectiveness? A statistically rigorous IIHS review of crash-based studies in 2002 found that the cameras reduce injury crashes by 25-30%. “Although rear-end crashes tend to go up, when you look at all crash types—particularly those involving injury—photo enforcement leads to significant overall reductions in crashes,” says Susan Ferguson, IIHS senior vice president for research.

In 2005, FHWA published a before-and-after study (see sidebar) using data from seven sites across the country. Red-light cameras were found to “provide a modest aggregate crash-cost benefit.” Since right-angle crashes were lower but rear-end ones were higher, FHWA notes these systems “would be most beneficial at intersections where there are relatively few rear-end crashes and many right-angle ones.” It found “a modest to moderate economic benefit.”

Recently IIHS researchers focused on busy Roosevelt Boulevard in Philadelphia, where first the yellow-light period was extended, and then cameras were installed. The study found that both measures reduced signal violations, but the cameras made by far the biggest difference. Researchers tallied violation rates before and after extension of yellow lights, and again after about one year of red-light camera enforcement. The first step reduced violations by 36%, and cameras reduced the remaining violations by 96%.

Captain Cameron McLay of the Madison Police Department notes that the public tends to think law enforcement is the key to traffic safety, but agency resources are often stretched thin, with many demands on an officer's time. Last summer, as part of their *Stop on Red* effort, the Safe Community Coalition of Madison and Dane County monitored red-light running and other violations at five busy intersections before, during and after an intensive enforcement campaign. They were dismayed to find high levels of violations, that it's difficult for officers to safely stop violators at some intersections, and that the deterrent effect of the enforcement campaign was short-lived—violations returned to pre-campaign levels within a mere two weeks.

Cameras, of course, are on the job around the clock. They not only record violations but also have a deterrent effect. McLay notes that many drivers are deterred only when they feel there's a good chance of getting a considerable fine. Officers can't always wait at busy intersections, but cameras can. Camera deterrence causes a “spillover” effect, with violations decreasing not only at intersections with cameras but also at intersections in the community. A 1999 IIHS study in Fairfax, Virginia, found a 44% violation reduction at camera sites and 34% at non-camera sites after one year.

Often signs are used to alert motorists about photo enforcement. This helps with the deterrent effect and it addresses critics' concerns that red-light cameras are all about catching people, writing tickets and raising money.

What about the economics? Graduate students at the LaFollette School of Public Affairs at UW-Madison studied this issue for Milwaukee. With about 1,340 red-light running crashes per year, the societal cost was estimated at about \$131 million. The study (www.lafollette.wisc.edu/publications/workshops/2006/camera.pdf) looked at the costs and benefits of installing cameras at the city's 13 most dangerous intersections. It found a net present benefit of \$7.6 million and \$4.8 million in additional revenue during a five-year period.

A 2001 AAA Wisconsin opinion survey of its members found that two-thirds favored such photo enforcement. A cynic might say that many of us speed and therefore there's little support for photo radar enforcement against speeders, but most of us don't run red lights and we'd welcome those who do getting citations. The League of Wisconsin Municipalities has expressed support for Assembly Bill 528.

In October, Representative Josh Zepnick and a bipartisan group of legislators introduced the bill. It specifies conditions under which municipalities could set up red-light camera systems. Car owners would get citations in the mail, but unlike a ticket issued by an officer, owners wouldn't get demerit points on their record and couldn't have their license suspended or revoked due to a camera citation. An owner could get out of a ticket by proving, for example, that someone else was driving. A public hearing was held in January and amendments to the bill are likely.

WisDOT is neutral regarding the intent of this legislation because it is a municipal issue, says Dennis Hughes of the Bureau of Transportation Safety. But, if a bill eventually passes, the department would be involved in working out details such as signage.

As in many other areas of our lives, legislators have to grapple with the potential pros and cons of this new technology. Red-light cameras raise some concerns but they also might help improve traffic safety. As Captain McLay observes, “In some urban settings, especially where there's heavy traffic and law enforcement resources are stretched thin, this technology could help us be more effective in reducing red-light running.” ■

Resources

FHWA

Safety Evaluation of Red-Light Cameras (4/05)
www.tfhr.gov/safety/pubs/05049/
Red Light Camera Systems Operational Guidelines (2005)
http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/intersections/rlc_guide/

Insurance Institute for Highway Safety

Automated traffic law enforcement [VIDEO] www.iihs.org/research/topics/rlr.html

Status Report newsletter:

VOL 42, NO 1, 1/27/07: Red light cameras in Philadelphia all but eliminate violations; Cameras in US communities

VOL 37, NO 5, 5/4/02: [SPECIAL ISSUE] *Automated enforcement*



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Badger Tracs is catching on *from page 1*

cars and can be used with technologies such as bar code scanners, digital cameras and Global Positioning Systems (GPS).

Wisconsin's version is called Badger TraCS. In 2001, the DMV and State Patrol began investigating TraCS and then the DMV Traffic Accident Section signed the licensing agreement with Iowa and began development with support from the Traffic Records Coordinating Committee. In 2005, the first agencies began electronic reporting of crash and citation data, and now Badger TraCS is blossoming into a full suite of forms. These include: the MV4000 crash report and an abbreviated MV4000 for single unit, property damage and vehicle/deer crashes; an amended crash form; Fatal Supplement; Uniform Traffic Citation; Alcohol Incident Reporting Form; Uniform Municipal Citation; traffic warning; Driver Condition or Behavior Form; and an attachment. Via the Forms Advisory Committee (FAC), people can suggest new forms, modifications, etc.

Automated reporting has many benefits (see sidebar) and many officers statewide are welcoming it. For example, the Menasha Police Department is one of the early adopters and serves on the FAC. Officer Martin Schramper says, "DOT time studies showed that the average traffic stop takes 12 to 15 min-

utes to write one ticket. With TraCS, we're down to 5 minutes for a warning and 7 to 8 minutes for everything else."

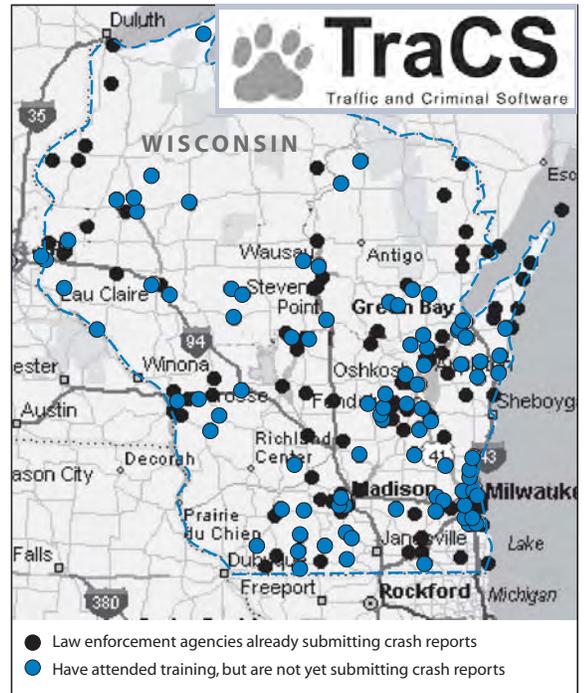
A Badger TraCS Users Meeting is held each fall for agencies that have been trained in TraCS.

Participants can learn how to get licensed and install TraCS, and they can learn about current issues, share success stories and discuss future developments. As of December, 184 of the state's 620 law enforcement agencies had received training. (The State Patrol is counted as one agency.) Of those, 93 are submitting crash reports electronically and 79 are submitting citations.

Both nationally and in Wisconsin, TraCS is growing and offering new capabilities. For example, progress is being made in the way electronic citations are transmitted. Currently, eCitations go onto a floppy disc and then to the Circuit Court. But now electronic transmission is being piloted, with eCitations going first to a DOJ-hosted Web server, and then on to the courts, including municipal courts.

Another new development is the recent launch of a Badger TraCS listserv (discussion group via email). This will complement the national TraCS listserv by providing a forum for discussing issues unique to Wisconsin.

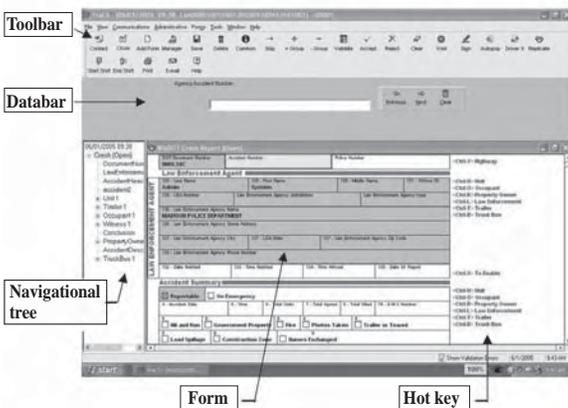
Improving data/decision support systems is one of the top priority issues in the state's 2006-08 Strategic Highway Safety Plan. This newsletter is doing a regular series of articles on progress with these issues. TraCS is one part of the data submission process, and in the next issue we'll go on to consider data access, including resources such as the UW-Madison TOPS Lab's WisTransPortal.



Basic layout of a Badger TraCS form

The TraCS window is divided into five areas:

- Toolbar** where the TraCS tool buttons are located
- Databar** where the form data is entered
- Navigational tree** allows for quick movement between areas of a form
- Form** where the TraCS form is displayed
- Hot key** used to navigate around the form or enable data fields



Scanning information into a TraCS form.

For more information, visit the [Badger TraCS section on the WisDOT website.](#)

TraCS-ready
Milwaukee Police Department's 50 motorcycle officers file 65-70% of all the city's crash reports.



Why Badger TraCS?

- Enter info once, use many times. Easily send data to WisDOT, courts, DPW, etc.
- Improves the accuracy, timeliness and ease with which incident data is collected and made available.
- Forms are more legible than with penmanship, so violators can actually read their copy.
- Improves officer safety because less time is spent at traffic stops, especially with multiple citations.

Msg 2 Teens

“Especially for our friends”

Nate Holmes and his two classmates at Middleton High School got involved in the *Msg 2 Teens* contest because they wanted to make a difference, to help promote safe driving . . . especially for their friends.

Teens listen to teens, which is why State Farm Insurance, BOTS and Fox 47 WMSN-TV sponsored this contest in the Fox station’s viewing area. High school students from Middleton, Platteville, Portage and Milton thought up and helped produce public service announcements (PSAs) which were then posted on the fox47.com website where people voted for their favorite. As the contest highlight, the winning PSA was broadcast during the Super Bowl pre-game show, in the last time slot before all commercial material went national. The Milton team won with their PSA showing distracted teens realizing too late a train is

bearing down on their car. They won a \$5,000 grant for their school. Their PSA will be broadcast on Fox 47 through June and will remain on the Fox 47 website. The Portage team came in second and the Middleton “Talking Bottle” team came in third, with both teams winning \$2,500 grants for their schools.

Kelly Savage from State Farm says, “We’re really committed to traffic safety from the child car seat to the driver’s seat, and we feel it’s most effective to reach teens through teens.” Together these young people conveyed a powerful message; because they cared, they got involved to help their friends.



“GRAVEYARD”
by Nate’s team,
Middleton
High School
With crash
statistics in the
sound-over, Nate
and three friends
go for a drive,
and later three of
them visit their
friend’s grave.
It concludes,
“Don’t let this
happen to you,
don’t let this
happen to
your friends.”



“DREAM”
by a Portage
High School team
Busily text
messaging and
talking on her cell
phone, a girl’s car
strikes and kills
a boy as he
crosses the road.
She awakes
to realize it was
just a nightmare.



“TALKING BOTTLE” by another Middleton team
A crash victim returns as a ghostly apparition to
warn about impaired driving.

CREDIT: FOX 47 WMSN-TV



Nate and his colleagues have all taken video
production classes and they helped edit their PSA.

CREDIT: PORTAGE DAILY REGISTER



**August 22-23
in Stevens Point**

Bureau of Transportation Safety Director's Award

Sergeant Don Mueller
Middleton Police
Department

Each year this award is presented to an outstanding law enforcement professional who has shown exceptional performance in traffic policing. The 2007 Director's Award goes to Sergeant Mueller, a member of his department for 32 years.

Award winners

2007 Governor's Conference on Highway Safety



Sergeant Mueller with (l) BOTS director Major Dan Lonsdorf and State Patrol Superintendent David Collins.

Don's supervisor cited 22 separate accomplishments and assignments in nominating him for the award. He has organized such programs as *Click It or Ticket*; *You Drink, You Drive, You Lose*; *Speed Waves*; and the *Stop on Red* campaign. Along with his many other duties, he is a member of the Madison and Dane County Safe Community Coalition and the Dane County Traffic Safety Commission.

Traffic Safety Heroism Award

Christopher Shaw & Samantha Houck

On October 22, 2006, Christopher was driving with Samantha on the Interstate near Madison when they saw a Jeep Cherokee cross the median and crash into a Dodge Caravan. They called 911, noted assistance was present, and then continued on.

Later when they drove back, they saw the Jeep driver hitchhiking and picked him up. Christopher whispered to Samantha that the person, who was bleeding and reeked of intoxicants, was involved in the crash and they should notify the police. Christopher dropped Samantha off at a restaurant to call 911. He drove on intending to take the person to the Sun Prairie Police Department, but a Sun Prairie officer stopped them and took the person into custody. It was his 8th OWI arrest, and he was charged with multiple felonies. Four of the occupants in the other vehicle were injured, one seriously.

"People Who Shine" Award

Donald Karkow, Chairman
Racine County Traffic Safety Commission

This award is presented annually by WisDOT to an individual who has shown extraordinary leadership and devotion to the traffic safety cause.

Don has chaired the Racine County TSC for 33 years and under his leadership it has been one of the most active in the state. He has championed many efforts, including the commission's Staying Safe program, a partnership in which each month the *Racine Journal Times* runs a full-page ad on a timely safety issue and the WRJN radio station hosts a call-in show on that topic.

State Farm Insurance Golden Car Seat Award

**Representative Jerry
Petrowski and Senator
Carol Roessler**

State Farm Insurance recognizes these legislators for helping pave the way for safer roadways in Wisconsin. By authoring Assembly Bill 618 and Senate Bill 305, they helped strengthen the state's child passenger safety law (see below). Thanks to their hard work and support, children



Representative Petrowski (l) receives the award from John Neumueller (r) and Chet Gerlach from State Farm.

are now better protected and their parents are better educated on the importance of proper passenger restraint for children.



Donald Karkow with (l) Captain James Formolo, Racine Co. Traffic Safety Coordinator, and Tom Knoop, BOTS State Program Manager for Law Enforcement Programs.



Governor Jim Doyle signs the law strengthening the state's booster seat requirements. The bill's co-sponsors were Senator Roessler (upper left) and Representative Petrowski (behind Governor Doyle).

Lifetime Achievement Award

Ray Sondelski

Ray began his career as a trooper with the Wisconsin State Patrol in 1977 and retired after 30 years of service. Ray was one of the first Standardized Field Sobriety Test (SFST) instructors and has taught more than 5000 police officers nationwide.

Ray's career included being a part of the State Patrol response to the spear fishing detail in northern Wisconsin, the 1993 Black River Falls flood and the Weyauwega train crash.



Pete Annis

President
Wisconsin
Traffic Safety
Officers
Association
(WTSOA)



Back in 1975, Pete joined the Lincoln County Sheriff's Department and over the years he has had many occasions to see how people's driving decisions make a life-or-death difference. He gradually developed a strong interest in traffic safety, and now, as WTSOA president, he works with officers from all around Wisconsin to expand the association's usefulness. He, the board and the group's membership all care about traffic safety, and he says, "We want the association to be a home for traffic safety officers, to provide a forum where peers can discuss problems, benefit from each other's experience, learn about new resources and developments in Wisconsin's laws, and learn from experts from all around the country."

Looking back over his years as a patrol deputy, he emphasizes that the job involves not only enforcement but education. Getting a traffic

citation can be unpleasant but it can also get people's attention and motivate them to improve their driving habits. Pete especially enjoys being a guest speaker at driver ed classes and being a part of Q&A sessions with young people.

His work includes administering grants from BOTS for new equipment and stepped-up patrols. Using Lincoln County's crash maps, he works with his department colleagues and BOTS staff to decide where to focus their efforts. Some enforcement campaigns, like *Click It or Ticket*, last only a couple weeks, but he notes that prolonged efforts can have more lasting impact. Regarding safety belt use, he wishes the state would pass a primary enforcement law.

WTSOA (www.wtsoa.org) brings together officers from diverse backgrounds and agencies both large and small. Their annual training conference, which this year was held March 10-12 in Green Bay, focuses on information and resources that, as Pete says, "the street cop can use." Last year, there were 83 traffic-related officer fatalities in the U.S., up 14% from the previous year. So this year's conference featured Captain Travis Yates of the Tulsa, Oklahoma, Police Department, an expert on emergency vehicle operation, who discussed how to avoid danger both in police driving and at traffic stops. Another conference highlight was the update on Wisconsin's OWI laws and other enforcement issues by Nina Emerson from the UW Law School's Resource Center on Impaired Driving and Assistant Attorney General David Perlman.

Contact Pete at Pannis@wtsoa.org.

Highway Safety Partners

This section profiles people who are helping improve traffic safety in Wisconsin.



Julia Sherman

Wisconsin Clearinghouse for
Prevention Resources

Julia says she learned a lot about underage drinking living across the street from Madison West High School for a decade. She got to know the school liaison officer, and where once she occasionally noticed a beer can on the lawn, she started seeing impaired middle school kids.

A month after her son graduated from West, she put that knowledge to work as part of the American Medical Association's *Reducing Underage Drinking through Coalitions* project. Later she became the national field director of the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth at Georgetown University. She worked in five states to reduce youth exposure to alcohol advertising, helping Philadelphia to eliminate alcohol advertising from all public property and Ohio to ban alcohol billboards within 500 feet of schools, parks and churches. Then she returned to Wisconsin, joining the Wisconsin Clearinghouse staff. One of her major responsibilities is helping organize the annual Wisconsin State Prevention Conference (see page 8).

The Clearinghouse provides services to nonprofit, private and public sector organizations and educators throughout Wisconsin, with the goal of helping young people lead healthy and productive lives. Its

services include disseminating prevention-related materials and providing technical assistance in such areas as grant writing and program evaluation.

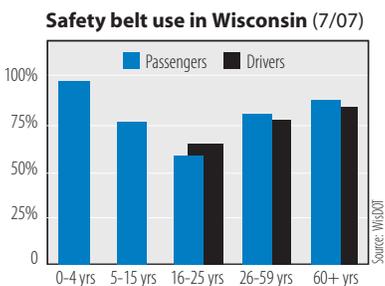
Often law enforcement comes in after there's already a problem, but when Julia saw how some other states deal with underage drinking, she began to realize how law enforcement could also be a key partner in prevention in Wisconsin. For example, courts are now coming down hard on parents who allow underage drinking parties, but there's also increasing interest in raising parents' awareness of the harm to kids and enforcing underage drinking laws, including compliance checks. Controlled Party Dispersal efforts by law enforcement are helping ensure that kids get home safely.

Wisconsin has the highest underage drinking rate in the nation (39%) but Julia also sees many promising developments. More and more communities are hosting town hall meetings and developing underage drinking coalitions (see page 8) to work with families and schools to create positive opportunities for young people, and to help prevent alcohol and other drug abuse. The Clearinghouse has created a listserv for individuals and organizations concerned about underage drinking; people can join just by sending her an email.

Contact Julia at jsherman2@wisc.edu.

Slow safety belt progress

WisDOT's July 2007 statewide survey found that 75.3% of passenger vehicle occupants were buckled up. Wisconsin enacted a mandatory safety belt law in 1987. In 1988, the use rate was 50%, and since then it has climbed steadily but very slowly. Belt use is the lowest (66.6%) among drivers ages 16-25. This group was 16% of all licensed drivers but accounted for 27.8% of drivers



in crashes in 2006.

National statistics show that states with primary enforcement average 85% usage, while states with secondary enforcement average 74% (Source: NCSA, 2006).

Motorcycle safety

WMSP distributes MSF Intersection Kits

Wisconsin Motorcycle Safety Program has distributed 500 Motorcycle Safety Foundation *Intersection Kits* to all motorcycle safety training sites, public and private driver education providers, and commercial truck driving schools. A law effective October 2006 requires all driver ed providers to include information on sharing the road with motorcyclists, bicyclists and pedestrians. WMSP manager Ron Thompson says, "This kit is an excellent way to meet this requirement as it pertains to motorcyclists."

The kit's DVD includes three separate 13-minute versions to appeal to teens, adults in general and commercial drivers.

About 50% of fatal motorcycle crashes involve another vehicle.

Visit store.msf-usa.org.

Booze & Belts campaign boosts December holiday safety

To get motorists to buckle up and drive sober during the holiday season, more than 140 law enforcement agencies statewide mobilized for the Booze & Belts campaign, December 10-16, and this helped make this December the third safest one in terms of traffic deaths since World War II.

"High visibility law enforcement combined with media outreach continues to be an effective way to deter impaired driving and increase compliance with the state's mandatory safety belt law," says BOTS Director Major Dan Lonsdorf.

"In 2007, record numbers of law enforcement agencies participated in high visibility traffic safety enforcement efforts in Wisconsin, like *Click It or Ticket*, *Drunk Driving Over the*



Limit. Under Arrest, and Booze and Belts," Major Lonsdorf says. "We know that law enforcement agencies face staffing shortages and other challenges. But we're encouraged that so many continue to make traffic safety enforcement a top priority."

Get to know ... Andrea Loeffelholz



Regional Program Manager for Southern Wisconsin, Bureau of Transportation Safety

In November, BOTS welcomed Andrea to her new position and now she's busy learning the ropes and making initial contacts in her

14-county region. She is taking over the position formerly held by Tom Knoop, who is now the BOTS State Program Manager for Law Enforcement Programs.

Andrea has a BA in Criminal Justice from UW-Eau Claire. Previously she worked in the DOT Chemical Test Section and then later in the Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Railroads and Harbors where she managed the WETAP grant program (Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program), working with nonprofit organizations and county agencies that help low-income people get to work in areas without public transportation.

Her experience as a grant specialist will help with her new work, which includes administering traffic safety grants. Another important part of her job is attending county Traffic Safety Commission meetings throughout her region. Last year her region, which doesn't include Milwaukee County, had 226 of the state's 741 total traffic fatalities. One challenge she'll be working on is to continue Tom's efforts to get application materials for traffic enforcement grants out to agencies earlier in the Federal Fiscal Year.

As she gets acquainted, she wants to get out the message, "I'm brand new to this job so I'm open to input."

Contact Andrea at (608) 267-3249 or andrea.loeffelholz@dot.state.wi.us.

▲ On October 6, a semi-driver traveling south on US 41 just north of CTH Y in Fond du Lac County suffered a heart attack and died. His semi crashed into the cable guard that WisDOT had installed to reduce cross-median crashes. "The cable guard did exactly what it was supposed to do," says Sheriff's Department Captain Dean Will.

Reducing cross-median crashes is one of the top priorities in Wisconsin's 2006-08 Strategic Highway Safety Plan; see article on page 8 of TSR, Vol. 10, No. 3, 2007.

2008

May 19-June 1

**CLICK IT or TICKET
Mobilization**www.buckleupamerica.org

June 30 – July 2

**Wisconsin State
Prevention
Conference**
Stevens Point

August 20-21

**Governor's
Conference on
Highway Safety**
BarabooContact Vicki Schwabe,
BOTS, at (608) 266-0402
or vicki.schwabe@dot.state.wi.us.

Resources

**Alliance for
Wisconsin Youth**
www.allwisoyouth.org**Wisconsin State
Prevention Conference**
(see above)*Study: Reducing Underage
Drinking: A Collective
Responsibility* (2004)
Institute of Medicine of
the National Academies
www.nap.edu

Underage Drinking Coalitions

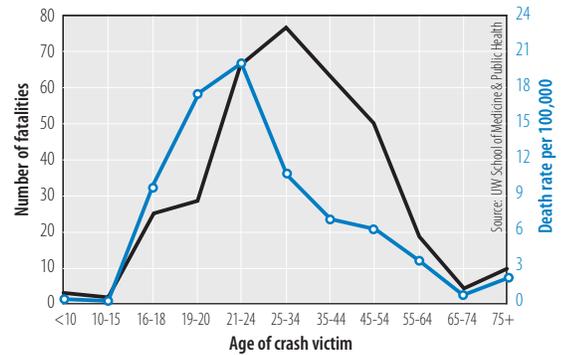
Communities caring for their kids

The human cost of underage drinking is staggering and tragic. When young people drink, they're more likely to get involved in a wide variety of harmful behavior, including impaired driving (see graph). At 39%, Wisconsin has the highest underage drinking rate in the nation.

The well-being of young people depends on their families, schools and communities, and communities can play a vital role in preventing underage drinking. In Wisconsin, a wealth of resources is available to assist communities with this effort (see sidebar). One way a community can help is by developing a local Underage Drinking Coalition.

One of the many successful ones is the St. Croix Underage Drinking Coalition (www.scudc.net). It includes all the law enforcement agencies in the county along with other community organizations, and, with BOTS funding support, it focuses on both education and enforcement. Officer Adam Wojceihowski with the Somerset Police Department says that citations are their last resort; they try to avoid problems by fostering community support. For their alcohol compliance checks, they have adapted the approach developed by the *Wisconsin Wins* campaign to reduce youth access to tobacco products. They are now in the process of developing an online database of their compliance check results.

One of their successes has been fostering better county-wide law enforcement cooperation. For example, he notes that young people sometimes gather for large drinking parties on islands on the St. Croix River, one nicknamed "Beer Can Island." Now, with better cooperation among local and county law enforcement, along with agencies across the river in Minnesota, they have sufficient resources to crack down effectively.

Wisconsin alcohol-related vehicle fatalities (2005)

Other coalitions are sprouting up around the state. Sue Allen, director of Wisconsin Positive Youth Development, says, "We're beyond the days when coalition members wondered, 'What should we be doing?'" Now there's an abundance of success stories and resources regarding best practices." Julia Sherman (see page 6), with the Wisconsin Clearinghouse for Prevention Resources, says, "One immediate benefit is knowing that you're not alone, that you can learn from others." To help with this sharing process, Julia now maintains a listserv (email discussion group) and welcomes newcomers.

As Blinda Beason, BOTS Youth Alcohol Program Manager, proudly notes, "These coalitions are doing a wonderful job helping their communities' kids."



Contact Blinda at (608) 264-7337 or blinda.beason@dot.state.wi.us.

A business in St. Croix Co. conveys an important message up-front.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Bureau of Transportation Safety
P.O. Box 7936
Madison, WI 53707-7936

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
MADISON WI
PERMIT NO 1369