

WISCONSIN TRAFFIC SAFETY REPORTER

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Texting and other deadly distractions

Major Dan Lonsdorf
Director, BOTS

Distracted driving received extensive media and public attention when a new state law that bans texting while driving went into effect on December 1, 2010. It is now illegal in Wisconsin to drive "any motor vehicle while composing or sending an electronic text message or an electronic mail message."

Wisconsin currently is one of 30 states and the District of Columbia that ban texting on a cell phone or similar device while driving. Wisconsin's texting ban is a primary enforcement law, so police officers may stop motorists suspected of this offense alone. All forms of distracted driving are dangerous, but texting is especially hazardous because the driver's eyes, hands and mental focus are all diverted from safe driving for too much time. As with any traffic safety law, we hope that drivers will voluntarily comply with this ban and also eliminate other distractions while behind the wheel.



Distracted drivers are a threat to themselves and everyone else on the road. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) attributes an estimated 6,000 traffic deaths and 500,000 injuries to distracted driving in 2008.

NHTSA and the entire traffic safety community are devoting time and resources on educational and enforcement efforts to reduce distracted

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Motorcycle helmets: proven effective

"The effectiveness of appropriately designed motorcycle helmets in preventing and mitigating head injury is unquestionable."

— NTSB, November 2010

In November, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) announced its latest *Most Wanted List of Transportation Safety Improvements*. New this year: they are urging states to enact mandatory helmet laws for all motorcycle riders.

The NTSB is an independent federal agency charged with determining the probable causes of transportation crashes and also promoting safety.

The Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA), representing state highway safety offices nationwide, also "urges states to support the use of DOT-certified helmets by motorcycle riders of all ages, oppose efforts to repeal their universal motorcycle helmet laws and adopt motorcycle helmet laws

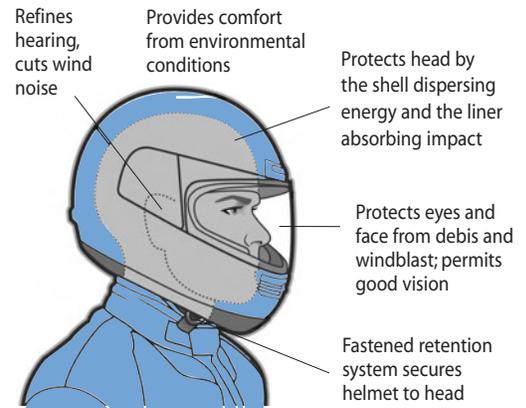
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Your input welcome!

Each year the WisDOT Bureau of Transportation Safety (BOTS) creates a Highway Safety Performance Plan (HSPP) and submits it to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA). It describes how BOTS intends to spend monies granted to the state to decrease crash-related fatalities. Our planning process is continuous and we are engaged year-round with others who want to make our roadways safer. We are now beginning the process of creating the 2012 HSPP, due at NHTSA by September 1, and we invite new ideas aimed at changing driver behavior, especially in the areas of impaired driving, occupant protection, and speeding.

If you or your organization would like to present ideas for consideration, please contact Laura Andréasson at laura.andreasson@wi.gov or (608) 267-5136 by June 15.

The 2011 HSPP is on the WisDOT website. We look forward to hearing from you.



CREDIT: MOTORCYCLE SAFETY FOUNDATION

See and be seen. Be prepared. Enjoy the ride.



Modular (flip-up) helmets, closed and open: a hybrid between full-face and open-face helmet



Please note

Future issues of this newsletter will be emailed, so we need your email address.

Starting with the next issue, the *Wisconsin Traffic Safety Reporter* will be emailed to readers. This will save on printing and postage costs.

To ensure delivery, please email us at TSR@danenet.org. The title can be "Email me the TSR" and put your name and organization in the body of your email.

Readers who don't use email and would like to continue receiving paper copies should write us: WisDOT Bureau of Transportation Safety, P.O. Box 7936, Madison, WI 53707-7936.

All TSR issues are on the WisDOT website at www.dot.state.wi.us/news/newsletters.htm.

Deadly distractions

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driving. Because so many people routinely multi-task in their vehicles and personal communications technology is changing so rapidly, reducing distracted driving is a complex challenge.

As part of our *Zero In Wisconsin* campaign, we will continually remind drivers that they are legally and morally responsible for controlling a potentially destructive—and even deadly—force. And that's why driving absolutely requires everyone's undivided attention.

Motorcycle helmets: proven effective



CREDIT: WIKIPEDIA: MOTORRAD-67

Full face helmet. White is the color most visible to other motorists.

for all riders.” (See GHSA's *2009-10 Highway Safety Policies & Priorities*.) GHSA spokesman Jonathan Adkins says, “The NTSB is extremely well thought of and very credible. The fact that they're weighing in on this issue is very helpful and, frankly, very brave. They will take

some heat for it. But there's no argument that motorcycle helmet laws will reduce fatalities.”

The NTSB was prompted by a disturbing trend. From 1997 to 2008, the number of motorcycle fatalities more than doubled while overall highway fatalities declined. Though motorcycles comprise only 3% of all registered vehicles, motorcyclist fatalities accounted for 13% of all motor vehicle fatalities. The NTSB explained, “Our recommendations calling on states to enact universal helmet laws result from our careful study of the issues surrounding motorcycle safety and are consistent with the research findings from numerous studies over many years.”

NHTSA estimates that helmets saved the lives of 1,829 motorcyclists in 2008, and if all motorcyclists had worn helmets, 823 more lives could have been saved.

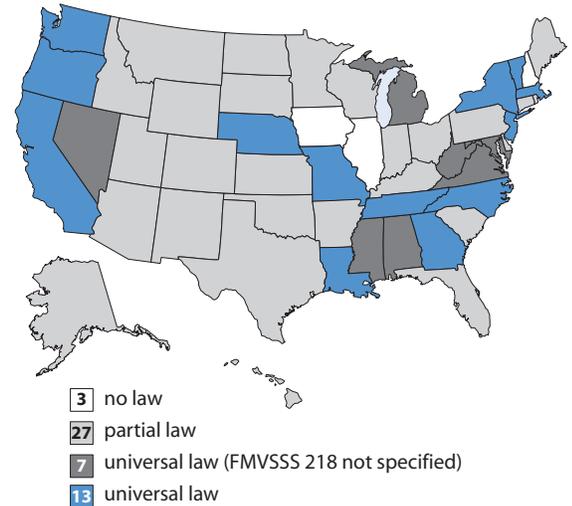
- Head injuries are a leading cause of death in motorcycle crashes and wearing a helmet reduces the overall risk of dying in a crash by 37%.
- Motorcyclists who crash without a helmet are three times more likely to have brain injuries than those wearing a helmet.
- Wearing a helmet does not increase the risk of other types of injury, and helmets do not significantly interfere with vision or hearing.
- Helmet use rates approach 100% under universal laws, but, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, partial laws that cover only some motorcyclists are widely disobeyed.
- In addition to the tragic loss of life, the economic cost to society is enormous. In 2005, motorcyclists without helmets were involved in 36% of all motorcycle crashes, but represented 70% of the total cost of all crashes: \$12.2 billion.
- Medical and other costs for un-helmeted riders involved in crashes are staggering, estimated at \$310,000 per crash-involved motorcyclist. That's more than four times the overall cost of accidents involving helmeted riders.

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History of helmet laws

In 1967, the federal government required the states to enact helmet laws in order to qualify for certain federal safety programs and highway construction funds. This incentive worked, and by the early 1970s almost all states had universal helmet laws (“universal” in the sense that they covered all riders). But in 1976 states successfully lobbied Congress to stop the USDOT from assessing financial penalties on states without helmet laws, and by 1980 most states had repealed or limited their laws to cover only riders younger than 18. Wisconsin enacted a universal helmet law in 1968 and in 1978 changed to the current law requiring helmet use by riders 17 and younger and instruction permit holders.

State motorcycle helmet laws



Source: NTSB, as of November 2010

These changes in helmet laws have created a natural laboratory for researchers to study the effects of the laws on helmet use rates and on motorcyclist deaths and head injuries. During the last 35 years, a great wealth of research has proved the importance of all riders wearing appropriately designed helmets.

Research highlights: nationwide

The federally-funded 1976-1981 study, *Motorcycle Accident Cause Factors and Identification of Countermeasures* (widely known as the Hurt Report), was a benchmark in motorcycle crash research, clearly establishing that helmets save lives by reducing head injuries. Decades of further research has confirmed this finding and has improved our understanding of helmets' importance.



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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For example, in 2004 NHTSA published *Motorcycle Helmet Effectiveness Revisited*. Using FARS (Fatality Analysis Reporting System) data from 1993 through 2002, the report found that helmets are estimated to be 37% effective in preventing fatal injuries. This means that for every 100 motorcyclists killed in crashes while not wearing a helmet, 37 could have been saved had all 100 worn helmets.

To reliably determine effectiveness, researchers based their calculations on a paired comparison study of crashes involving motorcycles with two riders, at least one of whom was killed. This enabled them to study, for example, crashes in which one rider was helmeted and the other wasn't on the same motorcycle. This method pinpointed the results of helmet use or non-use under very similar conditions.

In 2009, NHTSA published *Motorcycle Helmet Use and Head and Facial Injuries: Crash Outcomes in CODES-Linked Data*. This study examined the relationship between helmet use and crash outcomes in terms of injury types and hospital charges, employing data from the Crash Outcome Data Evaluation System (CODES), a program facilitated by NHTSA. States that participate in CODES, including Wisconsin, link state crash data with medical outcome data and use the results for analyses of crash outcomes.

Eighteen states in the CODES network submitted data, combining information on 104,472 motorcyclists involved in crashes during 2003-05. Results include the following:

Motorcyclists by helmet-use and head injury

	Helmet not used	Helmet used
No head injury	40,408 (91.9%)	54,933 (94.7%)
Head injury	3,575 (8.1%)	3,071 (5.3%)

Of the unhelmeted motorcyclists, 8.1% suffered head injury compared to 5.3% for helmeted motorcyclists. So helmets are estimated to be at least 35% effective at preventing head injuries.

Again, a crucial issue is how effectiveness can be determined reliably. In this study, researchers used logistic regression, a statistical method that enables them to account for other crash factors (e.g., speed) and focus in on the effect of helmet use or non-use. Using this method, they estimated the effectiveness of helmets at preventing traumatic brain injury to be 41% for single-vehicle crashes and 25% for multiple-vehicle crashes.

Researchers have also tracked the outcomes of states enacting universal helmets laws and also the effect of repealing or weakening these laws. For instance, a 2005

NHTSA study, *Evaluation of the Repeal of the All-Rider Motorcycle Helmet Law in Florida*, examined what happened after Florida replaced its universal helmet law in 2000 with one requiring helmet use only by riders under the age of 21 or older riders who do not carry at least \$10,000 of medical insurance. Fatalities in Florida per 10,000 registered motorcycles increased 21% compared to 13% nationally for the two years before and after the law change. Similar analyses also showed significant increases for Kentucky, Louisiana and Texas.

NHTSA reports that 86% of motorcyclists wore compliant helmets in states with universal helmet laws during 2009, while only 55% did so in the other states.

Wisconsin

As with the rest of the nation, motorcyclist fatalities in Wisconsin rose dramatically during 1998 to 2008 and then dipped in 2009. There were 84 motorcyclist fatalities in the state in 2009, but in 2010 the toll rose to 104. Of all motorcyclists killed in crashes in Wisconsin in 2009, for cases in which helmet use could be determined, 62% were not wearing helmets.

In March 2010, Wisconsin CODES – www.chsra.wisc.edu/CODES/—published *Health and Cost Outcomes Resulting From Traumatic Brain Injury Caused by Not Wearing a Helmet, for Motorcycle Crashes in Wisconsin, 2008*. Researchers combined WisDOT crash data with emergency department and hospital data from the Wisconsin Hospital Association. They faced the challenge of linking records between two data sets when one or both did not have person-level identifiers such as name, address or social security number. This problem was solved using a method called probabilistic linkage (see presentation on website). Their findings included:

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Motorcycle and passenger vehicle crash victims in Wisconsin (2008)

	Motorcycle	Passenger vehicle	Ratio
Total crash victims	3,455	238,129	
Visited an ER	1,375	22,76	
%	39.8%	9.6%	4.1
Hospitalized	676	2,266	
%	19.6%	1.0%	19.6
Died	90	359	
%	2.6%	0.2%	13.0
Total medical costs (millions)	\$ 77	\$ 398	
Average	\$ 22,196	\$ 1,649	13.5
Total other costs (millions)	\$ 303	\$ 2,053	
Average	\$ 87,635	\$ 8,621	10.2



Get to know ... *John Remy*

*Occupant Protection Program Manager
Bureau of Transportation Safety (BOTS)*

In November, the Bureau of Transportation Safety (BOTS) welcomed John as the new manager of its Occupant Protection Program, which is being re-energized after a five-year hiatus.

John has worked for WisDOT for 18 years, initially managing all the Safe Driving Programs that were designed for and presented to the state's high schools. Three of those programs originated from BOTS. During the last 12 years he has been part of the audio-visual staff at the Hill Farms State Transportation Building in Madison. Throughout his time with WisDOT, he has helped staff the Governor's Conference on Highway Safety, usually providing AV and other technical assistance.

John's focus now will be on two main areas: increasing seat belt usage and improving child passenger seat safety statewide. He notes that buckling up is the single most effective thing drivers and passengers can do. NHTSA estimates that seat belts saved more than 13,000 lives nationwide in 2008. BOTS staff work closely with law enforcement agencies on *Click It or Ticket* mobilizations, including planning and contracting for paid media campaigns. Seat belt use rates in Wisconsin had been quite flat for several years, but recently they took a nice jump upward to 79% in July 2010, with some of the credit going to the state's primary enforcement law.

To foster child passenger safety, John will be working with a wide variety of community partners, including public health organizations and WINS (Wisconsin Information Network for Safety), with goals that include fostering CPS training classes and distributing free child safety seats to low-income families.

Contact John at (608) 266-0550 or john.remy@dot.wi.gov.

BOTS welcomes Zack Wyatt



In November, Zack became a new member of the Program and Policy Unit within the Bureau of Transportation Safety (BOTS) Policy Analysis and Local Programs Section.

He grew up in Tennessee and graduated from the University of Tennessee—Knoxville. In 2006, he graduated from the UW Law School. He then became a policy analyst for the Wisconsin Government Accountability Board in the election division before coming to WisDOT.

Zack is interested in data-driven policy analysis, and he'll be a member of WisDOT's internal legislative committee, which helps develop the department's positions on pending legislation. Another part of his work will be policy research, including working with BOTS program managers to determine the results of BOTS grants and where funding is most effective.

Contact Zach at (608) 266-0403 or ZacharyD.Wyatt@dot.wi.gov.



Motorcycle helmets: proven effective from page 3

Of those involved in motorcycle crashes, 57% were hospitalized or visited an emergency room. For those with traumatic brain injury, the average medical cost was \$198,000, other costs were \$470,000, and quality of life costs were \$832,000.

Those not wearing a helmet were 3.4 times as likely to have a traumatic brain injury (TBI) as those wearing a helmet. Alcohol use increases the likelihood of a TBI by 180%, having a crash on a road with a posted speed limit over 45 mph by 290%, and being in a head-on collision by 450%.

Resources

WisDOT website

- Motorcycle safety and riding brochures
- Rider course information

NHTSA website

- Motorcycle Safety Campaign Planners
- Earned Media Materials (e.g., news release), educational video, PSA, posters
- Brochures, research papers
- Motorcycle Safety Foundation website brochure: *What You Should Know About Motorcycle Helmets*



Conclusion

As the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety points out, courts have repeatedly upheld motorcycle helmet use laws under the United States Constitution. In 1972, a federal court in Massachusetts told a motorcyclist who objected to the law that the public has an interest in minimizing the resources directly involved. From the moment of injury, society picks the person up off the highway; delivers him to a municipal hospital and municipal doctors; provides him with unemployment compensation if, after recovery, he cannot replace his lost job; and, if the injury causes permanent disability, may assume responsibility for his and his family's subsistence. The court said it did not understand a state of mind that permits the motorcyclist to think that only he himself is concerned. This decision was affirmed by the Supreme Court.

ACE Report fosters

Municipal action to improve Wisconsin's alcohol environment

Unlike states where major aspects of alcohol policy are under statewide control, Wisconsin's reliance on municipal control allows communities to greatly improve their community alcohol environment.

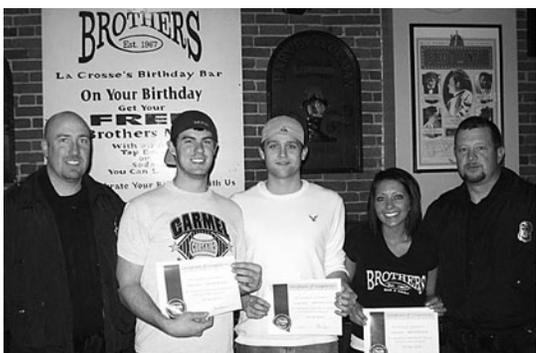
To help communities make optimal use of this power, the Wisconsin State Council on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse has released *Alcohol, Culture and Environment Workgroup Recommendations: Changing Wisconsin's Alcohol Environment to Promote Safe and Healthy Lives*, also known as the ACE Report. It includes a broad set of Wisconsin-specific recommendations, including ones requiring legislative or state action and others requiring municipal action.

Topics include: the alcohol licensure process, compliance checks, social host ordinances, and alcohol retailer training. The report is available at www.law.wisc.edu/rcid/news/aces_report.html

The Wisconsin Alcohol Policy Project, based at the UW Law School's Resource Center on Impaired Driving, hosted a one-day seminar, "Alcohol Policy in Wisconsin: Municipal Action to Promote a Positive Alcohol Environment," in Madison and Stevens Point in September 2010.



Employees at Brothers Bar & Grill in La Crosse after a server training



Officers Al Iverson (left) and Bob Wiczorek with Brothers employees after completing a two-hour server training

Along with updates on the ACE Report, workshops included success stories from communities that are improving their local alcohol environment.

One example is the La Crosse Police Department, which was recently honored by the Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center as the Law Enforcement Agency of the Year for 2010 in recognition of their comprehensive efforts to reduce underage and binge drinking.

After several alcohol-impaired young people drowned in the Mississippi River, community concern in La Crosse prompted the mayor to launch the police department's ACE (Alcohol Compliance Education) team. They offer free beverage server training, and Officer Al Iverson says that a key challenge is making these trainings engaging and motivating. The city's public intoxication ordinance allows officers to cite and take people into custody when intoxication makes them a public nuisance or a danger to themselves and others. Offenders can avoid the forfeiture by attending an alcohol intervention session. Repeat offenders are rare. Since adopting this ordinance as part of a comprehensive plan to reduce alcohol misuse, detoxification holds have been reduced by 50% and disorderly conduct citations decreased by nearly 15%.

Another success story is Two Rivers' social host ordinance enabling the community to crack down on underage drinking and the adults who facilitate it. Begun two years ago, the ordinance has also been adopted by Manitowoc County and a similar proposal is pending in Winnebago County. Melissa Arps, the Two Rivers Police Department's school resource officer at Two Rivers High School, explains that public concern and support by key community leaders led to the ordinance.

Among Officer Arps' many duties, she trains underage buyers for the compliance checks. They are mostly 18 or 19 years old, and include Police Explorers who are interested in careers in law enforcement. She has written a document, "Two Rivers Police Department CARD Grant." For a copy, email her at melarp@two-rivers.org.

WisDOT Bureau of Transportation Safety (BOTS) provides funding support for the Wisconsin CARD (Comprehensive Alcohol ReDuction) program, which supports compliance checks and Party Patrols. In 2010, 47 law enforcement agencies statewide participated. Citations increased 57% over 2009 because enforcement agencies and local coalitions are working well together and because of the successful implementation of the "Parents Who Host Lose The Most" multi-agency statewide program.



Shredding some of the 800 false IDs recovered during one year.

Contact

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Highway Safety Partners

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

Wisconsin TIC

<http://tic.engr.wisc.edu/>

Using studies that show growing public recognition of traffic control symbols, the 2009 MUTCD specifies them in many cases to replace language signs.



New "school bus stop ahead" symbol sign has a black legend on green fluorescent background with red to show flashing lights and stop sign on a standing bus.



Training on work zone and flagger safety

Serving Wisconsin municipalities since 1983

Wisconsin Transportation Information Center

There are more than 100,000 miles of local roads in Wisconsin, and each year municipalities statewide spend about \$1 billion to maintain, repair and replace roads and bridges. The Wisconsin Transportation Information Center (TIC) helps local highway officials manage their road systems with a focus on safety, up-to-date best practices and cost effectiveness.

Cities, counties and towns maintain more than three million miles of road and 300,000 bridges in the United States, and keeping them safe requires a skilled and knowledgeable workforce. In 1982, the Federal Highway Administration created the Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP), which now has an LTAP center in each state, including the Wisconsin TIC. Nationwide, local transportation agencies save about \$8 for every \$1 LTAP spends on information, training and technical assistance.

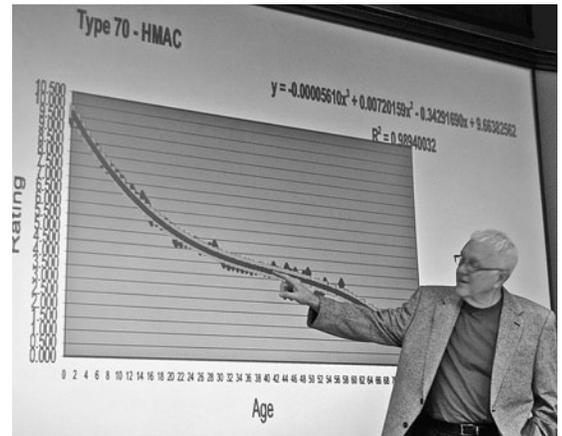
Wisconsin TIC at the UW-Madison Department of Engineering Professional Development offers training, publishes the quarterly newsletter *Crossroads* and other technical bulletins, provides limited consultation, and maintains a lending library of resources.

The TIC's work benefits engineers, street and highway officials, as well as local law enforcement, planners and members of county Traffic Safety Commissions. During 2009, the TIC conducted 75 one-day training sessions statewide, covering topics such as:

- Speed management
- Work zone and flagger safety
- Sign retroreflectivity (which ensures that signs are easier to see at night)
- Road maintenance
- Using PASER and WISLR to manage roadways

"We're best known for our PASER Manual," says TIC Director Steve Pudloski. PASER is a state-approved pavement surface rating system, and since the late 1980s, TIC has distributed more than 75,000 copies.

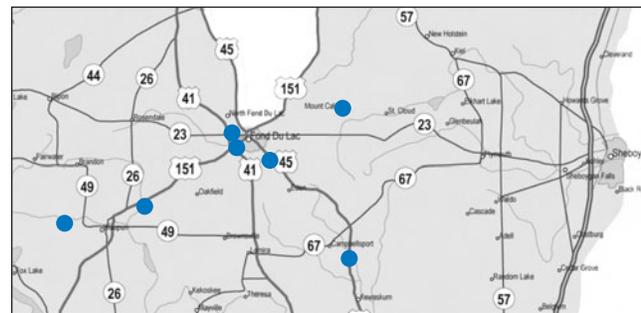
Local governments need a clear strategy on how to budget for and implement road safety efforts that include meeting important changes in federal sign requirements. During November 2010, the TIC provided training statewide with a detailed review of how to incorporate the 2009 MUTCD (*Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*) standards into their sign and safety programs.



Steve Pudloski teaching about PASER and WISLR.

Community Maps

More recently, the TIC has been supporting the continued development of Community Maps, a web-based resource that enables local governments to plot and manage their crash data. One goal is to help county Traffic Safety Commissions generate local crash "spot maps" for quarterly review. This project will lead to a statewide crash map that is managed at the local level.



Visit Community Maps at <http://transportal.cee.wisc.edu/partners/community-maps/>. ABOVE Fatal crashes in Fond du Lac County in 2010

Community Maps is built using the Google Maps API, which provides a high quality map interface for plotting and sharing data. It includes a password-protected admin area for users to enter and manage crash data. They can also maintain separate data "folders" to plot and manage project-specific datasets in addition to the main statewide map.

With funding support from the WisDOT Bureau of Transportation Safety, Community Maps is being developed with the TOPS Lab as part of the WisTransportal at the UW-Madison College of Engineering. The TIC is seeking project participants: for more information, email Joni Graves at graves@epd.engr.wisc.edu.

Contact Steve at pudloski@epd.engr.wisc.edu.

Complete Streets in Wisconsin

Complete Streets are roadways designed with all users in mind: motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, public transport users, including children, older adults and people with disabilities.

Safety Many site-appropriate features can improve safety: e.g., raised medians, turning access controls, better bus stop placement, traffic calming measures, better lighting, and treatments for disabled travelers.

Health Complete Streets foster walking and biking. These are two of the easiest ways to be active, which provides many health benefits.

Economics When road projects are planned (e.g., when roads are being built, reconstructed or repaved), it makes good economic sense to include pedestrian and bicycle accommodations.

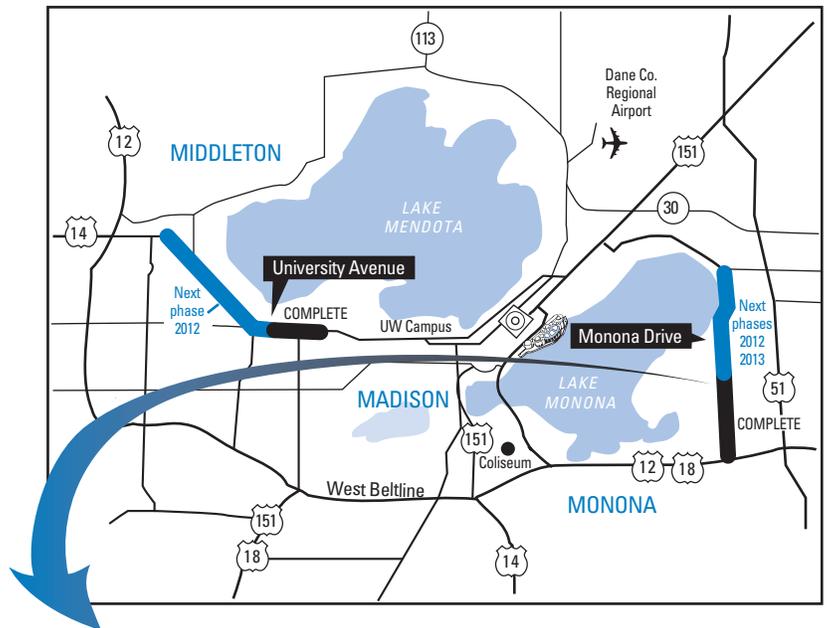
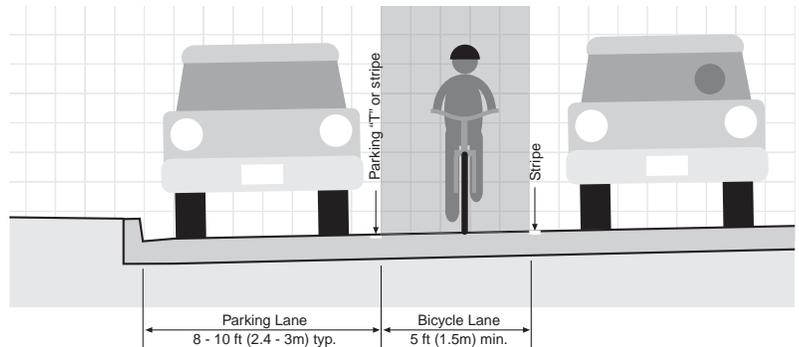
Wisconsin's Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations Law addressing Complete Streets was codified in 2009. It was incorporated as State Statute SS 84.01(35) and later into administrative rule as Transportation 75. In the fall 2010, workshops were offered statewide to explain how the law applies to roadway projects receiving state or federal funds.

On the WisDOT website at www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/state/complete-streets.htm:

- Complete Streets presentation
- Administrative rules
- *Wisconsin Bicycle Planning Guidance*
- *Wisconsin Bicycle Facility Design Handbook*

Contact **Tom Huber**
WisDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator
(608) 267-7757 or thomas.huber@dot.wi.gov

Typical dimensions for a bicycle lane next to a parking lane



The first of three phases of the Monona Drive reconstruction, finished late in 2010, includes complete accommodations for both bicyclists and pedestrians. Richard Vela, City of Monona engineer, says that overall the community has expressed "overwhelming satisfaction" with the reconstructed road.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Bureau of Transportation Safety

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In October 2010, 44 communities throughout Wisconsin received grants totaling more than \$6 million to help fund projects to make their streets safer for children who walk or bike to school. The Safe Routes to School

program is designed to get more children in grades K-8 to walk or bike to school, decrease traffic congestion around schools, and reduce pollution. The funds will help with projects including multi-use trails, bike racks, traffic calming, sidewalk improvements, bike and pedestrian education, and enforcement activities.

This is the third round of grants approved under the program. Since 2007, WisDOT has distributed approximately \$14 million in federal funds for these projects. A safe walking and biking environment encourages a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age, and it also reduces traffic, fuel consumption and air pollution in the vicinity of schools. The American Academy of Pediatrics, the Institute of Medicine, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services have all suggested walking and bicycling to school as ways children can be more active.

School officials, parent-teacher groups, law enforcement agencies and others can find detailed information about the program at: www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/saferoutes.htm

Also visit the website of the National Center for Safe Routes to School.

“Tentatively we’re planning our next application cycle to begin in January 2012,” says Renee Callaway, WisDOT Safe Routes to School coordinator.

Contact Renee at (608) 266-3973 or srts@dot.state.wi.us.



TOP: Walking School Bus in Platteville CENTER: Bike to School Week in La Crosse
BOTTOM: Walk to School Day in Omro