

WISCONSIN TRAFFIC SAFETY REPORTER

Vol. 16, No. 2
2013



Important traffic safety work underway

by Major Sandra Huxtable, *Director*
WisDOT Bureau of Transportation Safety

We are already well into 2013 and across Wisconsin our traffic safety partners are busy with activities within their disciplines that help save lives.

Even while the snow banks were deep along our roadways, the Wisconsin Motorcycle Safety Program (WMSP) was busy planning for this year's riding season. On page 7, you can read about the challenge of rising motorcyclist fatalities, and also about some new WMSP activities and resources designed to foster safety, such as making the new SMARTrainer available.

This issue highlights some of the resources being developed to improve how crash data are used. The article on Community Maps, *Bringing data to life*, which starts on this page, provides an overview and also success stories of how communities have used crash maps to identify local hazards and then make improvements.

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Improving EMS in Wisconsin

The condition of our emergency care system affects us all. When illness or injury strike, we count on the system to respond with timely, high-quality care.

In Wisconsin, important progress is being made to strengthen our EMS system. For instance, a recent NHTSA assessment has provided valuable recommendations that are now being implemented. Also, WisDOT Bureau of Transportation Safety (BOTS) is funding efforts to improve recruitment and training of first responders and provide essential life-saving equipment.

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Bringing data to life

A wide variety of agencies use crash data and maps to improve traffic safety. For instance, each county in Wisconsin has a Traffic Safety Commission (TSC) that meets quarterly to monitor local crashes and other traffic safety issues and coordinate efforts to address problems. Other users include law enforcement, traffic engineers and planners.

WisDOT is supporting a multi-pronged approach to enhancing the use of crash data, including development of the WISLR (Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads) crash map, and improvement of data collection with the implementation of Badger TraCS 10.

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Emergency medical responders treat multiple victims during training exercise.

CREDIT: WEMSA

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 diverse partners who want to make our roadways safer. We are now in the process of creating the 2014 HSPP, due at NHTSA by July 1, and we invite new ideas aimed at changing driver behavior,

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Mark your calendar!

39th Annual Governor's Conference on Highway Safety August 7-8

Holiday Inn Hotel & Convention
Center, Stevens Point

Contact Michele Lind
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FAX (608) 267-0441, or
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Includes:

Traffic Incident Management
track sponsored by Wisconsin
TIME Program

Community Maps - Crash

Community Maps - Crash Record Information for Wisconsin
Data Populated by the TIC and Local Traffic Safety Stakeholders

About Search Advanced Admin Contact Help

Home > Community Maps > Crash > Advanced

Search Results

Collection: 09 - Chippewa | WCHA Bridge 'n Court

New Search Spot Map Download CSV

Fatality Injury Property Damage

There were 41 crashes meeting the following criteria:

Counties: All
Begin Date: 01/01/2007
End Date: 12/31/2013
Crash Severity: SELECT ALL
Revised Or Canceled: SELECT ALL
Checked Flags: NONE

Check All | Uncheck All | Zoom To Selected

Sort By: Accident Date | Display: 10 Points

7841963	124 AT COURT ST CHIPPEWA FALLS (C), CHIPPEWA County 01/19/2007 PROPERTY DAMAGE	1
7806000	124 / S BRIDGE ST AT COURT ST CHIPPEWA FALLS (C), CHIPPEWA County 02/05/2007 PROPERTY DAMAGE	2
7926965	124 AT COURT ST CHIPPEWA FALLS (C), CHIPPEWA County 02/06/2007 PROPERTY DAMAGE	3

In March, at the Wisconsin County Highway Association commissioners' spring training conference, staff from the UW Transportation Information Center (TIC) presented this Community Maps example of crashes at an intersection in Chippewa Falls as a case study. There was "homework" with this case, and a follow-up webinar in April.

Important traffic safety work *from page 1*

Also in this issue, learn about important progress in improving Wisconsin's EMS system, including implementing recommendations from a recent NHTSA assessment and BOTS support of training and equipment for first responders.

We will be busy working with teens (see page 8) and seniors alike to raise awareness about the traffic safety issues that affect them most. Our bicycle and pedestrian safety groups have been preparing communities for increased activities, and they are reminding cyclists and pedestrians of the importance of complying with the rules of the road to reduce injuries and fatalities.

Everyone has a role to play to help us reduce crashes, injuries and deaths so that we can reach our ultimate goal of Zero in Wisconsin.

Improving EMS in Wisconsin *from page 1*

Overview

The **Wisconsin EMS Unit**, located in the Department of Health Services (DHS), is charged with developing and maintaining a statewide EMS delivery system. Unit staff license and coordinate diverse services statewide (see summary at right). Its website includes a wide variety of information for the public.

Emergency care is rapidly evolving and new challenges are always emerging. Important medical advances, for example, necessitate updating training requirements. And new services are emerging, such as Tactical EMS, with specially trained EMS personnel accompanying SWAT teams on calls such as standoffs and high-risk warrants.

NHTSA assessment

NHTSA helps states deal with new challenges and develop integrated EMS programs. In 1988, it developed a Technical Assistance Team approach that permits states to use highway safety funds to support the evaluation of existing and proposed EMS programs. It also developed a reassessment program to help states measure their progress since the original assessment.

A NHTSA assessment of Wisconsin's EMS system in 1990 led to important advances, such as the establishment in 1992 of a Legislative Council Special Committee to review EMS. The committee's deliberations led to legislative actions including the formation of the EMS Board and the EMS Physician Advisory Committee, and the appointment of a State Medical Director. A reassessment in 2001 led to further improvements.

Then in July 2012, NHTSA reviewed Wisconsin's EMS system again; see [their report](#). In December, NHTSA's recommendations went for public comment, and input is being reviewed by DHS. Priorities are being considered for inclusion in the EMS system strategic plan, and EMS Advisory Board members are working to prioritize tasks outlined in the report that apply to their specialty areas.

WisDOT BOTS support

Wisconsin's legislature has mandated the development of a statewide trauma care system to optimize local resources. But recruitment and retention of first responders is an increasing challenge in rural Wisconsin. WisDOT BOTS is funding equipment purchases and training for new volunteer first responders. During 2012, about 130 adult jump bags (see photo) were distributed to new first responders, especially in rural areas where the need is greatest. A public outreach campaign is fostering recruitment and retention.

The Division of Public Health maintains a secure, web-based reporting system, the **Wisconsin Ambulance Run Data System (WARDS)**. It enables ambulance service

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EMS calls in Wisconsin
(all services)

2011	598,416
2012	633,798



EMS services (804 statewide)

First responder groups (certified) ... 342

Ambulance services (licensed):

142	Basic
146	Intermediate technician
14	Intermediate
99	Paramedic
45	Critical care

Tactical EMS services (licensed) 16

Air medical services (licensed at one of the above levels) 10

EMS personnel (18,632 statewide)

First responders (certified) 3,489

Personnel (licensed):

8,216	EMT-Basics
2,791	Intermediate technicians
197	Intermediates
3,332	Paramedics
607	Critical care paramedics
78	Tactical EMS (licensed at one of the above levels)

As of April 12

For each EMS level, see [details](#) on the skills, equipment and medications approved for use.



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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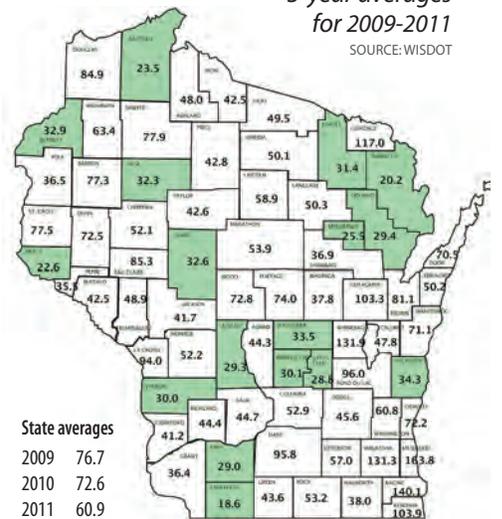
Funded by WisDOT and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

www.dot.wisconsin.gov

Injury-to-death ratios

3-year averages for 2009-2011

SOURCE: WISDOT



Shaded counties averaged at least one death per every 35 injuries. Crash survivability varies greatly by location statewide, due to many factors including vehicle speed in crashes (often higher in rural areas) and the quality of emergency medical response and treatment. Wisconsin's injury-to-death ratio has been getting worse.

providers to submit their ambulance run information via the Internet at no charge. One goal is to link WARDS data to the state trauma database and be able to track incidents all the way from crash to outcome.

The modern EMS system in the United States developed only during the past 50 years, yet its progress has been dramatic. In the late 1950s, researchers demonstrated the effectiveness of mouth-to-mouth ventilation, and in 1960 cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) was shown to be effective in restoring breathing and circulation. These advances led to the realization that rapid response of trained community members to emergency situations could significantly improve patient outcomes. Local communities began developing more sophisticated EMS capacity, but there was significant variation nationwide. Increased recognition of the importance of EMS in the 1970s led to strong federal leadership that resulted in important advances: e.g., the nationwide adoption of the 9-1-1 system, development of a professional corps of emergency medical technicians (EMTs), and establishment of more organized local EMS systems. Federal funding for EMS, however, declined abruptly in the early 1980s, and, since then, the push to develop more organized systems of EMS service delivery has diminished.

SOURCE: *Emergency Medical Services at the Crossroads, Institute of Medicine of the National Academies (2006)*

Despite the lifesaving feats performed every day by diverse

EMS services and personnel, the nation's emergency medical system as a whole tends to be overburdened, underfunded and highly fragmented, according to this Institute of Medicine report.

Fortunately, important progress is being made to strengthen Wisconsin's EMS system and its capabilities, and a crucial asset is the devotion of the many caring people who together make up the state's system. For example, many of the EMS Unit's staff have volunteered for decades in a variety of EMS services. At the heart of their devotion and volunteering is appreciation of the value of saving a human life. This is what motivates a volunteer to respond to the 3 a.m. call that an impaired driver has been in serious crash. This is what prompted an EMS Unit staff member to, as he says, "grow his own replacements"; along with his wife, his children are now volunteering, too.

But generational changes bring new challenges. The "greatest generation", which came up age during the Great Depression and World War II, made a strong volunteer contribution, as did the large baby boom generation. But now many aging baby boomers are retiring, and the younger generations now have to be welcomed into our EMS system that depends so much on volunteers.

In addition to the [EMS Unit website](#), a wealth of information is available on the website of another key partner in the state's system, the [Wisconsin EMS Association](#).



LEFT EMTs administer cervical spinal stabilization for patient involved in bicycle crash.



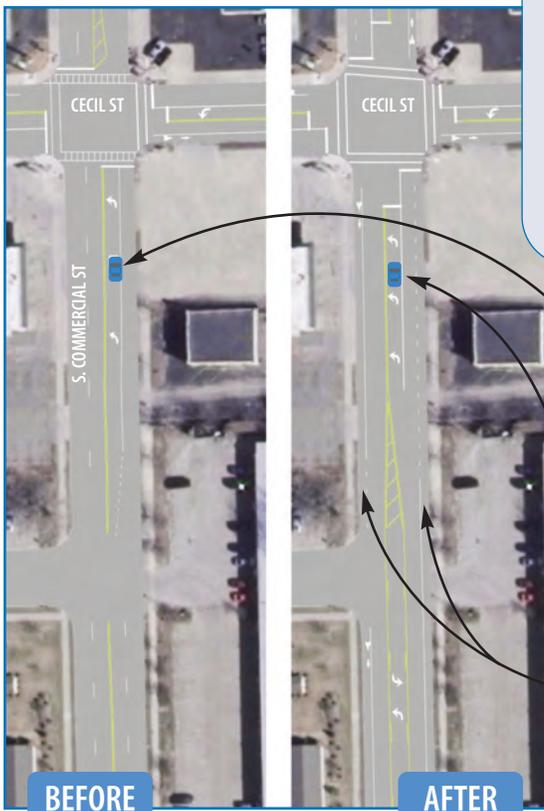
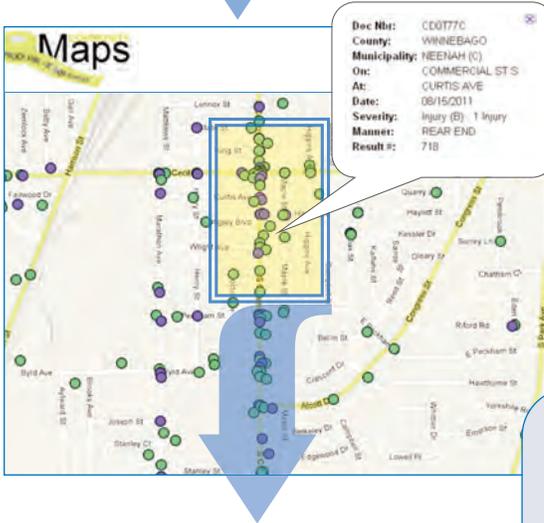
RIGHT EMTs provide airway support for unresponsive patient.



LEFT WEMSA Working Together Conference participants receive continuing education on advanced life support procedures.



RIGHT EMS responder equipment bag, known as jump bag



Bringing data to life from page 1

Another crash map resource is Community Maps, which was first developed in 2005. It is currently maintained at UW-Madison under a partnership between the Wisconsin Transportation Information Center (TIC) and the Traffic Operations and Safety (TOPS) Lab, which developed the WISLR map. WisDOT Bureau of Transportation Safety (BOTS) has provided funding support.

Community Maps is a collaborative, publicly-accessible website for Wisconsin crash data. Its philosophy is based on the value of leveraging local knowledge, and it provides local participants with resources for using their data, along with the opportunity to contribute to a statewide crash map.

As part of the TIC's ROADS (Resources, Outreach and Data Support) initiative, Community Maps focuses on providing resources to increase awareness, facilitate local engagement, and inform local safety priorities and activities. Joni Graves, director

of the project at TIC, explains, "We believe that bringing traffic data to life can improve traffic safety and help save lives."

Putting data to use

The city of Neenah provides an example of Community Maps' usefulness. James Merten had used Community Maps as an intern with the Fond du Lac County Highway Department (page 6). When he took a position as traffic engineer with Neenah's Public Works Department, he requested a new Community Maps account and then put his interns to work mapping injury and property damage crashes.

As he explains, it was clear from the maps (at left) that there were numerous crashes along S. Commercial St., the city's "main drag." This two-way street had two lanes in each direction, and Merten identified last-minute lane changes—in anticipation of left-turns—as a significant contributing factor. Putting the street on a lane reduction "road diet" was identified as a promising countermeasure. The proposal was embraced and work began in April to convert the street to one lane in each direction with curbside bike lanes and a TWLTL (two-way left turn lane) in the center (see "before" and "after" maps). FHWA has found that this increasingly common modification tends to reduce crash rates (see: FHWA-HRT-10-053, June 2010).

"This is an example of what I saw when I first looked at crashes using Community Maps. I was able to visualize the crash situation much more easily with a map than with data in a spreadsheet. My colleagues and I immediately noticed the crash cluster at the intersection of Commercial and Cecil and also the numerous crashes along Commercial in between intersections."

— James Merten
City of Neenah traffic engineer

- **BEFORE** One cause of these crashes: last-minute lane changes. Consider, for instance, a vehicle in the left lane headed north on Commercial. The driver intends to go straight through the intersection at Cecil, and belatedly realizes it has become a left-turn-only lane. The driver might try to abruptly switch to the right lane ... just as another vehicle nearby is switching to the left lane.
- **AFTER** With the new TWLTL design, a vehicle should get into the left lane only in order to turn left.
- **Bike lanes**

TWLTL (two-way left turn lane) in another part of Neenah



Leveraging local knowledge

Merten also provides a recent example of the value of local knowledge. In response to an update from Graves, he reviewed fatal crash locations in Community Maps and identified an error. As he put it, “I was heckled about that one being misplaced.” It was an unusual crash and Graves noted that Community Maps, the WISLR map, and NHTSA’s [FARS map](#) all had different locations for it . . . and none were where Merten placed it. She provided access to the archived record and was pleased that local review and knowledge made the map more accurate.

The Community Maps base map has fatal crash locations from 2001 to the present (and earlier for some counties). TIC updates the site with fatal crash data (K in the KABCO crash severity scale) from the DMV’s Daily Fatal Report. Merten and others map the data or provide a double-check to make sure crashes are located accurately. In the absence of a local collaborator, TIC maps locations as more information becomes available. Some users have also added injury (ABC), property damage (O) and non-reportable (NR) crashes that occur within their jurisdictions.

BOTS has requested that the scope of Community Maps be expanded to include incapacitating injury (A) crashes. Graves has added unmapped A-crash data for 2012-2013, and local users like Merten are being asked to verify or map K-crashes and to map A-crashes.

Supporting Traffic Safety Commissions

Community Maps’ satellite and density displays provide visual context and can foster discussion about crash factors and possible countermeasures. BOTS wants to expand local participation and encourages Traffic Safety Commissions (TSCs) to use the Community Maps website as part of their crash review.

Andrea Loeffelholz, TIC outreach specialist, is a former BOTS regional program manager (RPM) and has been demonstrating Community Maps at TSC meetings in Wisconsin’s South and Northwest districts, in cooperation with BOTS RPMs. Presentations have also been made at recent Wisconsin County Highway Association (WCHA) events

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St. Croix County

A few feet ... can make a life-or-death difference

WisDOT’s regional safety engineer contacted Tim Ramberg, St. Croix County highway commissioner, about the intersection (see aerial map) at County Trunk Highway (CTH) TT and 130th Street. Available data showed one fatality nearby, but only two crashes since 2008.

Then Tim got working with Joni Graves and Community Maps (see example below). “She helped me produce a map with all crashes for that area for 2005 to YTD 2012,” he recalls. “It was very telling for me. This tool gave me the ability to step back from the question at hand and take a more global look for patterns or potential common items. With the dot map, I noticed there had been more crashes at the next intersection (140th Street) than at 130th. This made me wonder if there might be similarities we could find while participating in the upcoming field review.”

This field review revealed that both intersections were strikingly similar in geometrics and vision issues. Recommended simple improvements at both intersections have been made (see below), costing much less than other possible remedies requiring hill cutting or buying more vision triangle right-of-way.



BEFORE



In this view, the vehicle is adjacent to the old position of the stop sign before it was moved closer to the intersection (see below). In this position, drivers had only a limited view of approaching traffic.

AFTER



Stop signs were moved closer to the intersections (but still within MUTCD guidelines), improving site distance along CTH TT. Larger signs were used, and there are now two stop signs in a row, better alerting approaching motorists. Also, vegetation was cleared within the vision triangle.

continued from page 1

especially in the areas of impaired driving, occupant protection, and speeding. HSPP 2013 is on the WisDOT website.

Please note

MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act), signed into law in July 2012, funds surface transportation programs during federal fiscal years 2013-14. It requires that Wisconsin convene a statewide OWI task force to develop a strategic plan to decrease the incidence of drunken driving in our state.

Task force requirements:

- Provide the basis for the operation of the task force: e.g., any charter or establishing documents
- Include a schedule of all meetings held in the 12 months preceding the application due date and any reports or documents produced during that period
- Include a list of membership and the organizations and functions represented, and include, at a minimum, key stakeholders from BOTS and the areas of law enforcement and criminal justice system (e.g., prosecution, adjudication, probation), and, as appropriate, stakeholders from the areas of driver licensing, treatment and rehabilitation, ignition interlock programs, data and traffic records, public health, and communication

If you would like to present ideas for consideration, contact Michele Lind, BOTS, at Michele.Lind@dot.wi.gov or (608) 266-0402.

Community Maps from page 5

and at the annual Wisconsin Traffic Safety Officers Association (WTSOA) conference. This outreach has yielded invitations from other TSCs, too.

One of these was from Calumet County. Highway Commissioner Mike Ottery saw a presentation and extended an invitation to discuss Community Maps. Chief Deputy Brett Bowe, the county's TSC coordinator, was familiar with the resource but had not used it. Andrea presented at the TSC, provided him with training, and they called Joni about setting up folders. She knew that most of the CCSO's crashes had been submitted with accurate coordinates, which would simplify the process, and Brett started reviewing the crash map the same day. A few weeks later, he emailed that he had gone through the crashes and checked the mapping for each one. He asked if property crashes that hadn't been submitted with coordinates could be uploaded, too. "I could check each and plot it. It doesn't take long when you know the roads, and, once I'm caught up, I think I could maintain them easily."

About Community Maps

Graves provides vision and technical support. To foster this outreach, she has undertaken a major reorganization of the Community Maps data structure and is updating user documentation resources.

The Community Maps website is housed on the TOPS Lab WisTransPortal. Graves and Steven Parker, TOPS Lab, anticipate that recommendations from this phase will be prioritized for implementation based on available resources and WisDOT concurrence.

The TOPS Lab also maintains the WISLR crash mapping project, which uses an algorithm to map location using on/at and offset data. As Steven explained in a recent funding request to the Traffic Records Coordinating Committee, "Preliminary discussions have taken place to reconcile areas of overlap between the two systems. TOPS Lab will continue to maintain Community Maps as a separate system while those discussions continue."

Nationwide, all kinds of GIS resources, including crash mapping tools, are improving rapidly, becoming more accurate, up-to-date and useful. In Wisconsin, one important development this year is the roll-out of **Badger TraCS 10**. Officers will use its Incident Location Tool (ILT)—an integrated map—to pinpoint crash locations and auto-populate portions of the crash report.

Community Maps uses the Google Maps API, which provides a high-quality satellite map interface for plotting and viewing data. Public search options include text and graphical search choices, with satellite and density display options. Advanced tools provide authorized users with additional search capabilities along with the ability to download search results data and generate digital "spot maps." Authorized admin users can map, manage and upload crash data across private and public folders.

WisDOT BOTS and the rest of the Community Maps team encourage county Traffic Safety Commissions and other potential community partners to contact TIC staff to learn more.

Contact Joni Graves at graves@epd.engr.wisc.edu, or Andrea Loeffelholz at loeffelholz@epd.engr.wisc.edu

Fond Du Lac County



Fond du Lac County spot map shows the location of single-vehicle crashes along a tight curve. The visual data helped the county prioritize cost-effective safety measures as part of a resurfacing project that included paving shoulders around the curve and installing chevrons.

SMARTrainers help riders learn safety strategies

The Wisconsin Motorcycle Safety Program (WMSP) is pleased to announce that the new Honda SMARTrainer (Safe Motorcyclist Awareness & Recognition Trainer) is now available in two ways:

- WMSP now has four units that can be shipped in special containers to sites wanting to borrow them
- They are available on THE REF (see its schedule)

This engaging [instructional tool](#) combines a personal computer, an advanced safety-training program and a video monitor, plus a handlebar, seat, footrests and all the standard controls found on a motorcycle. Under the guidance of a qualified instructor, riders respond to a variety of on-screen scenarios as they travel along virtual streets.

The objective of the on-road simulation is to negotiate safely a series of routes, while developing road hazard awareness. The experience reinforces the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF)

SEE strategy for managing risk: Search, Evaluate and Execute. In realistic traffic situations, users evaluate and address traffic hazards using the same control functions as an actual motorcycle. They gain valuable feedback from their choices, helping them identify areas where they can improve their decision-making abilities.

SMARTrainers are not motorcycle simulators, but rather traffic simulators with motorcycle controls. For instance, users can't learn the proper way to lean or countersteer.

Nationwide, motorcyclist fatalities have risen in 14 of the last 15 years. In April, the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) released a [report](#) that motorcyclist deaths rose by about 9% in 2012, to more than 5,000 lives lost. GHSA Chairman Kendell Poole says that speeding, alcohol and reluctance to wear approved helmets are resulting in unnecessary deaths. But, he notes, "The good news is that we know how to prevent crashes and the resulting injuries and fatalities. There are effective strategies."

In Wisconsin, motorcyclist fatalities jumped from 85 in 2011 to 116 last year (and 74% were unhelmeted). For 20 years, the average age of motorcyclist fatalities has risen steadily (see graphs).

At the WMSP Spring Kickoff, held in Madison in February, the focus was on reducing fatalities, and one goal is to encourage people to give the SMARTrainer a try, and then go on to take the BasicRider Course. Visit the [WMSP website](#) for details on all rider courses.

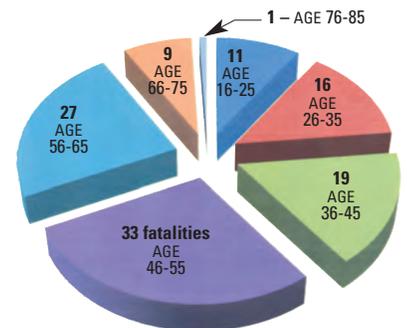


Honda SMARTrainer
SOURCE: HONDA & MSF

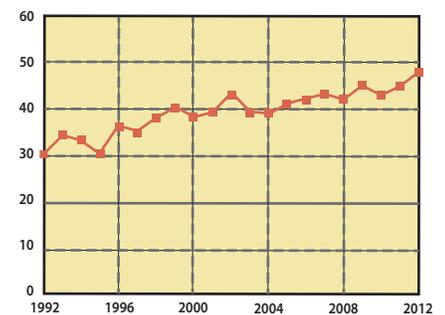
Motorcyclist fatalities by age group

Wisconsin, 2012 SOURCE: WISDOT

75% were between the ages of 36 and 75



Average age of motorcyclist fatalities



Trikes growing in popularity



WMSP's new Harley-Davidson trike

All across the US, more and more people are enjoying the benefits of 3-wheel motorcycles—commonly known as trikes.

Some riders enjoy its ease of handling, especially when compared to a 2-wheel touring bike weighing nearly 1,000 pounds. Riders don't need to lean into curves or hold them steady at stoplights. Many aging baby boomers—sometimes suffering from aching joints or slowing reflexes—simply find them more comfortable. Trikes can be equal parts "Easy Rider" and easy chair.

MSF provides a [booklet](#) with safe riding tips. And WMSP now owns a Harley-Davidson trike that will be used as part of the 3-Wheel Basic Rider Course (3WBBC) that includes about five classroom hours and eight hours of on-cycle riding exercises.



Major Sandra Huxtable, WisDOT BOTS director, on her Can-Am Spyder trike. She took the 3WBBC in October.



Al Hydeman, MSF director of research design and development, provides instruction at the SMARTrainer master instructor training course, in February at Madison College.

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Please note

WisDOT BOTS is transitioning to emailing the TSR to save printing and mailing costs.

If you did *not* receive this issue by email but prefer to in the future, please let us know. Put

"Email the TSR" in the subject line, your name and organization in the body of the email, and send to TSR@danenet.org.

To continue receiving a paper copy of the newsletter, please write or email BOTS with your request. Thank you!

Electronic versions are now full-color, and all TSR issues are at www.dot.state.wi.us/news/newsletters.htm.

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WISCONSIN TRAFFIC SAFETY REPORTER

Vol. 16 No. 2

WisDOT BOTS welcomes Michele Lind

In March, Michele joined the BOTS team as operations program associate. Previously she had worked in



the financial planning field for 12 years. "I'm glad to have this opportunity," she says, "to

work with talented and professional individuals who are devoted to improving traffic safety."

Contact Michele at (608) 266-0402 or Michele.Lind@dot.wi.gov.

Vicki Schwabe retires



Vicki, BOTS operations program associate, retired from state service

in February. Since 1996 she had smoothly handled BOTS office management, and her cheerful and efficient help will be missed. "It's been a great pleasure," she says, "working with BOTS' many traffic safety partners."

Driving simulators available

In March, WisDOT BOTS Director Major Sandra Huxtable participated in an assembly attended by about 200 students at Three Lakes High School. Senior Austin Wierschke, two-time LG U.S. National Texting Champion, challenged his peers to join him in taking the AT&T pledge to never text and drive. "My parents can attest to the fact that I text all the time," he says, "but I would never text and drive. It's really a simple message: there is no text worth dying over." He is featured in [TV and radio messages](#) broadcast statewide.

WisDOT BOTS, AAA Wisconsin and AT&T Wisconsin have teamed up to present traffic safety programs at school assemblies statewide. Students get to test their skills using an interactive driving simulator. Donated by AAA Wisconsin, the simulators offer real-world driving challenges, including distracted driving situations (e.g., texting while driving) and making traffic safety decisions with split-second timing.

In February, the Governor's Highway Safety Association released a [report](#) that the number of 16- and 17-year-old driver deaths in passenger vehicles increased dramatically for the first six months of 2012, based on preliminary data supplied by all 50 states. Overall, 16- and 17-year-old driver deaths increased from 202 to 240, a 19% jump.

Distracted driving was a contributing factor in nearly 10% of all fatal crashes and in 18% of injury crashes in 2010, according to NHTSA.

For details, schools and other organizations can contact [Katie Mueller, BOTS](#), at Katie.Mueller@dot.wi.gov or (608) 266-0094.



Students at Three Lakes High School test their driving skills on BOTS' driving simulator, learning how easily texting can cause a crash.