



Network of Employers for Traffic Safety

One of the strengths of the Safe Communities approach is the ability to reach a community through its own institutions and organizations. Such participants as law enforcement agencies, public health departments, service groups, churches, and youth organizations bring with them ways to reach different segments of a community, thus broadening and deepening a coalition's impact. But, as Dan Vartanian of the Michigan Office of Highway Planning points out, "For the most part, employers have not been involved in Safe Communities programs—yet employers can broaden a coalition's outreach." Vartanian speaks from an especially knowledgeable position, for he is also the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) Coordinator for Michigan. Michigan, like other states, has found that partnerships between NETS affiliates and Safe Communities coalitions can provide benefits for each organization and its constituencies.

productive. This is a loss to the company." Injuries result in absenteeism, increased health care costs, emotional stress, and lowered productivity.

NETS provides support, materials, technical assistance, and other resources to a network of 25 state coordinators, like Dan Vartanian, who work with individual companies or groups of employers to implement traffic safety programs at the company, local, and state levels. State coordinators use NETS resources and materials to train company fleet, health and safety, human resource, and loss control managers on methods for implementing traffic safety management programs for employees. They also coordinate their activities with other efforts, including Safe Communities coalitions and community policing programs. Dan Vartanian points out, "Employers can bring a lot of resources to

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NETS's mission is to prevent traffic injuries to employees while they are on the job or during their commutes, and to employees and their families during travel unrelated to the workplace. Kathy Lusby-Treber, NETS Executive Director, says, "Regardless of when the crash occurred, if an employee or a member of the employee's family is injured, the employee is often away from the job or not 100-percent



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the table and be a huge benefit in helping coalitions become self-sustaining.”

In Michigan, NETS and the Office of Highway Safety Planning are sponsoring two pilot projects (in Allegan and St. Clair counties) to demonstrate the benefits of such collaboration. In Georgia, Safe Communities coalitions and NETS programs solidified their relationship by having representatives on each other’s advisory boards. Franka Young, Safe Communities Coordinator at the Georgia Governor’s Office of Highway Safety, says, “It’s always important for Safe Communities coalitions to have the support of businesses. A relationship between Safe Communities and NETS is a win-win situation, a great partnership, and a prudent use of limited resources.”

Other NETS programs that can be used in workplaces or communities include the following:


- **Distracted Driving Tool Kit:** This kit contains all the materials necessary for an employer to implement a training program enabling employees to identify potential distractions while driving and to develop techniques and strategies to manage these distractions. The kit includes a Leader’s Guide, a video, a Rate-Your-Risk Quiz, incentive items, and other materials.
- **Novice Driver’s Road Map:** This publication helps a parent or other adult guide a teen or novice driver through eight practice sessions. It includes a teen/parent driving contract as well as information on being a positive role model, what mistakes to expect from a new driver, and how to select a driving school. A Road Map CD-ROM that can be used by teens will be available later this year. NETS encourages employers to make the Road Map available to employees with children approaching driving age.

NETS also sponsors Drive Safely Work Week (DSWW). Kathy Lusby-Treber reports:

The theme of DSWW 2002, “Drive Focused. Stay Safe,” addresses the situations on the roadway that those traveling for work and to and from work are likely to encounter: distracted, aggressive, drowsy, and alcohol-impaired driving. The campaign will emphasize seat belt use as the best defense against these risky driving behaviors. With our roadways becoming increasingly congested,

with drivers experiencing anxiety, stress, fatigue, and numerous personal and work-related distractions, it’s critical that American businesses make safety a priority. One of the best ways to help employees overcome travel concerns is to educate them about safe driving practices.

DSWW will take place October 7–11, 2002. A DSWW Campaign Tool Kit, including fact sheets, drop-in newspaper articles, a poster, an activity guide, and a CD-ROM of other resources, will be available from NETS.

To download NETS materials or locate the NETS coordinator in your state, visit NETS on the Web at <www.trafficsafety.org/>. To arrange for a NETS representative to speak to your organization, call National NETS at (202) 452-6005. Dan Vartanian can be reached at (517) 333-5322. 

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School Bus Safety



NHTSA has recently released a number of new resources on school bus safety:

- **Best Practices Guide for Reducing Illegal Passing of School Buses:** This publication provides examples of programs that have been successful in reducing the incidence of stop-arm violations, an outline of a model program, and resource materials to help start or expand a program to reduce the illegal passing of school buses.
- **Choosing the Correct School Bus for Transporting Pre-School-Age Children:** This booklet is designed for anyone responsible for selecting and buying school buses. It addresses the key features and equipment a school bus should have to safely transport pre-school-age passengers. It discusses such issues as aisle width, seating capacity, anchorage systems, retrofitting lap belts onto buses, and lap-belt-ready seats.
- **School Bus Driver In-Service Training Series:** The School Bus Driver In-Service Training Series allows pupil transportation directors to conduct refresher training for school bus drivers. Modules include Vehicle Training, Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety, Knowing Your Route, Student Management, Driver Attitude, Transporting Infants and Toddlers, and Loading and Unloading. Two new modules, Transporting Children with Special Needs and Driving Under Adverse Weather Conditions, will be available later this year.

These items can be ordered through the Publications Catalog and Safety Materials sections of the NHTSA website (www.nhtsa.dot.gov/) or by calling (888) 327-4236. 

Local Notes

South Jersey Traffic Safety Alliance

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are collaborative structures that coordinate regional transportation planning and provide a forum for decision-making among state and local officials, the operators of transit systems, and the public. In New Jersey, the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO), an MPO for Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem counties, decided to expand its activities to traffic safety by establishing the South Jersey Traffic Safety Alliance (referred to locally as “the Alliance”), a regional Safe Communities effort building on the strengths of its interagency parent organization.

The Alliance’s mission is “to assist all county and municipal agencies and organizations with problem assessment, development, implementation, and evaluation of educational programs, enforcement programs, engineering projects and traffic and pedestrian safety.” In addition to representatives from the organizations included in the SJTPO, Alliance members include police officers, emergency rescue personnel, educational and safety professionals, and the general public.



Teresa Thomas, Alliance Coordinator, says that MPOs can provide traffic safety coalitions with a number of benefits: They “can utilize safety management system data, act as a voice for the region, provide access to funding and resources, and be essential to identifying traffic safety needs.” For example, every other year the Alliance conducts a Safety Needs Assessment Survey of more than 1,000 key informants in its four-county area to help identify priorities for action. Thomas reports that in the 1998 survey, “the most frequently mentioned traffic safety concern was lack of sidewalks. This prompted SJTPO to use Federal funds for a project that will install sidewalks and other pedestrian safety treatments in five locations.”

The Alliance works with smaller local organizations on traffic safety issues, often providing resources and an impact that local groups could not achieve on their own. For example, it was able to work out an innovative arrangement with the Federal Highway Administration to use Federal planning funds to purchase eight

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radar speed monitor trailers, which are used by county partners and local police departments to prevent speeding by providing a visual warning to drivers, as well as to collect data on road use and speed. Other community activities in which the Alliance has participated include the Boost America Campaign (in conjunction with SAFE KIDS and the United Way), a Bicycle Safety Bowl, a Child Passenger Safety Seat Inspection Campaign (conducted by safety seat technicians whose certification was supported by the Alliance), and a Saved by the Seat Belt Club, in which people whose lives have been saved because they used seat belts share their stories and promote seat belt use.

For more information, contact Teresa Thomas at (856) 794-1941 or <Teresa@sjtsa.org>. 

SAFE KIDS/Safe Communities in Montana

In 2000, the Montana legislature discontinued the practice of using reinstatement fees from drivers convicted of impaired driving to fund local impaired driving prevention programs. Under the leadership of the Governor's Highway Safety Representative, Albert Goke, the Montana Traffic Safety Bureau (MTSB) developed a strategy to preserve local impaired driving prevention activities by offering traffic safety funding to communities that were willing to establish a coalition to address impaired driving prevention and occupant protection, using a model that combines features of Safe Communities and SAFE KIDS. Kent Mollohan of the MTSB reports:

We saw many advantages in combining the SAFE KIDS and Safe Communities programs. First was the utility of joining with a private, nonprofit organization with a history of social improvement efforts and a concern for children. It was an advantage that Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies [which sponsors Montana SAFE KIDS] was involved in many projects in addition to SAFE KIDS. Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies [HMHB] had a structure and network that is experienced in fundraising and getting projects launched and finished. We were already working with HMHB to deliver public information and education on a variety of traffic

safety, public health, and injury prevention issues. Much of the safety and health literature promotes collaborative efforts and coalitions. We followed this advice on surviving in times of diminished resources.


In addition to providing funding, MTSB helped ensure that the 17 new SAFE KIDS/Safe Communities (SKSC) coalitions were data driven by preparing a data book for each of the counties that housed one of the programs. MTSB is also going to establish a NETS chapter (see page 1) to help the coalitions expand their activities into Montana's workplaces.

Patty Carrell, Montana SKSC Coordinator, says that National SAFE KIDS responded enthusiastically to this opportunity for Montana: "This is the kind of

creativity you need to get resources to local programs within the state." In addition to highway safety funding, many of the coalitions use SAFE KIDS BUCKLE UP and General Motors grants to fund child passenger safety seat activities. Carrell explains that the SKSC model allows coalitions to engage in a broad range of injury prevention efforts:



The coalitions do seat belt surveys that feed into state DOT data as well as help the local programs track the effectiveness of their occupant protection activities. They participate in Buckle Up America and ABC mobilizations. They engage in social norms campaigns, including "Most of Us," which focuses on impaired driving and seat belt use. They get local law enforcement involved. Every coalition is a bit different. The coalitions also do other types of injury prevention projects. Once you have a foundation laid—once you learn to do public awareness activities, track data, work with the schools and law enforcement—you can use this structure to do other types of traffic safety and injury prevention activities.

For more information, contact Patty Carrell at (406) 449-8611 or <pattycarrell@hotmail.com>. 

National News

You Drink & Drive. You Lose.



Although the July 2002 You Drink & Drive. You Lose. (YD&D.YL.) mobilization is now in the past, many of the resources developed for YD&D.YL. can be used by communities in their own year-round efforts to prevent impaired driving. NHTSA also provides criminal justice and traffic safety partners with new media toolkit supplements for every Fourth of July and December mobilization. Each toolkit includes suggestions on news “hooks,” sample press releases, Op-Ed articles, fact sheets, public service announcements, talking points, posters, logo sheets, and artwork. Another valuable resource is the *Saturation Patrols and Sobriety Checkpoints How-to Guidebook*, which provides step-by-step instructions on planning and coordinating high-visibility campaign activities. The guidebook addresses issues including site selection, signage and other warning devices, detection, arrest holding areas, and chemical detection. It is designed for year-round use and contains sample proclamations, letters of support, guidance for conducting town hall meetings, evaluation questionnaires, case law summaries, and fact sheets.

These resources are available from the NHTSA website (www.nhtsa.dot.gov/) or by telephone at (888) 327-4236. BSC

National Stop on Red Week

September 7–13, 2002, is National Stop on Red Week—a week dedicated to educating Americans about the dangers of running red lights. This effort is co-sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the American Trauma Society. Resources for Safe Communities coalitions and other organizations who want to sponsor local Stop Red Light Running events are available on the FHWA Stop on Red Week website (safety.fhwa.dot.gov/fourthlevel/pro_res_srlr_week.htm). These include fact sheets, articles, and reports on current technologies to help law enforcement agencies prevent red light running, and 10 activities local programs can use to promote National Stop on Red Week. For more information, see the FHWA website or contact Patrick Hasson at (708) 283-3595 or patrick.hasson@fhwa.dot.gov. BSC



Walk to School Day

October 2, 2002, is Walk to School Day, an annual event sponsored by the Partnership for a Walkable America. Last year, students, teachers, school staff, and parents from 49 states joined 3 million participants worldwide to walk to school in support of pedestrian safety, clean air, and fitness. The Walk to School—USA website (www.walktoschool-usa.org/) includes suggestions for activities, funding ideas, and materials for organizations and communities who want to sponsor a local event. The site also includes several informative articles about the differences between young and adult pedestrians, which are essential reading for anyone interested in pedestrian safety. BSC



Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day

October 10, 2002, is the second annual Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day. This event is designed to raise consciousness about how people can reduce motor vehicle fatalities. The effort is coordinated by a coalition of more than 40 national organizations; Federal, state, and local government agencies; and corporations. Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day will feature national and state events. Resources, including a media toolkit, fact sheets, posters, logos, and talking points, are available from the Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day website (www.brakesonfatalities.org/). BSC



National School Bus Safety Week

October 20–26, 2002, is National School Bus Safety Week. As in previous years, the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT) is sponsoring a school bus safety poster contest for children of elementary and middle school age. This year's event also includes a school bus safety speech contest for high school students. The final round of the safety speech competition will be held in conjunction with the NAPT national conference in November 2002. For information about either contest or how your Safe Communities coalition or community can participate in National School Bus Safety Week, see the NAPT website (www.napt.org/) or call (800) 989-NAPT. BSC

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Safe Communities Calendar

September 7–13: *National Stop on Red Week*



October 2, 2002: *Walk to School Day*

October 7–11, 2002: *Drive Safely Work Week*



October 10, 2002: *Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day*

October 20–26, 2002: *National School Bus Safety Week*

November 24–30, 2002: *Operation ABC Mobilization*

December 2002: *You Drink & Drive. You Lose. Mobilization*



The Safe Communities Service Center

The Safe Communities Data Toolkit will soon be available for downloading at the Safe Communities Service Center (SCSC) website. This easy-to-use resource was developed to help coalitions collect and analyze injury and crash data. The toolkit helps coalitions rank injury problems and then focus on their top three problems and target populations. The toolkit helps users create a community profile; use automated templates to track deaths, injuries, and medical costs, as well as analyze contributing factors; and map locations by zip code. Visit the SCSC website to learn more about this valuable tool.

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