Traffic Records Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday December 3, 2009 from 9:30 to 11:30 am
In the Magnolia Room at the NC Judicial Center in Raleigh, NC

Present: Mitch Batuzich, Sharon Schiro, John Stokes, Brian Mayhew, Ethel Keen, Julian Council, Chad Lohmeier, Janet Greene, John Farley, Bryan Chadwick, Greg Ferrara, Ron Hughes, Carol Martell, Bill Hunter, and Eric Rodgman.

9:35 am Eric Rodgman welcomed the attending members.

9:36 am Current 408 Project Updates: John Stokes opened with the news that the MDTs in SHP vehicles are now upgraded with the TraCs software on them which began in October 2009. Janet Greene noted that printers were distributed for eCitation. Several portable computers were purchased to be placed on board the NC Batmobiles so they can transmit required forms to be signed off by the court magistrates. Otherwise, the arresting officers have to take the arrestee to the magistrate's office to complete the forms (time consuming). John Stokes added that these changes were very positive as NC makes "measurable improvements" as required by NHTSA.

Ethel Keen updated the TRCC on the pilot project to begin in January 2010 to facilitate accepting non-TraCs electronic crash reports from Charlotte, Greensboro, and possibly New Hanover County. There will be a consultant and DMV will hire 2 persons to help from the DMV side. In the case of Charlotte, the City purchased a complete data management system which does crashes as one part of that system.

Ethel updated the TRCC on the NC DMV 349 Crash Report re-design effort. John Stokes will begin the interviews this coming Friday. John noted that he had received 19 applications so far and was probably going to begin interviewing the top 3 candidates. John noted that all were from NC.

Bryan Chadwick gave an update on the new MDTs for the NC SHP. New computers were being loaded with the software and classes were being provided to the troopers. These classes should be finished in late February or early March 2010.

Brian Mayhew noted that John Farley submitted a project concept proposing to add more detail to the state GIS. At this time, Mecklenburg County can only a little over 50% of the fatal crashes in their county. John Farley stated that this project would help add more detail for the non-state roads.

Chad Lohmeier updated the TRCC on the linkages project in their area. The organization of the data in this effort is the great challenge. This system will link EMS Data – Medical Data – Crash Data. Chad felt the links would be easy, but the software to present the data to the users (depending on what they would be allowed to see) would be more challenging. Certain personal and medical data are protected and not available. The data warehouse will be quite large. The tiered data system would only show certain users select data variables.

10:00 am New Efforts: Ethel Ken noted that TraCs Version 10 will be available and would be implemented in the coming year. This new version has location and mapping tools available. This version has maps where you can click on the map and get the GPS (x,y) coordinates on the map. Bill Hunter added that they would have to keep their maps updated as roads get upgraded (e.g. Wilson NC is about to open a major by-pass around the city.   NC DOT will have to help will this process.

Brian Mayhew added that keeping up with road improvements statewide has always been difficult. John Farley added that he believed that the current system is nearly 99 % correct. John added that the relative accuracy of the mapping has to be done by a person (the officer) – being sure that the crash point is, in fact, on the right side of the road and/or the right side of the intersection.

Ethel noted that their staff will be meeting with the developers (from the University of Iowa) and experts on the TraCs system so it can be used to its' fullest potential. John Farley noted that they upload map updates to the state maps quarterly.

Greg Ferrara noted the law enforcement officer should have the option to "snap" the location so he can correct it if it is wrong. Brian noted that locating crashes to within 500 feet is pretty good. The problem is that an error of that magnitude could put the crash on the wrong side of the road / wrong side of the intersection. John Farley noted that you need the relative location to help with being accurate.

Carol Martell added that you need the location of the crash especially if it were off road – the vehicle hit a tree or other roadside hazard. John Farley noted that to have a imagery map for the whole state is very expensive (maybe $12 million or more). John suggested doing the state in thirds – use 1:20 compression techniques to shrink the data in transmission.

Ethel brought up another important issue – the state will need a new communication system. CGEN is woefully old and out-dated. Some troopers are using AirCards, but that works well in the Piedmont and Eastern parts of NC. Problems in low areas occur in the west.

Bryan Chadwick noted the SHP has moved this way up the list of priorities for their agency. CGEN is not capable for the new TraCS, other key data transmission items that are required. AirCards work, but to outfit the entire SHP for a year is 1 million dollars. Verizon has good cell coverage over the state. Buying for the SHP should allow for a good deal on a large purchase (1000+). This might be an issue to ask the Executive Committee for Highway Safety to assist on.

Ron Hughes added that the money might be available under the "homeland security" umbrella. The SHP communications network is necessary to NC security.

Ethel suggested that this be a joint effort involving DMV, SHP, and the TRCC. This might be a future 408 money effort. John Stokes noted that this source is not likely to be able to provide that much money.

Janet Greene noted that the NC Aware has about one quarter of the state covered for transferring "arrestables" data to and from the magistrates. This is done with AirCards.

Ron Hughes asked if using AirCards was OK with the NC IT. Is there a policy?

Janet Greene added that the SBI has a good system – no one else is allowed to share it with them.

Bryan Chadwick noted the three biggest concerns for the SHP are vehicles, gas for them, and communications. He noted that the SHP needs help with the Strategic Plan (3 years) with keeping up with these three large expenses. Brian Mayhew asked how the TRCC could help?

Mitch Batuzich mentioned that FHWA may have some money which could be used to help. He will check on this possibility, then let us know.

John Stokes noted that we need a sub-committee to address this important issue. Janet Greene, Ethel Keen, Bryan Chadwick, Ron Hughes, and Eric Rodgman will pursue this issue. The plan is to start with creating a "needs statement", and then from that, create a description of recommendations on how to best approach solving this issue for the entire NC TRCC to provide input for.

Brain Mayhew brought up another issue concerning certain cities not sending in their crash data. It may be the case that non-injury cases are being considered non-reportables (< $1000 property damage) so a full 349 is not required / completed. In particular, Brian mentioned that Wilson, Gastonia, Pine Level, Four Oaks, and Charlotte have seen significant drops in the number of crashes being submitted to DMV during 2009.

Ethel will contact these city PDs to work out a solution. She asked Brian to provide her with the documentation showing these dramatic changes.

This can be a big problem since cities not reporting all their truly reportable crashes appear to be reducing crashes!! AAA Carolinas gives awards to the safest cities in NC. They could be making awards based on erroneous crash data for the cities.

11:30 am   Eric asked the TRCC when the next meeting should be? The group wanted either the first or second week in February 2010. Eric will do an email poll on select dates in February to determine the best date for the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted by NC TRCC Co-chair Eric Rodgman.

.