

**Executive Committee for Highway Safety  
Meeting Minutes; Mtg. #3  
January 21, 2004**

**Location:**

Chief Engineer's Conference Room, Beryl Drive @ 9:30 a.m.

**Committee Members in Attendance:**

David King	Susan Coward	Bob Andrews	Debbie Barbour
Ken Bumgarner	Sherri Johnson	John Crone	Peg Dorer
Herb Garrison	Darrell Jernigan	Kevin Lacy	Calvin Leggett
Jim Long	Troy Peoples	Drexdal Pratt	Doug Robertson
John Sullivan	George Tatum	Steve Varnedoe	Jim Westmoreland

**Guests in Attendance:**

Don Voelker	Brad Hibbs	Max Tate	Joe Geigle	Cliff Braam
Eric Rodgman	Shawna Browne	Jane C. Stutts	Karen Croysdale	Raghavan Srinivasan
Don Nail	Chris Broome			

**Scribe:**

Cliff Braam

**Minutes:**

- The meeting began at approximately 9:35 a.m.

**Task I – New Members**

- David opened the meeting with a moment of silence and remembrance for DOT members and their family who have been involved in recent vehicle crashes.
  - Lin Wiggins, State Bridge Maintenance Engineer, was killed in a car crash on January 19.
  - Tim Hinnant's daughter was seriously injured in a head-on car crash and is still in the hospital. Tim works with the Governor's Highway Safety Program.
- David announced that the Secretary's office has appointed him as the new Chair of the Executive Committee and that Susan Coward has been named as the Vice-Chair. David then introduced new members of the committee and also new members that have been appointed to fill vacated seats. These members include:

**Ken Bumgarner**; Jacksonville Chief of Police

**Susan Coward**; Deputy Secretary – NCDOT Intergovernmental Affairs

**John Crone**; Mooresville Chief of Police

**Peg Dorer**; Director N.C. Conference of District Attorneys

**Herb Garrison III, MD**; Director Eastern Carolina Injury Prevention Program

**Drexdal Pratt**; Director N.C. Office of Emergency Medical Services

**Darrell Jernigan**; Director Governor's Highway Safety Program – Replaces Don Nail and **Steve Varnedoe**; Chief Engineer – Operations – Replaces Don Goins

- All members of the committee introduced themselves again since there were new members present.

## **Task II – Action Items from Previous Meeting**

- At the previous meeting there was discussion of getting endorsement of the Executive Committee from the Governor's office and having a publicized media blitz similar to what a couple of other states had apparently done.
- It was decided that instead of getting the Governor's endorsement of the committee, it would be better to wait until the committee had actual action items that were more news worthy. These could then be presented to the Governor for his approval. The committee will also keep his office informed of its actions on a regular basis.
- Kevin stated that Washington had a "Program Zero" and that Minnesota had an effort called "Towards Zero", but he was not sure if their Governor had officially endorsed these programs but instead was supporting their efforts.
- It was also noted that in the previous meeting, the committee adopted the goal of 1.0 fatalities per 100 MVM traveled by the year 2008. North Carolina is currently at 1.6 and therefore reaching this goal will require a 40% reduction in our present rate.

## **Task III – "Top 5 Issues" Rankings**

There was a lot of good discussion concerning this task. The major issues raised are listed and the final outcome is summarized in table below.

- Due to many factors, it is likely that the Committee will only be able to address 3-5 issues at a time.
- It was decided to combine Item #15 (Keeping Vehicles on the Roadway), #16 (Minimizing the Consequences of Leaving the Road) and #18 (Reducing Head-On and Across Median Crashes) into one item.
- Kevin noted that this has also been done by AASHTO and the new grouping is collectively referred to as "Lane Departure Crashes."

- It was noted how successful NC has been in preventing across median crashes on freeways with the installation of median barriers.
  - ◆ Kevin stated that this system has saved over 70 lives to date, that the system has already paid for itself and that it still has many years of useful service life left.
  - ◆ Debbie said that all freeways with median widths of less than 70 feet wide are being retrofitted with median barrier and that median barrier is being included in all new contracts where applicable.
  - ◆ Jim L. expressed concern with the median barrier as related to emergency vehicle operations.
  - ◆ Kevin stated that new guidelines concerning breaks in median barrier went into effect January 1, 2004 and that these were developed with the assistance of the ER community.
- Sherrie stated that she felt that items #6 (Keeping Drivers Alert) and #7 (Increasing Driver Safety Awareness) should be combined and probably needed to be in the top 5.
- Doug stated that since speed was a contributing factor in so many of the various areas, that he felt it needed to have a dedicated working group. This would allow the issue of speed to be addressed as a whole instead of in pieces through the work of other working groups.
- Ken suggested that speed be combined with item #4 (Curbing Aggressive Driving).
- For item #8 (Increasing Seat Belt Usage) it was decided to remove the “Improving Airbag Effectiveness” portion from this item since we can have no impact on this. It was also discussed that while the “Click It or Ticket” campaign has been highly successful, that there may need to be a change in or an additional emphasis placed on this, since NC’s belt usage rate seems to have leveled off.
- For item #5 (Reducing Impaired Driving), it was noted that the Governor’s Task Force on DWI was being reformed and therefore the Committee should follow the lead of and support the efforts of this group.

The following table summarizes the final grouping of items along with possible agencies to be represented in the working groups.

<b>AASHTO Item #</b>	<b>Key Emphasis Area</b>	<b>Possible Agencies</b>
15 16 18	<b>Lane Departure Crashes</b> Keeping Vehicles on the Roadway Minimizing the Consequences of Leaving the Road Reducing Head-on & Across Median Crashes	Traffic Engineering, Operations, Law Enforcement (State & Local), HSRC, Public Information, Local DOT, District Attorney, ,Public Information
2	Ensuring Drivers are Licensed and Fully Competent	DMV, Law Enforcement, District Attorneys, UNC HSRC, SHP, Public Information
4 N/A	Curbing Aggressive Driving Speed	HSRC, Law Enforcement, GHSP, District Attorneys, Insurance, Public Information, Local DOT
8	Increasing Seat Belt Usage	GHSP, Public Information, Law Enforcement, District Attorneys, Insurance, DMV, Medical, Public Information, UNC HSRC
6 7	Keeping Drivers Alert Increasing Driver Safety Awareness	GHSP, HSRC, DMV, Public Information, District Attorneys, Medical, Local DOT

#### **Task IV – Traffic Records Work Group**

- Kevin gave a brief overview of the Traffic Records Coordinating Committee (TRCC) and its efforts to date.
- Kevin also stated that the Electronic Reporting of collision reports project is underway. This project will increase both timelines and accuracy. By May 2004, pilot testing will be underway with local law enforcement offices and the State Highway Patrol. It is anticipated by the end of 2004, there will be widespread use of the system and many of the collision reports in the state will be sent directly into the crash database.

#### **Task V – Legislative Initiatives – Short Session**

- It was noted that once again there is an effort to end NC's existing helmet laws by various groups and that this is now back in a legislative sub-committee.
- It was discussed and decided that the committee as a whole would take a stance on this issue in favor of keeping NC's mandatory helmet law in place. There was no opposition to this by any of the present committee members.
- It was decided that a resolution would be drafted and sent out to all of the committee members for comments in support of the helmet law. This resolution will list each

committee member and their agency to show the diversity of the committee (covering a wide range of stakeholders in highway safety) and will be signed by each member.

## **Task VI – Other Issues**

- Deer crashes continue to be an on-going problem in NC. Cliff gave some general statistics concerning deer/vehicle related crashes. There are approximately 14,000 reported animal related collisions in NC each year, with approximately 90% of these involving deer. These crashes represent 6% of all crashes, resulting in approximately 4 fatalities, 1,200+ injuries and \$30 million in property damage each year.
- Cliff discussed the wide range of available countermeasures and stated that the Department has reviewed a system of roadside reflectors for a possible pilot project. However, due to several factors, the systems was not justified nor installed.
- Speed issues were discussed earlier in the meeting under Task III and there was no further discussion.
- John presented the committee with a chart illustrating NC Fatal Crash Rates by road type (i.e. Interstate, US route, etc.)
- The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

### **Action Items:**

- ◆ Draft resolution in support of keeping NC's helmet law as it is. This will be distributed to the committee members for review and comments. Once finalized, this will be signed by all committee members and presented to the legislative sub-committee.
- ◆ David, Susan and Kevin will meet to discuss the formation of working groups for the items as outlined in Task III above. Once this is done, working groups will be established and your office may be contacted for recommendations for participation in one or more working groups. If you would like to make a recommendation<sup>4</sup> prior to being contacted, please contact Kevin at 919-733-5418 or Cliff at 919-733-5699.
- ◆ **Next Meeting: April 21, 2004 9:30**