

Executive Committee for Highway Safety
Meeting Minutes; Mtg. #8
April 28, 2005

Location:

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

Committee Members in Attendance:

David King	Susan Coward	Bob Andrews	Debbie Barbour
Fletcher Clay	Don Nail	Kevin Lacy	Mike Stanley
Axel Lluch	Ashley Memory	Doug Robertson	Jim Westmoreland
Mike Yaniero			

Guests in Attendance:

Charlie Brown	Dave Haggist	Katy Jones	Forrest Council	Max Tate
Brad Hibbs	Joe Geigle	Kelly Damron	Rob Stone	Kevin Breedlove
Cliff Braam				

Scribe:

Cliff Braam

Minutes:

- The meeting began at approximately 9:30 a.m.

Task I – Welcome

David opened the meeting and everyone introduced themselves for the benefit of new members and guest that were present.

Davis mentioned the “Tag It” program that is being utilized to identify damaged sections of median barrier and other roadside safety devices by law enforcement personnel in an effort to help the DOT collect damages. He said that this program was saving the department money and time and thanked the Highway Patrol for participating in this program

Ashley shared an article with the committee from the publication “*Public Roads*”, on the Department’s median barrier program and the positive effect it has had on saving lives as a result of preventing cross median crashes. At the end of the article, there is also mention of the Executive Committee and some of its efforts.

Task II – Safe Speed; Photo Speed Enforcement

Captain Dave Haggist of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department gave a presentation on the photo speed enforcement program currently underway in Charlotte. Charlotte DOT Traffic

Safety identified 14 corridors where speed related crashes occur more frequently. These 14 corridors constitute only 2% of the total road mileage but account for more than 30% of speed related crashes. The program utilizes vans equipped with Lidar (laser radar) coupled with a digital camera and can issue citations at the rate of one every 0.5 seconds. The program is proving to be very successful and from August 2, 2004 to April 2, 2005, six officers operating Safe Speed issued 19,452 citations. Of these, there have been 103 appeals, with all but 6 citations upheld.

Copies of the presentation will be available on the ECHS web site.

Task III – Red Light Running

Forrest Council gave the Committee an overview of a study completed on the evaluation of red-light cameras. This economic analysis represents the first attempt in the known literature to combine the positive effects of right-angle crash reductions with the negative effects of rear end crash increases and identify factors that might further enhance the effects of RLC systems. Even though the positive effects on angle crashes of RLC systems is partially offset by negative effects related to increases in rear end crashes, there is still a modest to moderate economic benefit of between \$39,000 and \$50,000 per treated site year, depending on consideration of only injury crashes or including PDO crashes, and whether the statistically non-significant shift to slightly more severe angle crashes remaining after treatment is, in fact, real. Even if modest, this economic benefit is important. In many instances today, the RLC systems pay for themselves through red-light-running fines generated. However, in many jurisdictions, this differs from most safety treatments where there are installation, maintenance, and other costs that must be weighed against the treatment benefits.

Copies of the presentation will be available on the ECHS web site.

Task IV – Improving Incident Management

Rob Stone, State Incident Management Engineer, gave a presentation on “Improving Incident Management”. Rob’s group is working to establish an executive level traffic incident management coalition with the ultimate goals of improve the safety of motorists and emergency responders while reducing traffic congestion and costs associated with traffic incidents.

An invitation was extended to the Committee members or someone from their staff to attend the initial Traffic Incident Management workshop to be held on May 23, 2005 from 10:00 – 2:00. More information will be sent to Committee members when a final meeting location is determined.

Copies of the presentation will be available on the ECHS web site.

Task V – Fatal Trends Update

Kevin gave the group an update on the fatal trends. So far this year, fatalities are up approximately 8% as compared to this time last year with fatalities in some areas increasing more than 10% (sideswipe, utility pole, trees, bicycle, pedestrian and rail road crossings). One alarming statistic is the number of rail road

crossing related fatalities. So far this year, there have already been six of these fatalities as compared to one at this time last year.

Kevin mentioned that he and David had discussed possibly developing a public information campaign entitled “STOP!”. Asking people to stop killing themselves and others on the highways. Kevin will discuss this further with Ashley and report back to the group.

Task VI – Working Groups; Updates and Strategies

ENSURING DRIVERS ARE LICENSED WORKING GROUP

Cliff reported to the Committee that the work group has two strategies in final draft mode which should be ready for submission to the committee at the next meeting. The first strategy “Habitual Revoked Drivers” focuses on strengthening the penalties for individuals who continue to drive even after being permanently revoked and includes a recommendation for mandatory jail time. The second strategy, “Impoundment of License Plates” deals with immediately revoking license plates on a vehicle that is stopped if the driver is discovered to be DWLR.

INCREASING SAFETY BELT USAGE WORKING GROUP

Darrel was not present at the meeting, but was at the legislature presenting the Safety Belt strategy to the Senate Judiciary II committee. Therefore in his absence, Cliff briefed the Committee on the status of the Senate Bill 774 “Seat Belt Enhancements”. Darrell, Kevin, Bill Hall from HSRC and Cliff met with Senator Purcell (bill sponsor) and made some revisions to the originally introduced bill. Darrell and Cliff put together a package of information to share with the Judiciary II committee members along with a video showing the effects of unbelted rear seat passengers on front seat occupants in a crash. A copy of the legislative package, along with a revised copy of SB 774 was distributed to the Committee members and the video was shown.

Cliff mentioned that Committee members should discuss this bill and its importance and potential life saving impact with members of the legislation at any opportunity that may arise. Education of the legislators will be key in getting this bill passed.

Susan mentioned that if Committee members could not “sell” the bill on its safety aspects, that they should make the legislators aware of the financial ramifications, especially in regards to commercial motor vehicles. If North Carolina does not increase its CDL belt rates, it risk loosing upwards of \$32 million initially and then \$65 million in the following year. If this compliance rate is increased to 90% or better, our 402 allotment monies will increase by 4-5 times their present amounts (up to about \$20 million per year for N.C.)

The progress of the bill can be followed at:

<http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/gascripts/BillLookUp/BillLookUp.pl?Session=2005&BillID=s774>

KEEPING DRIVERS ALERT WORKING GROUP

Katie and Jessica updated the Committee on the on-going efforts to conduct focus groups. The group is now utilizing the Governor's Pages to have the focus groups with and to date have conducted two sessions. The discussions have gone well and have been eye opening to say the least. There are a total of 7 groups currently scheduled. At the conclusion of these, the data gathered will be analyzed and the group will look to craft a message and program targeting distracted teen drivers. Katie and Jessica discussed some of the specific comments and these can be found in their presentation.

Copies of the presentation will be available on the ECHS web site.

SPEED WORKING GROUP

Kevin briefed the committee on the efforts of the speed working group. The group is still investigating and talking to District Attorneys about the Safe Speed Act and continues to work on other homework assignments.

Doug R. and Kevin have been invited to a national conference on Speed to take place in June.

LANE DEPARTURE WORKING GROUP

Cliff gave the Committee an update on the efforts of the group. The last meeting was spent discussing the drivers education program in North Carolina. There was a lot of good discussion and the group hopes to come to some specific conclusions at the next meeting about drivers education.

Information was also given about an Advanced Driving School program that is taught by Leigh Gill in the piedmont region. Leigh's class trains in three primary areas 1) Emergency Maneuvers, 2) Run Off Road and 3) Time/Distance/Speed.

Leigh has offered to set up his course for the Committee members at their convenience. Most Committee members in attendance, expressed interest in going to the course. Cliff will coordinate possible dates with Leigh and Committee members.

For more information about Leigh's program, please visit his web site at: <http://www.ads-1st.com/pages/1/index.htm>.

INTERSECTION WORKING GROUP

Cliff announced that the member list of the Intersection Working Group is nearly complete. As soon as a Chair is selected, this group should be up and running.

Task VII – Legislative Issues

Kevin made the announcement that issues that have come from the working groups this year that have required legislative action have rested upon the DOT to be taken care of. This has put an additional burden on the Department in conjunction with all of its other legislative requirements.

For the upcoming year, any strategies coming out of the working groups that will require legislative action will need to be presented to the Executive Committee by the January meeting. At that meeting, the Committee will divide the issues up among the represented agencies to pursue the required legislation.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

- ◆ **Next Meeting: July 27, 2005; 9:30 – 11:30 Chief Engineer’s Conference Room**