

Executive Committee for Highway Safety
Meeting Minutes; Mtg. #9
July 27, 2005

Location:

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

Committee Members in Attendance:

David King	Bob Andrews	Debbie Barbour	Herb Garrison
Terry Hopkins	Darrell Jernigan	Kevin Lacy	Ashley Memory
John Sullivan	Steve Varnedoe		

Guests in Attendance:

Carrie Reeves	Don Nail	John Stokes	Travis Braswell	Max Tate
Brad Hibbs	Joe Geigle	Major Munday	Don Voelker	Missy Dickens
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.

Major Munday gave the Committee an update/overview of the Patrol's Operation Slowdown 2005 program which will run through throughout the summer and is a group effort aimed at "wolfpacking" enforcement efforts targeting speeding and other violations. These enforcement efforts will utilize marked and unmarked patrol cars, motorcycles and even the patrol's helicopter.

Major Munday also told the group of a custom SHP "chopper" that has been built by a group out of Charlotte. Once all necessary approvals are obtained, the intent is to use this vehicle for education/awareness campaigns specifically those targeting the Harley or biker groups.

Kevin noted that visibility and sustained enforcement are key to keeping speeds down.

Task II – Update on DWI Legislation

Ike Avery gave the Committee and update on the present DWI Legislation. There are currently bills in both the House and the Senate and both are in various stages of the process.

For more information or to check on these status of these bills, please refer to the General Assembly web page <http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/homePage.pl> and enter “H 1048” for the house bill or “S 1069” for the senate bill under the “Bill Look Up” section on the right hand side of the page.

The bills may also be found here:

<http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/gascripts/BillLookUp/BillLookUp.pl?Session=2005&BillID=h1048>
<http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/gascripts/BillLookUp/BillLookUp.pl?Session=2005&BillID=s+1069>

Task III – Fatal Trends Update

Kevin gave an update on the fatal trends so far for this year. At the present time, fatal crashes are down 1.5% as compared to this time last year and fatalities are down 3.1%.

Sideswipe, tree, utility pole, RR crossing and pedestrian crashes are all up significantly (at least 20%) from this time last year.

Unbelted, across median, work zone, intersection bicycle and motorcycle related fatalities are all down to some degree from this time last year.

Task IV – Recommended New Working Groups

There was discussion about adding three new working groups to the Executive Committee. These will be targeting 1) Motorcycles, 2) Older Drivers and 3) Public Information.

The motorcycle working group will be a continuation of an effort that has been ongoing for some time. This group has been meeting approximately four time a year and is actively seeking ways to increase motorcycle safety. It is anticipated that this group will focus on items other than the helmet issue. The Governor’s Highway Safety Program office will take the lead on this effort and John Stokes will chair the group.

The working group for Older Drivers will be a continuation of the Senior Driver Coalition that has been meeting for approximately two years. Jane Stutts from the Highway Safety Research Center at UNC Chapel Hill will serve as the chair.

The Public Information working group will be chaired by Ashley Memory. The focus of this group will not necessarily be to simply put out “news blitzes” but to disseminate other valuable information coming out of the Executive Committee and it’s working groups. The goal of this group will not be to put out distressing news and emphasizing the number of highway related deaths, but rather to publicize the positive programs and how they are working to reduce fatalities and injuries.

The addition of all three groups was unanimously approved by all Committee members who were present.

Task V – Working Groups; Updates and Strategies

INCREASING SAFETY BELT USAGE WORKING GROUP

Senate bill 774 gained favorable support from the Senate Judicial II committee and is now in the Finance committee. The bill is sitting waiting until the committee get started back up. Darrell spoke with Senator Kerr who was initially strongly opposed to the requirements of SB 774, but now the Senator said that he will not fight the passage of the bill.

Committee members were asked to continue talking with legislators and others who can make a difference in getting SB 774 passed. If this can not be sold on the safety benefits alone, it should be pointed out that 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. Also, 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>

The results of the spring Click It campaign are in and it appears that belt usage is up about 0.5% which is pretty significant considering how high our usage rate is. This puts us nearly at 87% (just a little shy).

The crash statistics continue to show that teenage drivers are not buckling up. GHSP is looking to begin a statewide program focusing on getting teens buckled up. Part of this effort will include the high school program where parking lots will be monitored for belt usage. Darrell has already received commitment from 55 schools and the program will start up within the next two months.

KEEPING DRIVERS ALERT WORKING GROUP

The group has finished the last of the focus groups with teen drivers and the summary report is available. This will be distributed with the meeting minutes. We have also talked with Dr. Dougall, a professor at UNC Chapel Hill about having her class develop the campaign for distracted teens for the working group and Committee. Discussions are on-going, but it appears that her class will take on this endeavor as the class project for next semester.

Jane mentioned that HSRC had been in contact with Dr. Ken Mills who is working on a Distracted and Aggressive Driver Education Project that is a cognitive-behavioral approach to driver education. Dr. Mills has discussed his program with Chief District Judge Joe Buckner

(Chatham/Orange Counties) and Judge Buckner is interested in having defendants in his court complete Dr. Mills program and evaluating the out come. The KDA group will likely be talking to Dr. Mills more about this in the near future.

There is currently a Senate Bill (SB 102) that will prohibit cell phone use by drivers under the age of 18. This bill is presently in the Senate Judiciary II committee. For details of the bill see the following:

<http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/gascripts/BillLookUp/BillLookUp.pl?Session=2005&BillID=s+102>

SPEED WORKING GROUP

There were three committee members who attended the National Symposium on Speed in Washington D.C.. The national issues related to speed are much the same as the ones we are seeing in North Carolina. Use of photo enforcement was one of the major initiatives that came out of the symposium and the Speed working group will explore this further.

One thing to keep in mind when considering the cost of countermeasures for our crash problems. The cost of *EACH* fatality in N.C. is approximately \$3 million. We need to associate this cost with the cost of the countermeasures.

LANE DEPARTURE WORKING GROUP

Discussions are continuing on driver's education and the fact that although it is hard to put a tangible value on the program, it is also difficult to say that the program is not worth the effort. One of the most effective aspects involving our young drivers is the Graduated Drivers License program which has had a tremendous impact on reducing crashes and fatalities among 15-17 year old drivers. However, for some reason, once these individuals reach the ages of 18 to 19, the crash and fatality rates go back up.

The group will continue to explore the driver's education issue and will begin to look at international programs where research shows that progress is being made.

The Committee has asked this group to explore why there is a lack of state wide standards for driver's education in N.C.

The group continues to believe that there is a value in some sort of advanced driving school for young drivers. If an advanced driving school could secure funding to teach these concepts to a concentrated group of students (i.e. an entire high school), then the Lane Departure working group would recommend that the Committee fund an evaluation of these effort to determine the benefit (or lack of) that a program like this provides.

Steve mentioned to the group that the DOT has pending legislation focusing on its secondary roads program which is currently funded at about \$180 million per year. The legislation would allow the Department to transition out of the approach of paving all secondary roads to improving secondary roads. In 2006 the first \$68 million would be based upon the total number

of miles of secondary roads and would allow for more “Moving Ahead” type of projects. Many of these would/could address the very issues faced by this working group. By the year 2010/2022 all of the program funding would be based upon secondary road miles.

INTERSECTION WORKING GROUP

The intersection working group has held their initial meeting. The meeting primarily focused on explaining what the Executive Committee is and the role of the working group. The group did begin discussing some of the practices that are presently being utilized or under consideration to reduce intersection related crashes.

ENSURING DRIVERS ARE LICENSED WORKING GROUP

The strategy, “Impoundment of License Plates” was presented to the Committee. This is an aggressive strategy that targets individuals who continue to drive without a valid license. The Committee felt that the strategy needed to be worked on further to focus on the worst of the offenders and something that was perhaps easier to sell to the legislators.

The working group will rework the strategy.

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

◆ **Next Meeting: October 12, 2005; 9:30 – 11:30 Chief Engineer’s Conference Room**