

**Executive Committee for Highway Safety**  
**Meeting Minutes; Mtg. #12**  
**April 25, 2006**

**Location:**

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

**Committee Members in Attendance:**

David King	Susan Coward	Bob Andrews	Doug Galyon
David Harkey	Darrell Jernigan	Terry Hopkins	Kevin Lacy
John Sullivan	Mike Yaniero		

**Guests in Attendance:**

Jessica Jones	Katy Jones	John Stokes	Delisa	Catherine McLaurin
Brad Hibbs	Beth Horner	Cpt. Glidewell	Max Tate	Missy Dickens
Don Voelker	Tom Crosby	Nicole Burris	Tony Spence	Jane Stutts
Chris Hartley	James Williams	Vivian Bridges	Chris Broom	Brian Mayhew
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.

**Task II – Fatal Trends Update**

Kevin gave an update on the fatal trends for the year 2005. Although final numbers are not in, the projected fatalities for 2005 is 1,468, down from 1,585 in 2004. This is a decrease of 110 fatalities and drops N.C.'s fatal rate from 1.66 to 1.51 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled. The preliminary numbers show a 2% decrease in fatal crashes and a 9% decrease in fatalities. Using the year 2002 as the baseline for the ECHS, the fatal trend line has been relatively flat, however, preliminary 2005 numbers if they hold, will show a significant decrease.

These numbers are **PRELIMINARY** and are likely to change some when the final totals for 2005 come in.

David commented that although this is significant progress, that everyone needs to stress that we still are not where we need/want to be yet, especially when dealing with the media, legislators, the public, etc. and that we still have a lot of work to do.

A large number of the fatalities in 2005 were due to unbelted back seat passengers. Committee members were asked to keep this fact in mind and use this to further stress the need for passage of Senate Bill 774 (All seating positions buckled) when talking to our legislators.

Several Committee members made the comment that the numbers are beginning to look better, but everyone should only bask in the glory briefly as there is still much work left to be done. There was talk about possibly putting out a press release, but again there was guarded caution as the Committee does not want to suggest to the media, public or anyone else “that we have arrived” as there is still much work to be done.

### **Task III – 2006 NCDOT Agenda**

Terry handed out copies of the DOT Secretary’s agenda for 2006. One of the key items on this agenda is the Executive Committee for Highway Safety. With the ECHS being on the Secretary’s agenda, this further illustrates the importance that the DOT has and continues to place on the Committee.

### **Task IV – Work Zone Safety Work Group Overview**

Terry gave the Committee a brief overview of the Work Zone Safety Work Group that is active within DOT. Jimmy Travis leads this group which has four primary goals:

- Better awareness and education,
- Adjudication & Enforcement,
- Improving technologies and practices and
- Improving Work Zone plans.

The group may look towards the ECHS for help on future issues affecting work zone safety.

### **Task V – SAFE TEA-LU Overview**

Brad Hibbs gave a overview of the new SAFE TEA\_LU legislation and addressed some of the highlights in regards to funding and potential impacts of this program. Nationally, this program will encompass \$182 billion in spending. In North Carolina, this will translate into roughly \$5.1 billion over the life of the bill (through September 2009). These funding levels are approximately %30 greater than what was available in TEA 21. SAFET TEA-LU will emphasize state’s Highway Safety Improvement Programs and funding in part will be tied back to the HSIP.

In general,. SAFET TEA-LU will make more money available, will focus more on safety and accountability.

## **Task VI – Future Working Groups**

Kevin told the Committee that there are two key areas where we are experiencing safety issues that we do not have working groups established for; Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety and Incident Management. These two topics were discussed and the Group agreed to establish two new working groups to address these issues.

Kevin and David will discuss and select Chairs.

## **Task VII – Working Groups**

### **COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY**

Darrell reported that his group has met twice and is composed of a broad spectrum of backgrounds. The group has been given a presentation on future trucking trends in the U.S. and anticipates a dramatic increase in trucking tonnage and related issues, making the charge of this group all the more important.

The group has been divided into four technical working groups focusing on:

- Engineering,
- Enforcement,
- Education and
- Legislation/Adjudication.

### **OLDER DRIVERS**

Jane Stutts, Chair, reported out on the Older Drivers Working Group. Jane stated that although there is no strategy to present yet, the group should have a strategy ready for the next ECHS meeting that will address signing issues at interchanges. Jane also stated that the group is looking into older driver education for engineers and an even larger scale public education campaign coming from the national level.

### **MOTORCYCLE SAFETY WORKING GROUP**

John Stokes, Chair, reported out on the progress of the group. Motorcycles comprise less than 1% of registered vehicles and 0.2% of the miles driven, but account for nearly 9% of highway fatalities. The group presented two strategies for review and approval by the Committee.

### **Operators Permit**

Presently, there are no limits on how long a person can operate a motorcycle with a learner's permit. To obtain such a permit requires only the successful completion of a written test and no demonstration of rider skills. This strategy proposes that the permit system be revised to allow a one year non-renewable permit by taking the DMV written test if they have held a valid NC drivers license for two years or more. Individuals with less than two years valid drivers license will be required to successfully complete the NC Motorcycle Safety Education Program. Individuals less than 18 years of age would be required to take and successfully complete the NC Motorcycle Safety Education Program course.

The development of this strategy was initiated at the request of Representative Joe Hackney.

**Motion to approve this strategy was made by John Sullivan, Seconded by Mike Yaniero and unanimously approved by the Committee.**

### **Clarify Legal Helmets**

This strategy targets clarification of the current legislation detailing what constitutes a “legal” helmet. In order to correct this situation, North Carolina needs to eliminate situation that the wording of our current law, G.S. 20-140.4, creates. The wording currently reads “No person shall operate a motorcycle or moped upon a highway or public vehicular area: ...(2) Unless the operator and all passengers thereon wear safety helmets **of a type approved by the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles.**” (emphasis added). The problem occurs due to the fact that there is no guidance from the Commissioner on this law. There is no list, or directive explaining what type of safety helmet is approved and acceptable. This leaves the door open to any type of head covering to be worn. This creates a law that is unenforceable and places motorcyclists in an unsafe situation. It also creates a situation that places all taxpayers at risk to cover medical expenses for motorcyclists that require long-term care that is a result of preventable head injuries.

This strategy consists of a technical revision to G.S. 20-140.4 (2) that eliminates the phrase “of a type approved by the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles” and changes it to reflect that only helmets that meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) Number 218 are approved for use in North Carolina.

**Motion to approve this strategy was made by Kevin Lacy, Seconded by Kimberly Overton and unanimously approved by the Committee.**

### **LANE DEPARTURE WORKING GROUP**

No new reports. Working Group is working on a lot of different issues at the present time.

### **ENSURING DRIVERS ARE LICENSED WORKING GROUP**

No new reports.

### **INCREASING SAFETY BELT USAGE WORKING GROUP**

Darrell Jernigan, Chair, reminded the Committee that Senate Bill 774 will hopefully be up for vote in the House during this session. Committee members were urged to stress the importance of this bill to any legislators they know. Darrell said that Charlie Deal with the NC Trucking Association will be speaking with select representatives in support of this bill and that the Governor’s office was notified in March concerning the stoppage of funding if the CMV portion of this bill does not pass.

#### **KEEPING DRIVERS ALERT WORKING GROUP**

Tom Crosby, Chair, reported out. The child fatality task force has gotten legislation introduced to ban the use of cell phones by a GDL driver. The group has also submitted a concept statement to GHSP seeking funding for the Teen Distracted Driving campaign.

#### **INTERSECTION SAFETY WORKING GROUP**

Terry Hopkins, Chair, gave an update on the strategy “Advanced Street Name Plaques/Signage for Improved Driver Navigation” to the Committee. The strategy was presented to the Division Engineers who had concerns in regards to sign proliferation and costs. Terry was asked to have Traffic Engineering draft a policy on the use and implementation of these signs. Terry will have this done and present the policy to the Division Engineers. If they approve, the strategy will be brought back to the ECHS.

#### **SPEED WORKING GROUP**

No new reports.

#### **Task VII – Next Meeting Date**

**July 25, 2006; 9:30 – 11:30; Chief Engineer’s Conference Room.**

At the conclusion of the meeting, David King, in honor of his retirement and excellent service he has given the Committee in his role as chair, was presented a plaque from the Committee members.

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