

Executive Committee for Highway Safety
Meeting Minutes; Mtg. #13
July 25, 2006

Location:

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

Committee Members in Attendance:

Susan Coward	Bob Andrews	Doug Galyon	Debbie Barbour
Herb Garrison	Darrell Jernigan	Terry Hopkins	Kevin Lacy
John Sullivan	Mike Yaniero	Axel Lluch	John Sullivan
Jim Westmoreland			

Guests in Attendance:

Tom Crosby	Katy Jones	Tony Wyatt	Roberto Canales	Brian Purvis
Brad Hibbs	Beth Horner	Kelly Damron	Max Tate	Sannon Lassiter
Don Nail	Joe Geigle	Tom Norman	Stephen Lowry	Jane Stutts
Chris Hartley	Brian Mayhew	Cliff Braam		

Scribe:

Cliff Braam

Minutes:

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

Task I – Welcome

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

Susan introduced Tom Norman and Kelly Damron to the group. Tom will be chairing the newly formed Bicycle and Pedestrian Working Group and Kelly will be chairing the newly formed Incident Management Working Group.

Tom gave everyone a brief overview of his working group and stated that the group's first meeting was scheduled for the upcoming Friday (July 28).

Kelly introduced Brian Purvis from her office. Brian will be co-chairing the Incident Management Working Group. Kelly asked the Committee members for participation from their staffs in this group. She stated that 30% of all crashes and 20% of all fatalities are a result of secondary incidents. Kelly said that the focus of this working group would be to determine ways to 1) minimize the duration of cleanup and 2) to get information out to the traveling public about an incident.

Task II – Fatal Trends Update

Kevin gave an update on the fatal trends for the year 2005. Since the report out at the last Committee meeting, there have been 56 fatalities added. This is mainly a result of information coming in from vital records who sends information into DMV, as they are running behind this year. These additional fatalities bring the 2005 totals up to 1,417 crashes and 1,546 fatalities. These numbers are still below the final totals for 2004.

In an effort to reach the 1.0 goal by 2008, we need a reduction in fatalities of 32%. While this is a lofty goal, hopefully the passage of Senate Bill 774 (requiring rear seat passengers to be belted) will assist reaching this goal.

Since we established our baseline in 2002, the fatal trend line has been on a negative slope, but relatively flat. The time has now come for us to begin to push this trend line down.

Kevin handed out and reviewed several charts in regards to our annual fatalities. Most notable was the fact that in an effort to reduce our fatal rate to 1.0, our total number of annual fatals will have to be equal to the total number of fatals in 1945, while our annual VMT is over 17 times higher (i.e. currently, our 3 week VMT is equivalent to the 1945 annual VMT).

Task III – Strategic Highway Safety Plan Update

SAFETEA-LU requires each state to have in place a Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). The Executive Committee and its Working Groups will be our SHSP. It is more valuable to do things and have projects being implemented than to have a document saying what we want to do.

The plan will need to be completed by September 2006 and have the DOT Secretary sign off on it and submit it to the Federal Highway Administration for approval.

We have discussed this already with FHWA and they are in agreement with our proposed course of action on this.

Task IV – Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Overview

One requirement of the SAFETEA-LU is that each state list and publish their top 5% of HSIP locations. We have been doing this in N.C. for many years, so we are already in compliance with this requirement.

Stephen Lowry gave the Committee an overview of N.C.'s HSIP. The presentation will be available on the ECHS web site.

Task V – Spot Safety Funding Overview

One method by which projects identified under the HSIP can potentially be funded is through Spot Safety funds. Tony Wyatt gave the Committee an overview of N.C.'s Spot Safety Program. The presentation will be available on the ECHS web site.

There is typically a backlog of projects awaiting Spot Safety funding of around 170 projects at an estimated cost of \$20 million.

Task VI – Working Groups

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

Katy Jones, reported that the group has held its first meeting and developed three key initiatives.

- 1) To facilitate communications within the various agencies represented on the ECHS and amongst the Committee members and various Working Groups. There were preliminary discussions of producing a quarterly newsletter.
- 2) To increase the visibility of successes and
- 3) To support the various Working Groups and assist where possible in developing strategies, forming educational campaigns, etc.

Katy also mentioned that she and Cliff will be co-chairing the Driver's Education Working Group. Cliff mentioned that membership was still needed from the various agencies represented on the Committee and that membership has already been secured from the instructors and educators in this field.

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 divided into four technical working groups focusing on:

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

There is some direction now within this Working Group and everyone has begun to realize what a huge task this is going to be.

OLDER DRIVERS

Jane Stutts, Chair, reported out on the Older Drivers Working Group. Jane stated that the group is nearing completion on two different strategies, 1) focusing on advanced signing at interchanges and 2) putting in place training courses for planners and engineers on how to identify and address older driver issues. Jane said that these two strategies should be ready for presentation at the next ECHS meeting.

MOTORCYCLE SAFETY WORKING GROUP

Darrel reported out for John Stokes on the progress of the group.

The group has assembled two resolutions in support of 1) clarifying the helmet laws (what is a legal helmet) and 2) Strengthening the permitting system for motorcycle learners permits. Representative Hackney has decided to wait until next legislative session to promote these two strategies and the corresponding legislation.

LANE DEPARTURE WORKING GROUP

Tony Wyatt, co-chair reported for the group. Tony mentioned that the group has divided into four technical Working groups focusing on the following areas: 1) Positive Guidance, 2) Utility Pole Collisions, 3) Performance Measures and 4) Clear Recovery Areas.

The group is also working on a demonstration project with the safety edge concept. This demonstration will allow our field personnel to answer questions they have in regards to construction issues when utilizing the safety edge.

ENSURING DRIVERS ARE LICENSED WORKING GROUP

No new reports.

INCREASING SAFETY BELT USAGE WORKING GROUP

Darrell Jernigan, Chair, stated that Senate Bill 774 has passed and been signed into law by the Governor. While the bill did get watered down from its original language, it is a good start and will allow us to revisit it at a later date and “put more teeth into it”.

The law requires rear seat passengers to be belted. Failure to do so is a \$10 fine with no court costs. The rear seat restraint law is a secondary offense; meaning a law enforcement officer can not stop a vehicle just for this violation.

Representative Wise used the ECHS and DOT Board of Transportation endorsements as support to get this legislation passed.

GHSP will be producing educational materials including public service announcements, earned and possibly paid media.

KEEPING DRIVERS ALERT WORKING GROUP

Tom Crosby, Chair, reported out. The ban on teenagers talking on a cell phone has passed the legislature.

The group has also provided DMV with additional information to be included in both the printed and online handbook in regards to the dangers of both distracted and drowsy driving. This information has been provided in both English and Spanish.

The group is currently working on drowsy driving strategy.

INTERSECTION SAFETY WORKING GROUP

No new reports.

SPEED WORKING GROUP

Kevin reported that the Compliance Dismissal strategy that the Committee had approved was actually incorporated into the DWI legislation (separate action) and has passed. Compliance Dismissal cases will be required to pay 50% of the court costs.

Task VII – Next Meeting Date

October 24, 2006; 9:30 – 11:30; Chief Engineer’s Conference Room.

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