

## Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers December 15, 2003

### At least 9 killed in weekend crashes on Michigan roads

An 87-year-old Grand Haven woman was among at least nine people killed in weekend accidents on Michigan roads, state police said Sunday.

Vera Bares died when the vehicle in which she was riding crashed in her hometown at 2:50 p.m. Saturday. She was wearing a seat belt.

In other weekend crashes, police said:

\_ Tammy Malissa Pappas, 36, of Linden died after her vehicle crashed at about 2:42 p.m. Sunday in Alcona County's Curtis Township. She was wearing a seat belt.

\_ Kevin Wayne Beech, 41, of Grand Ledge, died after the truck he was driving crashed at about 5:30 a.m. Sunday in Ionia County's Boston Township. He was not wearing a seat belt.

\_ A driver whose name was immediately released pending notification of relatives died in Oakland County's Novi Township in a rollover crash at about 5:30 a.m. Sunday. The person was not wearing a seat belt.

\_ Another person whose name was immediately released pending notification of relatives died in Genesee County's Grand Blanc Township in a rollover accident at 5:10 a.m. Sunday. The victim was not wearing a seat belt.

\_ Sherrie Lee Hopson, 38, of Wayne County's Brownstown Township, died when the vehicle she was driving rolled over at 4:33 a.m. Sunday in her hometown. She was not wearing a seat belt.

\_ Kenneth Anton, 22, of Newaygo, died at 10:52 p.m. Saturday when the car he was driving flipped over in Newaygo County. He was not wearing a seat belt.

\_ Noah Royce Larkin, 20, of Bloomfield Hills, died in a rollover accident at 10:23 p.m. Saturday in Auburn Hills. Larkin was wearing seat belt.

\_ Jacob Strecker, 84, of Auburn, died after being struck by a vehicle at 7:17 a.m. Saturday in Bay County's Williams Township.

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### December is National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month

Since 1981, every President of the United States has demonstrated a commitment to preventing impaired driving by proclaiming December 3-D Month. In 2002, more than 17,000 people were killed in alcohol-related crashes on the nation's highways, representing a death every 30 minutes. An estimated 258,000 people were injured in crashes where police reported that alcohol was present – an average of one person injured approximately every two minutes.

**For a link to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) homepage for the 3D Month online package that includes fact sheets and safe driving tips, visit**

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/alcohol/3d/FY2003/index.html>.

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### NHTSA Releases High Priority Comprehensive Plan to Reduce Impaired Driving

Citing the lack of substantial improvement in the number of alcohol-related fatalities since the mid-1990s, NHTSA has released a high priority comprehensive departmental plan to significantly reduce impaired driving on the nation's roads in the coming years. The report proposes a multi-disciplinary approach to address the complexities of the legal, social health and safety infrastructures involved in control of the impaired driving problem. This report includes NHTSA's three priority strategies for reducing impaired driving: including high visibility traffic enforcement, enhanced support for DWI prosecution and adjudication, and medical screening and brief intervention of high-risk populations for



alcohol use problems. **For a copy of the report, visit**

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/alcohol/IPTReport/FinalAlcoholIPT-03.pdf>.

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## **NHTSA Announces National Hispanic Impaired Driving Prevention Campaign**

In its ongoing effort to educate the Latino community about the risks of drinking and driving, NHTSA launched a campaign emphasizing to Hispanics that "Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk."

According to NHTSA, traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for Hispanics ages 1-34 in the United States. Alcohol-related crashes account for about half of all Hispanic traffic-related fatalities.

**For more information on the National Hispanic Impaired Driving Prevention Campaign, and to order campaign materials, visit [www.stopimpaireddriving.org](http://www.stopimpaireddriving.org), [www.nhtsa.dot.gov/multicultural](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/multicultural) or [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov).**

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## **Recent Alcohol Treatment Research Shows EAPs Can Play Strong Role in the Delivery of Interventions**

A new report suggests the workplace can have a greater role to play in the delivery of successful interventions for the full continuum of alcohol problems, especially in early detection. **For the full report visit, <http://www.ensuringsolutions.org/images/primers/prim5.pdf>.**

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## **New York Times Reports U.S. Falls from 1st to 9th Safest Nation**

The U.S. has fallen to the ninth safest nation to drive in from the first over the past 30 years, the New York Times reported on November 27, based on a review of global fatality rates adjusted for distances traveled among industrialized nations. If the U.S. had kept pace with Australia and Canada, about 2,000 fewer Americans would die because of traffic accidents every year, the Times reported. If it had the same fatality rate as England, it would save 8,500 lives a year. Safety experts cited several reasons the U.S. has fallen in the rankings including lower seat-belt use, a big increase in deaths among motorcyclists and the proliferation of large vehicles. The World Health Organization said traffic accidents will become the world's third-leading cause of death and disability by 2020, up from ninth in 2003.

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## **Microsoft Announced Plans to Put a Computer in Every Car**

Microsoft recently announced plans to put a computer in every car. Cars with the Microsoft software will speak up when it's time for an oil change. They'll warn drivers about wrecks on the road ahead and scout alternative routes. They'll pay freeway tolls automatically. The software running their brakes will upgrade itself wirelessly. According to a Microsoft official, drivers spend millions of hours commuting and are distracted by a myriad of gadgets. Microsoft's "TBox," which he said will be available in 12 to 36 months, can connect them all and make them hands-free. **For the article, visit <http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/1201MicrosoftCars01-ON.html>.**

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## **Japanese Research Team Designs Inexpensive Camera-based System to Prevent Crashes**

A research team at Kejo University in Japan has designed a camera-based system to keep drivers from running into the car ahead or dozing off at the wheel. The team believes that the system can be used in subcompact cars because it employs inexpensive CCD cameras. Existing similar systems are said to be bulky and expensive because they use radar, and have, therefore, only been used in luxury cars. **For more information, visit**

<http://www.itsinternational.com/news/article.cfm?recordID=4052>.

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## U.S.DOT Launches National Public-Private Partnership to Increase Seat Belt Use Among Commercial Drivers

U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta last week released the results of a first-ever survey of safety belt use among truck drivers and launched a national public-private partnership to increase safety belt use among the nation's more than 11 million commercial drivers. The announcement was made at a Roadway Express trucking facility in Atlanta on Tuesday, December 9th. **To view the DOT Press Release, visit <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safetybelt/index.htm>.**

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## Pilot Study Shows Telematics Can Lower Insurance Bills

According to an Ohio-based insurance company, Progressive Corporation, telematics have the potential to dramatically change the way car insurance is sold to consumers and businesses. In 1998, Progressive launched a pilot program in Texas that tested the concept of "usage-based auto insurance." Their idea was to base insurance rates on where, when and how much a person drives, rather than traditional criteria such as age, gender, car model and place of residence. About 1,100 policyholders in both Houston and Dallas had their vehicles retrofitted with GPS tracking units, and after a couple of years of using the service, it was found that the average participant saved 25 percent on their annual insurance bill. With rates tied to usage, people were able to lower their bills by adjusting their driving behavior. Obey speed limits, drive only when necessary and avoid risky parts of town and, chances are, you'll pay less over the year. **For more information, visit the Progressive website at <http://www.progressive.com>.**

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## Auto Industry Adopting Standards to Improve Safety of Vehicles in Side-impact Crashes

The auto industry is adopting standards to improve the safety of vehicles in side-impact crashes over the next five years. The Washington-based Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers (Alliance) says the standards are voluntary, but automakers are expected to implement them by 2009. Alliance said most automakers will be able to meet the new standards by adopting side- and head-protecting air bags. Automakers also may make design changes to the front of sport utility vehicles so there is a less height difference in collisions with passenger cars. Some safety groups have argued against voluntary standards, saying they hold no weight because automakers can choose not to adopt them. Dr. Jeffery Runge, NHTSA Administrator, has said voluntary standards can bring safety enhancements to the market more quickly, since the government's regulatory process can require years. The changes, which are expected to cost at least \$300 a vehicle and be phased in from 2007 through 2009 could save thousands of lives annually.

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## 5 Million Vehicle Recalled Last Year Not Repaired But Still on the Road

In a report by NBC on December 3, NHTSA noted that there were 436 recalls issued last year, affecting some 18.3 million cars, trucks and sport utility vehicles. Of those, roughly 5 million have not

undergone repair work and remain on the road. Most recalls are issued for safety-related defects, although some cover vehicle paint and air conditioning problems. **NHTSA keeps a running list of recalls and affected vehicles, which can be searched on their website at <http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/recalls/recallsearch.cfm>.**

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## Fluorescent Pink Signs May Alert Drivers to Traffic Crashes

Fluorescent pink signs to alert drivers to traffic crashes, large print on road signs for older drivers, and "animated eyes" to caution pedestrians at intersections are among the improvements federal highway engineers are recommending to states to make travel safer and easier. The recommendations are



included in the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) update of a publication used nationally by state and local transportation agencies in designing and placing traffic signs and signals and pavement markings. These new standards and guidance for traffic control devices, like highway signs and traffic signals, will increase safety and mobility for older drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists and construction workers. **For more information, visit <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/pressroom/fhwa0334.htm>.**

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## **Secretary Mineta Urges State Legislators to Pass Primary Seat Belt Laws**

In his strongest call to date, Secretary Mineta urged state legislators from around the country to pass primary safety belt laws in each of their states. Speaking before the National Conference of State Legislatures Fall Forum in Washington, D.C. last week, the Secretary pledged to visit any state in which a local legislator was willing to take up the mantle for a primary safety belt law. States with primary safety belt laws have usage rates about 11 percentage points higher than states with secondary enforcement laws. For example, New Jersey increased usage from 63 percent under a secondary law in 1999, to 74 percent in 2000 under primary enforcement. States with primary safety belt laws allow traffic enforcement officers to stop a vehicle and issue a citation when the officer observes an unbelted driver or passenger. Officers in states with secondary enforcement safety belt laws may only write a citation after the officer stops the vehicle or cites the offender for another infraction.

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## **U.K. Fleet Decision-makers Call for Stringent New Laws to Improve Safety**

U.K. fleet decision-makers have called for a series of stringent new laws that would force employers to do more to improve safety. They created the wish list as part of an exclusive Fleet News and Fleet NewsNet survey, carried out in association with National Car Rental. Among the drastic measures fleet decision-makers have supported are mandatory driver training for all users of company vehicles, regular medical checks for at-work drivers most at risk and maximum daily mileage levels for drivers. Decision-makers also supported mandatory eyesight tests for all users of company vehicles and compulsory company policies on work-related road safety. Those who took part in the road safety survey were in all levels of authority including fleet management, purchasing, senior management, directors, chairmen and heads of human resources divisions. Fleet sizes ranged from fewer than 50 vehicles to more than 1,000, in sectors including food, wholesale, retail, financial services, public sector and leisure.

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## **Traffic Safety News for our Families...**

### **A NHTSA Report on Underage Drinking Prevention Finds Information and Education Alone Insufficient Initiatives**

A NHTSA report evaluating four community-based underage drinking prevention projects find that public information and education alone are insufficient to have a positive short-range impact on alcohol-caused crashes involving underage drivers. The report concludes that it may be necessary to implement initiatives aimed at reducing the availability of alcoholic beverages and deterring driving after drinking. **For more information, visit**

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/research/UnderageDrinkingPrevent/images/ImpactEvalUnderageDrinking.PDF>.