



## Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers December 1, 2008

### Michigan News You Can Use

#### **14<sup>th</sup> Annual Michigan Traffic Safety Summit**

Mark your calendar and be prepared to learn about the latest traffic safety information, research, and technology at the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Summit taking place March 24-26, 2009 at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center in East Lansing, MI. Sessions that are targeted specifically for employers on distracted driving and workplace programs will be offered on the first day of the conference. You will be notified via this newsletter when a registration link and an agenda will be available.

#### **Interested in Hands On Drivers Training?**

Vehicle Dynamics, Inc. has a proven record of training with a professional staff that is able to meet your training requirements. The training program is designed to enhance the current skill level of each participant and instruct them on how to maneuver a vehicle with confidence and control. Each attendee will be taught: the technique of ocular driving; interpret what the vehicle is doing; the correct braking technique for ABS and non-ABS systems; the correct steering inputs necessary to avoid a crash; and how to regain control of a vehicle when a skid is encountered. For more information link to: <http://www.vehicledynamicsincorporated.com/index.html> and contact Vehicle Dynamics Inc. at 313-884-2842 or e-mail: [vehdynamicsinc@juno.com](mailto:vehdynamicsinc@juno.com).

### **SHARE THE ROAD**

#### **Bicyclists Look to Key Web Sites for Equipment, Repair Information**

From information about maintenance to finding new gear to developing training regimens, bicyclists can turn to the Internet for all their needs. Check out local bicycling club Web sites for ride schedules, cycling events, maps and directions for finding trails and routes. One site, [www.bikeride.com](http://www.bikeride.com), covers organized ride events in Canada and the United States. For information about repairs, head over to [www.parktool.com/repair](http://www.parktool.com/repair) or [www.sheldonbrown.com/repair](http://www.sheldonbrown.com/repair). Pro cycling fans should bookmark [www.velonews.com](http://www.velonews.com) and [www.cyclingnews.com](http://www.cyclingnews.com). Women can check out [www.teamestrogen.com](http://www.teamestrogen.com) for female bicycle clothing and equipment. Two good advocacy Web sites are [www.bikeleague.org](http://www.bikeleague.org) and [www.bta4bikes.org](http://www.bta4bikes.org). For more information, go to <http://www.mailtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20081120/LIFE/811200309> Source: Mail Tribune, November 20, 2008

#### **Report Explores Elderly Mobility in Australia, Japan**

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of International Programs recently released a report that examines infrastructure improvements designed to help older drivers in Australia and Japan. The report is based on an international technology scan sponsored by several agencies. For more information, go to <http://international.fhwa.dot.gov/pubs/pl09001/oru.pdf> Source: TRB, November 24, 2008

#### **Ride to Work Day Moves to June**

The annual Ride to Work Day will move to the third Monday in June when the 18th annual day takes place June 15, 2009. Organizers moved the day from July to June because June weather is more favorable around the world. Also, many workplaces, especially in Europe, close for summer holiday in July. A Monday event will encourage motorcycle and scooter commuting to continue throughout the week. For more information, go to <http://www.ridetowork.org/> Source: RTW news release, November 25, 2008



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## Latest Traffic Safety News

### **Take Steps to Prevent Drowsy Driving During Holiday Travel Season**

Thanksgiving kicks off the busy holiday season, a time when U.S. roadways are bumper to bumper as Americans travel to visit family and friends. Traffic fatalities increase surrounding holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas. The National Sleep Foundation urges drivers to stay safe by getting enough sleep before hitting the road. Knowing the signs of driving while sleepy and learning the countermeasures to combat fatigue will save lives. For more information, go to [http://www.drowsydriving.org/site/c.lqLPIROCKtF/b.3338887/k.57A3/Detection\\_and\\_Prevention.htm](http://www.drowsydriving.org/site/c.lqLPIROCKtF/b.3338887/k.57A3/Detection_and_Prevention.htm).

Source: NSF, November 25, 2008

### **States Receive Scores for Traffic Safety Laws**

Oregon and Washington states ranked at the top of the Emergency Nurses Association's (ENA) roadway safety scorecard. The report examines traffic safety laws in all 50 states and the District of Columbia and uses 13 criteria to score each. The criteria include laws on seat belt use, graduated driver licensing, motorcycle helmets, ignition interlocks and more. Oregon and Washington were the only states to receive the best possible score of 13. Arkansas scored only three points, and North Dakota and South Dakota each scored four points. When the ENA released its first national scorecard in 2006, Arizona ranked last. In the past two years, the state has shown significant progress and enacted five new safety laws. D.C. and 46 states, most recently Kentucky and South Dakota, have passed legislation that will allow them to develop and maintain statewide trauma systems. For more information, go to

<http://www.ena.org/ipinstitute/AutoSafety/scorecard/default.asp>. Source: ENA news release, November 19, 2008

### **NTSB Acting Chairman Calls for Affordable Technologies**

Government and industry need to work together to deploy new intelligent transportation systems technologies as quickly and affordably as possible, said Mark V. Rosenker, acting chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), at a recent conference. "I believe it is time for us as a nation to stop accepting the costs of traffic accidents and instead put that money into making cars that can avoid potential accidents," Rosenker told attendees during a plenary session at the 15th World Congress on Intelligent Transportation Systems. The NTSB has a history of accident investigations that resulted in making safety recommendations that called for wider deployment of certain ITS technologies, such as adaptive cruise control. Rosenker urged attendees to make the technologies less costly and more widely available to the traveling public. For more information, go to

<http://ntsb.gov/speeches/rosenker/mvr081119.html> Source: NTSB news release, November 19, 2008

### **Firefighter Seat Belt Campaign Gets Another Endorsement**

NIOSH is the latest agency to endorse the National Fire Service Seat Belt Pledge 100% Campaign. The campaign's goal is for every firefighter in the United States to buckle up every time. Between 1998 and 2007, two-thirds of the 114 fire personnel killed in crashes were not wearing a seat belt or restraint system.

### **Driving Fewer Miles Becoming a Habit for Many Americans**

Americans are driving less despite falling gas prices, which signals a shift in lifestyles and driving habits. Drivers logged 10.7 billion fewer miles in September 2008 than in September 2007. "With the unemployment rate going up, people are just not driving," a Florida division planner said. "They just don't have the money to go on leisure trips." People are changing their driving habits: they take fewer trips, shorter trips and carpool more often. Truck and other commercial traffic usually declines faster than passenger travel in sour economies, but this time is different. "Even if gas prices drop a little bit, people will remember that gas prices can jump up there," said a toll services consultant. The decline in miles driven is the longest and deepest since the Iranian revolution in 1979. For more information, go to

[http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2008-11-19-driving\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2008-11-19-driving_N.htm) Source: USA Today, November 19, 2008



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### **Measures Could Improve States' Highway Safety Improvement Programs**

The Government Accountability Office analyzed highway safety plans from 25 states and found they met the following new SAFETEA-LU elements: 1) involved multidisciplinary stakeholders, 2) defined areas of emphasis by using crash data analysis systems, 3) identified strategies and projects to address these emphasis areas, and 4) provided for project evaluations. But many of the 25 states lacked components of the crash data analysis systems, and they lack necessary data for local roads because they do not maintain or operate them. Also, Federal Highway Administration data show most states haven't used a new flexible funding provision that lets states allocate some Highway Safety Improvement Program funds for behavioral approaches or emergency medical services. Better alignment of federal funds with state strategic plans could help states with implementation. Also, limited data on rural roads are hindering states as they implement the high-risk rural roads program. For more information, go to

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0935.pdf> Source: GAO release, November 2008

### **Obama Adds 2 to Transportation Transition Team**

Two officials have recently been named to President-elect Obama's transportation transition review team. Victor Mendez is the director of the Arizona Department of Transportation, and Jack Basso is a top official at the Association of American State Highway Transportation Officials. The administration plans to make increased transportation investment a top priority, according to the Obama transition team. Other team members include Kelley Shawn Coyner, Henry Jasny, Jeffrey Morales, Robert Rivkin, Gregory Tarpinian, Michael Winter, Duane Woerth, Thomas Panebianco, Nicholas Weiner, Peter Cowhey and Gregory Nixon. For more information, go to

<http://www.trafficworld.com/newssection/government.asp?id=48734> Source: Traffic World, November 21, 2008

### **Advancing Technologies**

#### **Automakers Present Smart Technologies at Conference**

Engineers are developing cutting-edge technologies that make cars smarter than ever, and many of them are introduced at conferences such as the recent 15th Annual World Congress on Intelligent Transport Systems. Toyota presented findings on several systems, such as a brake system that alerts the driver about an upcoming intersection with a stop sign. If the driver ignores the sign, the system applies brake pressure to avoid a crash. Systems such as integrated support for portable devices not only provides a better listening experience, but also increases safety benefits by preventing driver distraction. Other technologies help drivers become more environmentally conscious. Ford's EcoGuide Coach and Nissan's EcoPedal encourage fuel efficiency by giving drivers feedback about their driving habits. Lexus and Infiniti models make sure drivers are aware of hazards in the road. Blind-spot monitoring and rear cross-traffic systems also help drivers avoid crashes. For more information, go to

[http://www.forbes.com/lifestyle/2008/11/14/smart-car-technology-forbeslife-cx\\_jm\\_1114cars.html](http://www.forbes.com/lifestyle/2008/11/14/smart-car-technology-forbeslife-cx_jm_1114cars.html)

Source: Forbes, November 14, 2008

### **News from USDOT**

#### **NHTSA Updates Guide to Help States Select Behavioral Highway Safety Programs**

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) included more than 100 traffic safety countermeasures in its latest guide for state highway safety offices. Of the 104 countermeasures, 34 have been proven effective, 54 are rated as unlikely/uncertain or unknown effectiveness, and three have been shown to have negative consequences. NHTSA developed the report to help states select programs, projects and activities that have the greatest potential for reducing fatalities and injuries. Many of the effective measures bear little direct cost because they involving the passage of a law or are funded with "user fees." Benefit/cost calculations show most would have a positive effect on states. For more information, go to [http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp\\_rpt\\_622.pdf](http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp_rpt_622.pdf)

Source: TRB release, November 2008



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### **Federal Rule Limits Truckers' Hours on Road to 11**

Truck drivers will be limited to driving only 11 hours and working no more than 14 hours in a day under a rule the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) recently issued. FMCSA based the rule on an exhaustive scientific review and designed it to ensure truck drivers get enough rest to perform safely. The rule also requires drivers to spend at least 10 hours resting between shifts before going back on the road. They cannot operate a truck if they have worked more than 60 hours in a given week. "These rules are crafted to match what we know about drivers' circadian rhythms and the real world work environment truckers face every day," FMCSA Administrator John Hill said. For more information, go to <http://www.ergoweb.com/news/detail.cfm?id=2180>

Source: FMCSA news release, November 18, 2008

### **Highway Trust Fund Revenue Falls While Spending Increases**

The Highway Trust Fund took in \$3 billion less in fiscal year 2008 as Americans drove 90 billion fewer miles over 11 months of the same fiscal year. The trend of driving fewer miles is most evident in rural interstate travel, which fell by 8 percent in September. The Highway Trust Fund, primarily funded through federal gas tax receipts, collected \$31 billion in revenue in FY08. Spending increased by \$2 billion. If vehicle miles traveled continue to decline, the fund might experience another shortfall sooner than expected. "We can keep trying to patch our broken transportation policies, or we can embrace the kinds of changes needed to keep American commuters moving, shippers hauling and the economy moving," Transportation Secretary Mary Peters said. Source: FHWA news release, November 19, 2008

### **International Traffic Safety News**

#### **Fleet Managers Can Act Now on Traffic Safety Proposals**

The Department for Transport (DfT) outlined a series of proposals to tackle speeding and drunk and drugged driving. "We must crack down on the most dangerous drivers—the selfish minority whose reckless behavior can have a catastrophic impact on innocent victims and their families," Road Safety Minister Jim Fitzpatrick said. Included in the range of proposals is penalizing drivers six points if they exceed the limit by 20 mph. Careless driving could become a fixed penalty offense and reducing the drunk driving limit are being considered. Road safety charity Brake is calling for tougher speeding penalties and action on drunk driving. Fleet managers can start addressing their employees now about these issues by conducting regular risk assessments and training. Source: FleetNews, November 25, 2008

#### **New Device Helps Drivers Stay Connected while Commuting**

Despite risks to their personal safety, commuters continue to check e-mail and text messages on the way to work, according to the Commuting and Staying Connected omnibus survey. About a third of Americans and a quarter of Canadians think it's important to their work-life balance to have access to those communications while driving. A quarter of Canadians and a fifth of Americans say they've missed an important e-mail or declined a call from work while commuting. Other reasons drivers said they access mobile technology while commuting is that they like staying in touch with people, they want to make better use of time, and they find it convenient. Intelligent Mechatronic Systems launched the iLane, a portable device that lets BlackBerry users access their inboxes while driving. iLane reads e-mails out loud on command and provides daily news, sports and weather. iLane costs about \$599 (Canadian), plus \$7.99 a month. Source: IMS news release, November 24, 2008

#### **Mercedes Systems Work Intelligently to Prevent Crashes**

Mercedes-Benz presented technology that involves vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure communication systems at the 15th World Congress on Intelligent Transportation Systems. The technologies monitor vehicle surroundings and measure driver stress to help avoid crashes. If a crash occurs a few miles up the road, that information would relay to the driver from other vehicles up ahead. The driver would have the option of taking a new route, and satellite navigation will help determine the quickest way to the destination. Another system prevents drivers from ignoring traffic lights. When a driver approaches a red light without braking, warnings would go off. If the driver still makes no attempt to brake, the vehicle takes over and applies the brake to stop in time. Lastly, Mercedes' Mindlab



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uses brainwave measurements to analyze the driver's stress levels. It can determine how attentive people are or how much fatigue and/or stressed they are feeling. For more information, go to

[http://www.bdafrica.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=11389&Itemid=5843](http://www.bdafrica.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=11389&Itemid=5843) .

Source: Business Daily, November 24, 2008

## Work-Home

### **States Consider Barring Pets from Sitting on Drivers' Laps**

Legislators in some states are pushing for bans on pets riding in the driver's seat. In September California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed such a measure because he couldn't devote attention to it. Virginia and New Hampshire rolled proposed lap-pet bans into driver safety legislation that would prohibit using hand-held cell phones while driving and require the use of headlights when it's raining. Arizona and Illinois covered the issue by saying any driver who is distracted by anything can be cited. These states will consider the bills in their next sessions starting in January. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals commend owners who want to take their pets with them on trips, but suggest that they do so responsibly by restraining the animals correctly. For more information, go to

<http://www.stateline.org/live/details/story?contentId=356407> . Source: Stateline, November 18, 2008

### **MADD Releases Two New Reports on States' Drunk Driving Data**

About 2 million drunk drivers with three or more convictions, including 400,000 with five or more convictions, will be on the nation's roads this holiday season. The figures are based on data that 20 states and the District of Columbia reported to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Mothers Against Drunk Driving, which released those numbers, also issued its annual state progress report recently. The report gives each state's drunk driving fatality statistics, repeat offender data and highlights on ignition interlock law efforts and sobriety checkpoints. In 2007, nearly 1,500 drivers were killed in a crash that involved a drunk driver between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. MADD is ramping up efforts in 42 states that do not yet require ignition interlocks for first-time convicted drunk drivers. For more information, go to <http://www.marketwatch.com/news/story/New-Data-Shows-Disturbing-Number/story.aspx?guid=%7B3E869ECC-A89A-497F-BD0E-5D56889E42F7%7D>.

Source: MarketWatch, November 25, 2008



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