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# NETSWork

Summaries of timely road safety news, events, and alerts.

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September 15, 2009

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Dear NETS Member,

I am happy to introduce the first edition of NETSWork e-newsletter. NETSWork joins RoadSmart as a NETS' publication. While RoadSmart is written for the driver, NETSWork is for road safety professionals. It will bring you the latest in road safety-related information, ranging from technology, to research, to emerging issues, and impending legislation.

NETSWork is published for NETS members and is part of your NETS membership. It will be emailed to you monthly. Despite all the email calling for your attention, I am hopeful NETSWork earns a few minutes of your time each month. To that end, please don't hesitate to let us know how we can improve it.

In closing, I want to recognize AAA of Michigan and Consumers Energy. Both graciously provided grants towards the funding of NETSWork.

Yours truly,  
Jack Hanley  
Executive Director  
Network of Employers for Traffic Safety  
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## LATEST ROAD SAFETY NEWS

### Drivers distracted when near schools

Source: *US News and World Report*, September 1, 2009

A new study from Safe Kids USA suggests that one in every six drivers near schools is distracted. Researchers found that a variety of activities -- chatting on cell phones, grooming, drinking, eating, smoking and even reading -- are keeping drivers from focusing around school zones. The study also found that drivers who don't use seat belts are about one-third more likely to be distracted than those who are belted in, and afternoon drivers are 22 percent more likely to be distracted than morning drivers. The study results are based on more than 40,000 observations by researchers in 20 locations across the United States. For more information, see the full article at <http://health.usnews.com/>

### Survey shows overwhelming support for laws banning texting while driving

Source: *Business Wire (via Reuters)*, August 31, 2009

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## About NETSWork

NETSWork is published electronically the 15th of each month by the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety, Lynda Morrissey, editor, Jack Hanley, Executive Director. It is intended for the use of NETS members.

For more information,

Nationwide Insurance released the results of its new On Your Side® Survey, which found that 8 in 10 Americans surveyed last month say they would support legislation restricting cell phone use while driving. The survey, conducted Aug. 5-9, 2009, by Harris Interactive, reports that 80 percent of Americans favor a ban on texting while driving, while two thirds favor a ban on cell phone calls, and more than half say they would support a ban on cell phone use altogether. For more information, see the full article at <http://www.reuters.com/>

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## Americans want graphic PSA aired

Source: *FOX National Reports*, August 26, 2009

Most Americans who viewed a graphic British Public Service Announcement showing the dangers of texting and driving say they are less likely to text while driving, according to a new poll. The majority of Americans surveyed also think that the PSA should be aired in the U.S. The PSA is generally considered to be too graphic to be aired in the U.S. at this time. The PSA can be viewed along with the full story by going to <http://www.foxcharlotte.com/>

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## States target bad drivers with new laws, fines

Source: *USA TODAY*, August 18, 2009

States are trying to put the brakes on bad driving by targeting "super speeders," lane hogs and those guilty of multiple moving violations. Several states, including Florida, Georgia and Kansas, have launched new initiatives to curb habitually dangerous drivers. The moves come as a growing body of evidence suggests that aggressive driving — including speeding, tailgating, changing lanes without signaling, ignoring traffic signals and weaving in and out of traffic — is deadlier than drunken driving. An April study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that aggressive driving was a factor in 56% of all fatal U.S. crashes from 2003 through 2007. For more information, see the full article at <http://www.usatoday.com/>

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## Study: 1 in 10 binge drinkers get on the road

Source: *The Associated Press*, September 1, 2009

One of 10 binge drinkers got behind the wheel the last time they drank heavily, according to a new study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The study also found that half of those drivers left from a bar, restaurant or nightclub after downing five or more drinks. The study's authors said that binge drinking is a main factor behind the more than 11,000 deaths annually from alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes. For more information, go to <http://www.google.com/>

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## Lawmakers want ban on texting and driving

Source: *MSNBC*, July 29, 2009

WASHINGTON - Democratic lawmakers called for states to ban texting while driving or face cuts in highway funds, citing the need to reduce driver distraction and potential highway deaths and injuries. For more information, see the full article at <http://www.msnbc.msn.com>

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## Texting and trucking don't mix; new study results

Source: *Washington Post*, July 28, 2009

A new study finds a link between texting and truck crashes. According to an

contact [Lynda Morrissey](#)

### Note from the editor

All links to stories have been tested and are active 24 hours prior to distribution, however, links may become inactive over time at the discretion of the publication source.

analysis by Virginia Tech's Transportation Institute, texting truckers are 23 times as likely as their non-texting counterparts to be involved in a crash or a near miss. Researchers analyzed commercial trucking data from 2004 to 2007 that involved 203 truckers and 3 million miles of driving. For more information, see the full article at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/>

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## Illinois bans texting while driving

Source: CNN, August 6, 2006

Illinois is now the 17th state to ban texting while driving. Gov. Pat Quinn signed the new law that prohibits writing, sending or receiving text messages while driving. There are exceptions for drivers who pull over to text or shift their car into park or neutral to send messages while stopped in traffic. The move is in response to several high profile crashes and recent studies that describe the dangers. For more information, see the full article at <http://edition.cnn.com/>

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## Cyclists, pedestrians and cars clash over biking boom in New York City

Source: NY Daily News, August 16, 2009

The number of New York city bike riders jumped by 35 percent last year — making some wonder if the city is big enough for 8 million people, a couple of million cars and about 185,000 cyclists. Avid cyclists see themselves as the healthy, green, cheap future of transportation. City officials agree, completing 200 miles of bike lanes in three years, adding bike racks and shelters and pushing employers to provide bike parking. But with the number of cyclists exploding, many pedestrians and motorists say it's getting awfully crowded out there. A Hunter College study found that cyclists in midtown flagrantly disobeyed traffic laws, with 37 percent zooming through red lights, less than a third wearing helmets and nearly 75 percent failing to use head and tail lights in the evening. For more information, see the full article at <http://www.nydailynews.com/>

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## Save a life, make some money

Source: The New York Times, August 26, 2009

An innovative new service on Long Island is making it easier for drivers who have been drinking to get home safely. Here's how it works: a chauffeur arrives on a foldable scooter, which is then stored in the trunk of the customer's car. After driving that customer home safely, the chauffeur jumps back on the scooter to go to the next pickup. For many people, this is a better alternative than simply calling a cab, because they do not have to retrieve their vehicle the next day. The concept originated in Britain in the 1990's and spread to the U.S. early this decade. Although many scooter operators are for-profit entrepreneurs, for Mark Roberts, the founder of CityScoot in Louisville, the pull of the nonprofit world is too strong. Soon he will introduce No Excuse for Drunk Driving, or NEDD, a nonprofit organization intended to take the success of his scooter program national. For more information, see the full article at <http://www.nytimes.com>

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## GHSA gives out top traffic safety honors

Source: GHSA Press Release, August 31, 2009

The Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) presented its national highway safety awards during its Annual Meeting in Savannah August 30. The Association's highest honor, the James J. Howard Highway Safety Trailblazer Award goes to

Illinois State Senator John J. Cullerton of Chicago. Throughout his 30-year career in the Illinois State legislature, Senator Cullerton has amassed a traffic safety record likely surpassing that of any state legislator in the nation. He has led the effort in the state to enact safety legislation on a variety of issues, including: child passenger safety; primary seat belt use; mandatory motorcycle helmet use; .08 Blood Alcohol Content (BAC); graduated licensing; and alcohol interlock laws. For more information, see the full article at <http://www.ghsa.org/>

## **Volvo celebrates 50th anniversary of its invention of the three-point safety belt**

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*Source: Volvo Press Release, August 13, 2009*

Volvo is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the most important automobile safety device ever invented: the three-point safety belt. Invented by Volvo engineer Nils Bohlin in 1958 and patented in 1959, the device has saved more than one million lives and is now standard equipment on every car. Volvo was also the first carmaker in the world to equip its cars with front seat three-point safety belts as standard. Even after 50 years of automotive safety innovation, Volvo says that the three-point safety belt remains the most effective protection for occupants in the event of a collision. The belt reduces the risk of fatalities and serious injuries from collisions by about 50 percent. A design as obvious as it is intelligent; the three-point belt is perfectly suited to the seat occupant's body. It is the safety belt's ability to keep the occupant in the seat that is of crucial importance. For more information, see the full article at <http://news.pnnewswire.com/>

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## **WORK - HOME**

### **Utah offers preview of DUI call to mom**

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*Source: The Associated Press, August 30, 2009*

Police and bars in Utah are trying unique campaign themes to battle drunk driving, including "Getting a DUI is easy, calling your mom from jail is hard." A phone number has been set up to recreate what it would feel like to make such a call. After dialing 1-877-JAIL-FON, the caller is given the option to talk to a hysterical mother or a disapproving father, among others. A prerecorded message then plays one end of what the conversation might sound like, with the caller filling in the other half. The campaign runs through Sept. 7. For more information, see the full article at <http://www.google.com/>

### **NY program will alert parents about young drivers**

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*Source: The Associated Press via Newsday, August 7, 2009*

Law enforcement officials on eastern Long Island have begun a new program that will alert parents when officers stop young drivers. Families can register with the Suffolk County sheriff's department to receive windshield decals that tell officers to contact parents after stopping a driver under 21. The officer will report the number of people in the vehicle, the reason for the stop and whether any tickets were issued. Suffolk County officials hope other enforcement agencies on Long Island and beyond will honor the decals. For more information, see the full article at

<http://www.newsday.com/>

## Teen road deaths down in Texas

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Source: USA TODAY, July 28, 2009

Traffic deaths of teenage drivers in Texas have fallen at twice the national rate, a drop researchers there attributed to a combination of restrictions on young drivers and a program in which teens teach other youths about dangers on the road. The decline was sharper than that seen in other states that have graduated licensing but no peer program.

The program is called Teens in the Driver Seat. Students tailor the messages to match their individual school and spread the word using news conferences, a website, skits, assemblies and other activities. For more information, see the full article at <http://www.usatoday.com/>

## Older drivers and medication

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Source: New York Times (Wheels Blog), August 11, 2009

A new study has found that many older drivers were unaware of the potential danger of driving while taking some medications. According to AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, 78 percent of seniors used one or more medications, yet just more than one in four were aware of the possible dangers of driving while on medications. The study also found that as people aged, awareness decreased, despite the fact that the number of prescription medicines increased. The study also concluded that the problem is likely to get worse as the number of older drivers – and the amount of medication prescribed is increasing. For more information, see the full article at <http://wheels.blogs.nytimes.com/>

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## WORKPLACE ROAD SAFETY

### Distracted driving focus of workplace safety campaign

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Source: Automotive News, August 18, 2009

The annual Drive Safely Work Week (DSWW) campaign, Oct. 5-9, takes aim at distracted drivers, a factor in more than three-fourths of all vehicle crashes in the U.S. and a cost to employers in the billions of dollars. Sponsored by the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS), the DSWW campaign is designed to educate employees on targeted safe driving issues, whether they drive for business or just to and from the workplace.

The 2009 DSWW is themed "Drive Focused - Drive Smart - Get Home Safely." This year's employer campaign tool kit is entirely web-based complete with downloadable graphics and interactive tools. Materials focus on distracted driving as well as eco-friendly driving, or driving smart to reduce the impact of driving habits on the environment. For more information, see the full article at <http://www.automotive-fleet.com/>

### Adults who should know better feel driven to text

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Source: CNN, July 31, 2009

Business people exchange text messages while driving despite the risk of crashing, driven by the pressure of economic competitiveness. Psychologists advocate awareness campaigns on the dangers of driving and texting based on the [Virginia Tech](#) study's findings and say it's up to corporate executives to lead the way. For more information, see the full article at <http://www.cnn.com/>

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## A fresh look at rental car coverage

Source: MSNBC, August 6, 2009

Although you may have coverage for rental car damage on your personal or business auto policy, many rental car companies are now holding customers responsible for diminution in value (the decline in value of a vehicle that has been involved in an accident) and/or for lost revenue while the rental car is being repaired, things typically not covered on a standard auto policy. For more information, see the full article at <http://rss.msnbc.msn.com/>

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## Campaign to stamp out tired driving

Source: BRAKE, July 17, 2009

Sponsored by Brake, The Wake Up! Campaign is calling on employers to do more to manage drivers' schedules and health to prevent driver tiredness, particularly during the recession when employees might be under pressure to get more work done. The charity has produced a free information pack for fleet managers and their drivers giving straightforward guidance to help them recognize the signs of tiredness on the road and prevent tired driving in the first place. Employers can call 01484 559909 for the free information pack. For more information, see the full article at <http://www.easier.com/>

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## US DOT NEWS

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### Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announces new details on Distracted Driving Summit

Source: DOT news release, August 18, 2009

The U.S. Department of Transportation today announced that it will hold its summit to determine the best ways to reduce the number of crashes and deaths due to distracted driving on Wednesday, September 30 and Thursday, October 1.

The distracted driving summit will bring together senior transportation officials, elected officials, safety advocates, law enforcement representatives, private sector representatives and academics to address a range of issues related to reducing accidents through enforcement, public awareness and education. Authoritative speakers from around the nation will lead interactive sessions on a number of key topics including the extent and impact of distracted driving, current research, regulations and best practices.

To accommodate the strong response, the summit will be available live by webcast and members of the public will be given the opportunity to submit questions online

for each individual panel discussion. The Department has also created a website to provide information and updates on the summit at <http://www.rita.dot.gov/>

## **U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood launches Child Passenger Safety Week; Urges parents to learn how to correctly install safety seats**

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*Source: US DOT News Release, September 10, 2009*

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood today kicked off Child Passenger Safety Week as new research by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) showed that while there is a high use of child safety seats nationwide, a majority of children are not properly secured.

During Child Passenger Safety Week (September 12-18), parents and caregivers can get their child safety seats checked at one of the thousands of free safety seat inspection stations set up across the country. Beginning with National Seat Check Saturday, September 12, English- and Spanish-speaking child passenger safety technicians will be on hand to answer questions and for help with proper installation of child safety seats. To find an inspection site near you visit <http://www.nhtsa.gov/cps/cpsfitting/index.cfm>. See the full news release at <http://www.nhtsa.gov/>

## **When drunk drivers lurk (NHTSA/IIHS Study)**

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*Source: Scripps Howard News Service via the Kentucky Post, August 6, 2009*

A new Study conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety found what many late-night drivers already know. There are more drunk drivers on the road in the wee hours of the morning. Random stops of drivers across the country found that 4.8 percent of those stopped from 1 a.m. to 3 a.m. Saturday were legally drunk, compared to 1.2 percent of those stopped between 10 p.m. Friday and midnight, and 0.2 percent during the day Friday. The study also found that motorcyclists and pickup-truck drivers were far more likely to be driving drunk than others. For more information, see the full article at <http://www.kypost.com/>

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## TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

### **Virginia Tech helps blind drivers take the wheel**

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*Source: New York Times (Wheels Blog), August 10, 2009*

Undergraduate students at the Virginia Tech College of Engineering have entered relatively uncharted territory in the automobile world. They have created a vehicle that enables the visually impaired to drive unassisted.

Virginia Tech began work on the project in 2004. The college was the only research institution to accept the challenge and grant offered by the [Jernigan Institute](#), a subsidiary of the National Federation of the Blind, to design a car that the blind can drive without assistance from another person. For more information, see the full

article at <http://wheels.blogs.nytimes.com/>

## **Ford's MyKey for teen drivers controls speed, stereo**

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*Source: USA TODAY, September 2, 2009*

Ford Motor Company is introducing MyKey, a new technology to help parents control some of their teen drivers' behaviors. MyKey lets parents configure one key for their teen driver. When the car is started with MyKey, top speed can be limited to 80 mph, and chimes can be set to sound at 45 mph, 55 mph and 65 mph. If the driver and passenger don't put on their belts, a chime sounds until they do. Possibly more important to teens: The audio system won't turn on until the front two passengers are buckled up. The company is rolling it out on several models this year. For more information, see the full article at <http://www.usatoday.com/>

## **Brain fitness programs help sharpen skills for teen, aging drivers**

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*Source: The Seattle Times/Long Island Newsday, August 17, 2009*

Neuroscientists are taking aim at both young and older drivers groups with "brain fitness" computer programs they say can hone the cognitive skills that come in most handy while behind the wheel. PositScience released a computer program that exercises brain systems involved with "divided attention" and "useful field of vision." The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety feels strongly enough about the research behind the DriveSharp program that it sells it. "We are very careful about putting our name behind a product," said J. Peter Kissinger, president and CEO of the foundation. "But we believe in this program because it concentrates on the brain functions shown to be most relevant to driving." For more information, see the full article at <http://www.newsday.com/>

## **Firms racing to end texting and driving**

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*Source: The Wall Street Journal, August 26, 2009*

As governments study the dangers of texting while driving, software makers are working to develop cell phone applications that block texts or minimize the distraction of texting. Using the global positioning satellite technology in many cell phones, some applications will block the sending or receiving of text messages while the phone is in motion. This technology is promising, but it's still unclear if motorists — particularly teens — will voluntarily add this software to their phones. Additionally, text-blocking technologies aren't available for all popular models of phones. For more information, see the full article at <http://online.wsj.com/>

## **Dallas takes steps to prevent wrong-way crashes, a national concern**

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*Source: Automotive Fleet, August 5, 2009*

Officials have installed reflective buttons in the shape of arrows on the 47 exit ramps of the Dallas North Tollway. Headlights from a vehicle traveling the wrong way on an exit ramp will make the arrows pointing at the driver glow red. Officials hope these measures will help reverse a trend. Thus far in 2009, there have been five wrong-way crashes on the tollway, killing four people and injuring several others. Between 2003 and 2008, three people died in 28 wrong-way crashes, according to the Texas Department of Public Safety. At least 18 of those involved alcohol or drugs. A tollway spokesperson states wrong way crashes are a national and international concern.

For more information, see the full article at <http://www.automotive-fleet.com/>

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## INTERNATIONAL ROAD SAFETY NEWS

### Vehicles talk safety

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*Source: Supply/Demand Chain Executive Magazine, September 10, 2009*

A European research project called "Safespot," is now being conducted into how cars and trucks can communicate with one another and how infrastructure can be developed in what is known as a cooperative system for increased traffic safety. Every year, about 40,000 people die on Europe's roads and about 1.7 million people are injured. Apart from the tragedies and human suffering involved, this also costs society enormous sums of money -- about 160 billion euros. The European Union regards traffic safety as one of the most important social issues on its agenda. What is unique about the Safespot project is that with the help of telematics, vehicles will now be able to communicate with each other in a system known as "vehicle-to-vehicle" (V2V.) For more information, see the full article at <http://www.sdexec.com/>

### Road blocks ahead for lane change

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*Source: New Zealand Herald, August 30, 2009*

Rebellion is stirring in the Pacific island nation of Samoa, with threats to torch buses and stage mass demonstrations over the plan to require motorists to drive on the left. Due to a brief period of German rule in the early 20th century, Samoans have always driven on the right. The Government plans to change that on September 7, making it the first country to swap sides since Ghana in 1974. The rationale is that the switch will encourage Samoans' relatives in Australia and New Zealand to send home their used right-hand-drive cars. At present, most vehicles on the streets of the archipelago are American left-hand drives. <http://www.nzherald.co.nz/>

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