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NETSWork

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

December 15, 2009

LATEST ROAD SAFETY NEWS

Drunken driving fatalities down 7% in USA

Source: *USA Today*, December 7, 2009

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the drunken-driving fatality rate in the USA declined about 7% from 2007 to 2008, continuing a decades-long drop. Drunken-driving deaths have been trending downward since 1982; two years after Mothers Against Drunk Driving began focusing attention on the issue. There were 11,773 such fatalities in 2008, a 44% drop from the 21,113 in 1982, according to NHTSA and U.S. Department of Transportation data. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood attributes the drop to aggressive enforcement efforts by various states. States that target drunken driving saw their DUI fatality rates drop from 2007 to 2008. LaHood, White House drug czar Gil Kerlikowske and John Saunders of the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) recently launched the annual national winter holiday crackdown on impaired driving. Thousands of law enforcement agencies across the USA will be targeting drunken driving in the campaign, which runs through New Year's Day. Each state has its own version. To read the full article, including statistics on alcohol-related traffic deaths by state go to: <http://www.usatoday.com/>

States take innovative approaches to send clear message to would-be drunk drivers

Source: *GHSA*, December 7, 2009

The nationwide holiday crackdown on impaired driving--Over the limit, under arrest--takes place December 16 through January 3. All over the country, highway safety agencies will be conducting a period of increased law enforcement presence on the roadways to prevent the needless tragedies associated with drunk driving. The federal and state governments are also purchasing paid advertising to deter drunk drivers and remind the public about the enhanced enforcement presence on the roadways.

Numerous states are utilizing various new media approaches such as Twitter to share the safe driving message. In addition, Colorado is debuting a new iPhone application to help citizens estimate Blood Alcohol Content level, while the state of Washington is sharing its enforcement message in online gaming ads on Xbox 360 Live. Each state has its own version of enforcement and communication on the campaign.

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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.

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Note from the editor

All links to stories have

To view a summary compiled by GHSA of each state's activities, go to: <http://www.ghsa.org/html/projects/OTLUA/holiday09.html>. To read the full article, go to: <http://campaign.constantcontact.com/>

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

U.S. teens ignore laws against texting while driving

Source: Reuters, December 11, 2009

Despite the growing number of laws against the practice, many teens continue to send and read text messages while driving. Already 19 states and the District of Columbia ban texting by all drivers, while 9 others prohibit it by young drivers. The effectiveness of these laws has yet to be determined, with at least one state reporting a small increase in driver texting after the ban. The federal government supports the prohibition of texting while driving, and President Obama has issued a ban for federal employees.

To see the full article, go to: <http://www.reuters.com>

Older drivers may be ignoring drinking and driving warnings

Source: Vancouver News 1130, December 11, 2009

Younger generations of Canadians are getting the message about planning a ride home before a night out, it's the older generations who are not, concludes Mothers Against Drunk Driving Canada. According to MADD Canada, campaigns targeting young people have been working. It's the older generations that think they can make it home safe after a few glasses of wine. MADD Canada notes that police across the country are noticing younger adults are pooling their money for cabs or making sure there's a designated driver. To see the full article, go to <http://www.news1130.com/>

Cell phone use while walking reduces pedestrian safety

Source: TheImpactLab.com, November 25, 2009

Two studies have shown the risk of distraction from cell phones does not just apply to drivers. Pedestrians are also at greater risk if they talk while walking. The studies, in which participants crossed a virtual street while talking on the phone or listening to music, found that the music-listeners were able to navigate traffic as well as the average unencumbered pedestrian. Users of hands-free cell phones, however, took longer to cross the same street under the same conditions and were more likely to get run over.

To see the full article, go to: <http://www.impactlab.com/>

D.C. junks car safety inspections: Will others, too?

Source: USA TODAY, December 12, 2009

The District of Columbia recently decided to drop the requirement for motor vehicle safety inspections. Performed at a D.C. facility along with emissions tests, the safety checks were dropped for an annual savings to the city of about \$400,000. City officials justified the cut by citing a lack of data proving periodic safety inspections save lives. The Center for Automotive Safety says this is a dangerous trend, claiming that as much as one-third of crashes can be linked to improper vehicle maintenance. Currently, 19 states still require inspections, but advocates worry that some will follow in D.C.'s footsteps and decide to rethink the cost.

To see the full article, go to: <http://www.usatoday.com/>

Animal-vehicle collisions increasing

Source: *Automotive Fleet*, November 25, 2009

Animal-vehicle collisions have increased 110 percent in the United States during the past 18 years, according to a new report from the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute. According to the report, Relationships Between Lighting and Animal-Vehicle Collisions, there were 106 traffic fatalities in the United States resulting from animal-vehicle collisions in 1990. By 2007, that level had risen to 223. Texas, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan are the leading states in absolute numbers of fatal animal-vehicle collisions. Using data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), Sullivan analyzed the influence of posted speed limits on the odds of a fatal animal-vehicle collision occurring in darkness. The report indicates that the relative risk of animal-vehicle collisions in darkness versus daylight appears to be associated with posted speed limit. Higher posted speeds result in proportionally greater crash risk in darkness.

To see the full article, go to: <http://www.automotive-fleet.com>

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WORK - HOME

Older driver safety awareness week

Source: *American Occupational Therapy Association*, December 2009

Older Driver Safety Awareness Week (December 6–12, 2009) aimed to promote understanding of the importance of mobility and transportation to ensure older adults remain active in the community--shopping, working or volunteering--with the confidence that transportation will not be the barrier to strand them at home. Throughout the week, the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) brought attention to a different aspect of older driver safety each day. For information and tools targeted to both family members and practitioners on different aspects of older driver safety, go to: <http://www.aota.org/>

Students pledge not to text and drive kicking off Allstate's campaign, "X the Text"

Source: *9news.com*, December 1, 2009

The students at Montebello High School in Denver, CO will be adding their thumbprints to a pledge banner during an event at the school hosted by the Allstate Foundation. The banner will eventually circulate to more than 30 cities across the country, as part of the "X the Text" campaign, a nationwide effort to educate teens about the dangers of texting and driving. The non-profit, which is founded and funded by Allstate, recently found 82 percent of teens admit to texting while driving and at least 49 percent of them are extremely distracted by the practice. The campaign was launched at the high school days before a new law takes effect in the state making the practice illegal.

To see the full article, go to: <http://www.9news.com/>

AAA test of older drivers goes online

Source: *New York Times (Wheels Blog)*, December 8, 2009

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety is making its computer program that assesses the ability of older drivers available free online. The program, Roadwise Review, is designed to help older drivers test their abilities through exercises that measure eight physical and mental areas that can predict crash risk, including memory, visual processing speed, leg strength, and head and neck flexibility. The program allows users to check their driving skills at home. The online version automatically uninstalls itself after use, but allows users to save results. No personal data or scores are reported, so results remain confidential. The online introduction is in conjunction with the American Occupational Therapy Association's Older Driver Safety Awareness Week that took place December 6-12.

To try the program, click <http://www.seniordrivers.org/>

U.S. teens report 'frightening' levels of texting while driving

Source: *The Washington Post*, November 17, 2009

A new study found that more than a quarter of teens admit to sending text messages while driving. The study -- by the Pew Research Center -- also found that they may be learning the behavior from their parents as many report that their parents also text while driving. According to NHTSA, teenagers and drivers younger than 30 have the highest rates of fatal accidents attributed to distracted driving. The Washington Post recently reported that distracted driving caused 5,870 deaths last year and injured 515,000 people.

To see the full article, go to: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/>

Progressive Insurance will be tracking how you drive--if you want

Source: *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, December 12, 2009

A new program from Progressive Insurance Co. gives discounts to drivers who let the auto insurer track some of their driving habits with a wireless device. By plugging a cartridge into the on-board diagnostic system, information on miles traveled, acceleration, braking, and what time of day you drive is sent to the company in real-time. That information is used to determine whether you are eligible for a discount of up to 30 percent. In the worst case, the driver would get no discount. The company won't use the information to raise rates for people who prove to be bad drivers.

To see the full article, go to: <http://www.cleveland.com/>

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WORKPLACE ROAD SAFETY

MARTA: "stringent" ban on driver distractions

Source: *Atlanta Constitution Journal*, December 10, 2009

The Metro Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) has enacted what is considered to be the most stringent distracted driving policy in the nation. MARTA employees are now prohibited from operating MARTA equipment while using a cell phone or other electronic device, or while eating, drinking, reading, reaching for fallen items or otherwise engaging in distracting activities. The policy applies to almost all MARTA employees, including those driving MARTA-owned cars or personal cars on official business, or operating moving equipment.

To see the full article, go to: <http://www.ajc.com>

Fleet safety and risk management -- Are you steering your

company toward a massive iceberg?

Source: *BerryFocused.com*

Employers know about the human risks associated with on-the-job vehicle crashes caused by cell phone usage, but do they understand the impact on productivity loss and related costs? Bowan Spanbroek from FleetCare lays out the full scope of the risk posed by driver distraction to fleet operators. He also presents the benefits of new software packages that can track and enforce compliance to company mobile phone usage policies.

To see the full article, go to: <http://www.berryfocused.com/>

Company seeks savings, safety from smart driving

Source: *Forbes.com*, December 11, 2009

Canadian-based oil and gas producer, EnCana, is interested in saving gas, cutting pollution and, most importantly, keeping their drivers safe. EnCana teamed up with the city of Denver last year in what was believed to be the first-of-its-kind experiment to test whether drivers could reduce emissions by adjusting their driving styles. The company gave the city a \$400,000 grant for the project, which included 160 city vehicles, 240 private vehicles and 30 EnCana employees. A small black box type device was developed to track hard braking, rapid acceleration, speeding, idling, fuel efficiency and the amount of nighttime driving. City officials said the results showed a 10 percent drop in vehicle emissions and overall better driving, including a 35 percent decrease in idling.

To see the full article go to: <http://www.forbes.com/>

Driver Training: Where is it heading in 2010?

Source: *BusinessCar Magazine (UK)*

A 30-year veteran of the United Kingdom's fleet driver-training industry examines the evolution of the education sector and where its future lies. Steve Johnson examines the role that technology, cost and regulations will have on the way companies address their fleet training needs. "A decade ago most people's idea of 'fleet driver training' was in-vehicle, practical training with a qualified instructor alongside," said Johnson, "It's a very different picture today."

To see the full article, go to: <http://www.businesscar.co.uk/>

Who crashes the most? Car accidents by occupation

Source: *Insure.com*, November 20, 2009

Quality Planning Corp., a company that validates policy-holder information for car insurance companies, has collected statistics about car accidents and speeding based on profession. Some insurers will take profession into account when they calculate car insurance rates and some professions are eligible for discounts. However, it's a very small factor in a complicated formula.

To see the top 10 crashers by profession along with Insure.com's own speculation on the reason for their crash rates, go to: <http://www.insure.com/>

Give employees the gift of safety; join the drive against distraction

Source: *Fast Lane Blog – US Secretary of Transportation*, November 25, 2009

US Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood offers sound advice regarding the

dangers of distracted driving for workers who drive as part of their job. In his Fast Lane blog, he writes, "HEY YOU. Let it ring. No call--none--can be worth the risk you invite by answering it. Later, tell your boss or your client you were driving and it would have been unsafe to answer." LaHood also urged all employers to follow the example of the federal government and adopt firm policies to combat driver distraction.

To see the full article, go to: <http://fastlane.dot.gov/>

Heroes in the "Drive Against Distraction" encourage employers to prohibit distracted driving

Source: Fast Lane Blog – US Secretary of Transportation, November 23, 2009

US Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood recognized some of the many people and organizations fighting the battle against distracted driving in his Fast Lane blog. Among those recognized by LaHood was Working Mothers Magazine for adding a question about driving and texting policies to its annual survey to find the best employers. The National Safety Council was recognized for creating resources for employers and the group Stop Texting and Driving Now was listed for offering The Employer Awareness Membership program (TEAM).

To see the full article, go to: <http://fastlane.dot.gov/>

Firms can save by going green

Source: Chicago Sun Times, November 16, 2009

Corporate fleets are historically not fuel-efficient, but the Environmental Defense Fund is promoting Green Driver — an attempt to "green" corporate fleets, making them more efficient and less polluting. Some corporations adopt green fleet programs to be more environmentally friendly, while others just want to save money. Whatever the motive, the result is the same -- a gallon of gas not burned means 19.5 pounds of carbon dioxide that doesn't go into the air. Corporations often get big discounts on fleet purchases, which may bring in vehicles automakers have in quantity, like SUVs and minivans. But high gas prices last year got the attention of fleet managers, and made them more focused on fuel efficiency.

To see the full article, go to: <http://www.suntimes.com/>

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INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Heading to Grandma's? There's an app for that

Source: Sacramento Bee, December 13, 2009

As government officials work on new laws to address the issue of distracted drivers, many entrepreneurs are already launching technology based solutions to address this growing problem. Sometimes referred to as "nanny software," these programs are designed to save technology-addicted drivers from their worst impulses, notably chatting on handheld cell phones and sending text messages. One application reads incoming text messages aloud and automatically sends a response, "Hey, I'm driving, txt u later." Another application issues a message when you start your car. Its creator recorded his daughter's voice: "Hi, Daddy. It's me, Grace. I love you and wanted to remind you to drive safe."

To see the full article, go to: <http://www.sacbee.com/>

Cars that 'think' may help drivers who don't

Source: *Swinburne Institute of Technology*

The cars of tomorrow will be able to consider such factors as weather and traffic conditions and may even be able to suggest the most "green" route. When low on fuel, it will identify where the nearest fuel stations are, which one has the lowest price that day and which ones are offering loyalty program bonuses. These scenarios are examples of how future motor vehicles may incorporate so-called "context aware" systems, through which the range of applications will be limited only by imagination. Australia's Cooperative Research Centre for Advanced Automotive Technology is pushing to improve road safety and vehicle efficiency, and ease the stress of driving by exploring this new field of technology.

To read the full article, go to: <http://www.swinburne.edu.au/>

Cable guardrail works - MDOT's You Tube channel shows why

Source: *Michigan Department of Transportation, December 7, 2009*

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is using social media to tell motorists about the benefits of its 280-mile cable guardrail program. The message is now playing on the MDOT You Tube channel at www.youtube.com/MichiganDOT.

Cross-median crashes are three times more deadly than other freeway crashes. Cable guardrail is designed to prevent vehicles from crossing the median and is expected to reduce cross-median crashes by an estimated 90 percent. In addition to reducing the severity of crashes, cable guardrail is a very cost-effective safety measure when compared to other barriers. Cable guardrail only costs \$12-15 per foot, while steel "W-beam" guardrail costs \$28-33 per foot and concrete barrier has a cost of \$80 or more per foot.

To see the full article, go to: <http://www.michigan.gov/>

Autoliv develops next generation alcohol sensing system to prevent impaired driving

Source: *Autoliv News release (via BusinessWire.com), December 10, 2009*

Autoliv Inc. announced that it has been selected as a partner to participate in the recently announced alcohol sensing feasibility project co-sponsored by the Automotive Coalition for Traffic Safety (ACTS) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

NHTSA estimates that one third of all traffic fatalities in the US are alcohol related in some form. An alcohol sensor that prevents impaired-driving could have saved many of these lives. However, most consumers and vehicle manufacturers have resisted installing these systems. By making the detection system quicker, less intrusive, and less expensive than today's systems, the funded project aims to gain greater public acceptance for an in-vehicle alcohol detection system in all cars.

To see the full article, go to: <http://www.businesswire.com/>

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US DOT NEWS

Feds creating real-time traffic information alerts

Source: *Examiner*, December 6, 2009

The US Department of Transportation will soon issue rules for a new real-time information system to provide all states with the ability to monitor traffic and travel conditions, then share that information with each other and drivers. The proposal is expected to call for the system to be available on all interstates within two years and for other major routes within four years. The program could be expensive -- \$1.2 billion -- but that is far less than the \$30.2 billion cost attributed to traffic congestion. To see the full article, go to: <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/>

Obama picks Senate aide as NHTSA chief

Source: *Detroit News*, December 4, 2009

President Barack Obama announced December 4 that he nominated David L. Strickland, a senior Senate aide, as the new head of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration -- a position that has a critical impact on vehicle safety regulations. As senior Democratic counsel to the Senate Commerce Committee since August 2001, Strickland played a major role in pressing environmental rules and regulations. He also helped write auto safety legislation and the "Do Not Call" registry law. As senior counsel to the Consumer Protection, Product Safety and Insurance Subcommittee, he is the leading staff expert on fuel economy and vehicle safety. For more than 10 months, the agency has been run by an acting administrator, Ron Medford.

To see the full article, go to: <http://www.detnews.com/>

NHTSA proposes passenger ejection crash safety test

Source: *Motor Trend*, December 1, 2009

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has proposed a new crash safety test in hopes of reducing passenger ejections through side windows. The test involves propelling an impact device toward the side windows up to four times in order to simulate a rollover. Per the NHTSA, the mass is based on that of a 50th percentile male's upper torso on the window opening during an occupant ejection. The requirement would measure how far the impact device moves beyond the window's plane. This new standard, if applied, would affect just passenger-adjacent side windows of most vehicles.

To see the full article, go to: <http://wot.motortrend.com/>

NHTSA releases new research on run-off-the-road crashes

Source: *NHTSA*, November 17, 2009

Drowsy driving, inattentiveness and vehicle overcorrection are common factors in a high percentage of fatal crashes analyzed in a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration study of single vehicle run-off-the-road crashes. In the study released Nov. 17, researchers reviewed crashes recorded between 1991 and 2007 in NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System. The study showed 91.2 percent of drivers were most likely sleepy, 75.4 percent were inattentive and 85.6 percent had overcorrected the vehicle. Additional factors and conditions include alcohol use, curved roads, speeding, rural roadways, high speed limits and adverse weather.

To download a pdf of the full report, go to: <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/>

U.S. Transportation Secretary announces \$280 million for streetcars

Source: US DOT News Release, December 1, 2009

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced the availability of \$280 million for urban circulator projects such as streetcars, buses, and bus facilities. "This represents a significant effort to promote livable communities, improve the quality of life for more Americans and create more transportation choices that serve the needs of individual communities," Secretary LaHood said. A maximum amount of \$25 million per project will be made available from approximately \$130 million in unallocated discretionary New Starts/Small Starts Program funds. Eligible projects include streetcars and other urban circulator systems. Priority will be given to projects that connect destinations and foster the redevelopment of communities into walkable, mixed use, high-density environments.

To see the full news release, go to: <http://www.dot.gov/>

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INTERNATIONAL ROAD SAFETY NEWS

More UK drivers speaking on mobile phones

Source: Reuters UK, December 11, 2009

The number of British drivers illegally using hand-held mobiles at the wheel has doubled in the past two years, according to a study by the Transport Research Laboratory. The observational research found that 2.8 percent of drivers were speaking on mobile phones. Women under the age of 30 were found to be the most likely to use their phones while driving. These drivers are ignoring the stiff fines and penalties across Britain.

To see the full article, go to:

<http://uk.reuters.com/>

Bloomberg pledges \$125 million to reduce traffic deaths

Source: The Wall Street Journal, November 18, 2009

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg pledged \$125 million in November to reduce the number of deaths and injuries from traffic accidents in developing countries, where poor roads and lax law enforcement exact a heavy toll. The donation is the largest ever made to curb traffic deaths and injuries, the World Health Organization said. The money will go to six organizations over five years to strengthen traffic safety laws and police training, advocate for infrastructure improvements like highway overpasses, and to conduct road safety assessments in 10 countries.

To see the full article, go to: <http://online.wsj.com/>

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