

Katie Bower named director of the OHSP

There are common threads woven through the fabric of Katie Bower's family and career.

For Bower, recently named director of the Office of Highway Safety Planning, public service and law enforcement are stitched into the family DNA.

Her father, Ret. Sgt. Casimer Szocinski, began his career with the Michigan State Police (MSP) in 1947 and served 25 years before retiring in



1972. He then coordinated and served on the Oral Appraisal Board, which included testing for new trooper hires, until 1987.

At 100 years old, Sgt. Szocinski, who served mainly out of the Jackson post and

MSP headquarters' Traffic Safety Division, is the oldest living MSP trooper.

Bower's husband, David, recently retired from MSP after 31 years of service, and her daughter, Kelcie, works at MSP as a crime analyst.

"The first steps in my career path began with my father's example and encouragement," Bower said. "He dedicated 40 years of his life helping people through his work in public service and safety, and I wanted to do the same. I always thought MSP was a cool place to work."

Bower said her new position as OHSP director continues that connection and brings it full circle in the area of traffic safety.

"I'm proud of the fact that my father was instrumental in saving many lives during his decades of service," Bower said. "Not only did he witness the dawning of traffic safety efforts in Michigan, he played an integral part in making our roadways safer."

Bower succeeds Michael L. Prince, who served as OHSP director for 18 years before retiring in December 2021.

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Katie Bower, OHSP director

Bower brings a wealth of experience and versatility to the OHSP:

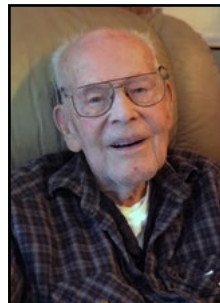
- She began her career with MSP in 1994 as a grant administrator with the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES).

- In 2001, Bower transferred to the MSP Criminal Justice Information Center (CJIC) to become manager of firearm programs. She also oversaw the crime analysis unit and the financial section and served as the department's Freedom of Information Act coordinator.

- From 2007 to 2018, Bower served as the assistant division director for CJIC, with a wide breadth of oversight. She also oversaw the traffic crash records unit – part of the Traffic Records Coordinating Committee – and served as chair for two years.

- From 2018 to 2022, she was the division director of the Business Compliance and Regulation Division at the Department of State, overseeing the licensing and regulation of automotive

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At 100 years old, Bower's father, Ret. Sgt. Casimer Szocinski, is the oldest living Michigan State Police trooper. His career at MSP began in 1947.

Teen safe-driving program begins its 12th year

Student-led initiative is accepting applications

Students at every Michigan high school have a chance to make a difference in their communities and help their fellow teens become better drivers by participating in this year's Strive for a Safer Drive (S4SD) program.

Entering its 12th year, S4SD is a joint effort between the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) and



Ford Motor Company Fund, the philanthropic arm of Ford.

The goal of the initiative is to reduce

the leading cause of death for teens: traffic crashes.

In 2021, teens and young adults aged 15 to 20 accounted for 9.1 percent (103) of all traffic fatalities in Michigan, with 63.1 percent (65) of those deaths being the driver. That is an increase over 2020 when that same age group accounted for 7.3 percent (79) of all traffic fatalities, with 51.9 percent (41) of those deaths being the driver.

Risky and dangerous behavior,

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To view teen-driver campaigns created during last year's S4SD program, click [here](#)

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MADD recognizes Dewane with Lifesaver Award

By Kinga Canike and Ken Stecker
Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan

Each year, the Michigan chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) recognizes a prosecutor who has gone above and beyond the call of duty in prosecuting cases involving intoxicated drivers.

This year's recipient of the David M. Schieber MADD Lifesaver Award is John Dewane, a Deputy Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney with the Ingham County Prosecutors Office.

Dewane was recently recognized for his vertical prosecution of the high-profile case of *People v Damorous Church*, which involved second-degree murder and Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) causing death charges.

Multiple witnesses saw the defendant driving more than 100 miles an

hour, tailgating, and passing vehicles on I-96. When attempting to pass a vehicle on the shoulder, he lost control of his vehicle and eventually hit a tree, rear-end first. The only two other passengers—the defendant's 8-year-old son and 9-year-old daughter—were killed in the crash. The defendant's hospital blood results revealed an ethanol plasma level of 130.

At jury trial, a toxicologist converted the plasma findings to whole blood to meet the legal criteria for OWI (1.16-.112 g/ml blood).



John Dewane, a Deputy Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney with the Ingham County Prosecutors Office, left, receives the MADD Lifesaver Award from Ingham County Assistant Chief Michael Cheltenham.

The defendant took the stand and lied about drinking despite recorded jail calls wherein he admitted to doing shots of alcohol while driving.

A jury convicted the defendant of two counts of second-degree murder and two counts of OWI causing death.

Dewane and the lead investigator now utilize the case as a training aid for the local Ingham Regional Crash Investigation Team. The training focuses on factors that elevate a fatal alcohol crash to a possible murder charge.

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dealers, repair shops, and mechanics. She also oversaw licensing and regulation of teen and motorcycle driving programs, as well as skills testing for teen, motorcycle and commercial vehicles.

Katie and David, who live in DeWitt, have been married for 25 years. They have two children: Kelcie and Trent, a fourth-year college student. Katie grew up in the Lansing area and is an avid runner who also "loves to travel."

Bower, who earned a bachelor's degree in human resources management from Spring Arbor University, is excited about the future of traffic safety planning.

"We have more resources, data, and technology available to us than ever before to help address traffic safety issues," Bower said. "I look forward to working with our experienced team at OHSP and our many partners to make our roadways safer."



Katie Bower is the new director of the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning. Katie stands in front of the OHSP's "Road to Safety" timeline, which charts the history of traffic safety in Michigan.



The *Michigan Guide for Aging Drivers and Their Families* was developed to improve older-driver safety by providing aging drivers, their families, and caregivers with valuable information and resources.

For more about the guide, please [click here](#).



Study: These fixes to road safety could prevent many deaths

A recent article in *Forbes* said that more than half a million deaths could be prevented each year if drivers would modify their behavior.

By ensuring people wear helmets and seat belts, respect speed limits, and do not drive while drunk, many lives could be saved, according to a new study.

KEY FACTS

Anywhere from 25 to 40 percent of road deaths could be prevented by targeting speeding, drunk driving, and helmet and seat-belt wearing in 185 countries each year, researchers estimated using a systematic literature review of peer-reviewed studies.

- Tackling speeding with changes such as infrastructure improvement or electronic speed controls would save the most deaths—more than 340,000 annually—researchers estimated, while enforcing rules on motorcycle helmet and seat-belt use could prevent more than 120,000 fatalities.

- In the U.S., about 43,000 lives could be saved each year by targeting all four of these factors, according to the paper, one in a series of studies published recently in the *Lancet* focused on road safety.

- The majority of traffic deaths are preventable, Dr. Adnan Hyder, coordinator of the study series and professor of global health at George Washington University's Milken Institute School of Public Health, said in a statement, adding deaths continue to rise annually in low-income countries while "progress in high-income countries has slowed over the past decade."

BIG NUMBER

Nearly 1.4 million. That's how many people die each year from traffic injuries, while 50 million people are injured annually.

More than 90 percent of those deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries.

CRUCIAL QUOTE

"There have been many successes on road safety at the global level including its inclusion in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, but the rhetoric has yet to deliver

results on the ground," said series co-author Dr. Margie Peden of the George Institute for Global Health in the United Kingdom. "A real, sustained decline in global road traffic injuries and deaths will only happen with a focus on implementation of effective interventions and concerted country action."

Researchers estimated that anywhere from 25 to 40 percent of road deaths could be prevented each year by targeting speeding, drunk driving, and helmet and seat belt wearing in 185 countries.

KEY BACKGROUND

Road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death worldwide for those aged 5 to 29, while low- and middle-income countries see the greatest number of deaths and injuries from traffic incidents, which are continuing to rise.

In the U.S. in 2021, traffic deaths hit the highest level in 15 years, with more than 42,000 dying in motor vehicle traffic crashes, a 10 percent surge from 2020.

Members of the United Nations in 2015 adopted more than a dozen sustainable development goals to improve the lives of people around the world, including cutting traffic and injury deaths in half by 2030, but the world is at "great risk" of not achieving this goal, researchers in one of the studies contended. They suggested it may be harder for governments to achieve this goal, as they've had to shift their priorities amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Researchers argued governments should focus on minimum drinking age laws, seat belt and helmet laws, enforcement of speeding laws, and lower blood-alcohol content level requirements for new drivers, all of which have been proven to prevent traffic deaths.

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such as speeding or distracted driving, and inexperience are the primary factors contributing to teen driver fatalities.

S4SD encourages teens to talk to other teens and community members about making safe-driving choices. Schools will develop and implement a student-led, peer-to-peer traffic safety awareness campaign. Topics may include speeding; seat belts; pedestrian, bicyclist, and passenger safety; and impaired, distracted, nighttime, and winter driving.

Participating schools will each receive \$1,000 to conduct their campaign. Once the projects are completed, student teams at each school will submit a video or PowerPoint outlining their campaign.

Schools with the top-five winning campaigns will receive cash prizes ranging from \$500 to \$1,500.

As part of Ford Fund's commitment to the campaign, all participating schools will have the opportunity to send students to a free Ford Driving Skills for Life hands-on driving clinic next spring.

Professional driving instructors from across the country will teach teens key skills such as hazard recognition, speed and space management, and vehicle handling with hands-on instruction.

Since the 2011 creation of S4SD, 178 different Michigan high schools have participated in the program.

The OHSP has partnered with the Transportation Improvement Association to coordinate activities of the S4SD program.

For more information, visit www.michigan.gov/S4SD.

INSIDE THE OHSP

STAFF PROFILE

Jessica Beyer

HIGHWAY SAFETY RESOURCE MATERIALS UNIT

Jessica has been serving OHSP partners and the public in her work with the Michigan State Police distributing traffic safety materials for three years from the MSP warehouse.

What do you like most about your job?

Meeting and talking with new people every day!



What are you most proud of at work?

I have had the opportunity to speak with people who are doing some truly amazing work within their communities to promote traffic safety. Being able to hear their stories and help them (even in a small way) to continue doing what they are passionate about is something that makes me proud.

What are your interests and hobbies?

Hiking; reading; and spending time with my son, dog, family, and friends.

What's your favorite vacation spot?

Anywhere I can relax and unplug for awhile.

October

- National Pedestrian Safety Month
- 16-22: Teen Driver Safety Week

OHSP VIDEO FILES



The OHSP produced a new video for its teen safe-driving programs, with a message to parents about the importance of talking to their teens on the dangers of speeding. The commercial is called "Put Your Foot Down." To view the video, click on the video still or [here](#).

Emily Shinevar named new P&A Manager

Emily Shinevar has been selected as the OHSP's new Planning and Administration Section Manager. Emily most recently served as the OHSP's Vulnerable Roadway Users Program Coordinator.

Emily has been with the OHSP for more than five years and with the State of Michigan for nearly 12.

Congratulations, Emily!

Emily and Alicia Sledge, OHSP Program Management Section Manager, will continue working together on the Vulnerable Roadway Users Program until that position is filled.

"Besides congratulating Emily on a well-deserved promotion, I would like to give a special thanks



to Charlotte Kilvington for serving as acting P&A Section Manager over the past several months," Sledge said. "Thank you for your leadership and direction Charlotte as you leave the P&A Section in great hands!"

OHSP WELCOMES

Zada Schriener

The OHSP recently welcomed Zada Schriener as its new Financial Management Section Manager.

Prior to joining the OHSP, Zada was with the Michigan Department of State (MDOS) Finance Team for more than 14 years and served as the MDOS Expenditure Manager since 2017.

She worked on the SIGMA implementation team as a DTMB training lead for more than three years. Before joining the SIGMA Project, she was an MDOS budget analyst, and accountant in the expenditure unit.

Zada is married and lives in Grass Lake with Shef the dog. She enjoys spending time with family and friends and traveling.

Welcome, Zada!