



STATE OF MICHIGAN

GOVERNOR'S TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMISSION
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

KATIE BOWER
CHAIR

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tim Wheeler of Wheeler Creative Studios to receive award from Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Commission

Tim Wheeler of Wheeler Creative Studios is being recognized by the Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Commission (GTSAC) for creating another platform for police officers to speak with children on many health and safety issues. The GTSAC honors organizations, programs and individuals for distinguished involvement in traffic safety.

Wheeler will be presented with an Outstanding Traffic Safety Achievement Award on Wednesday, June 14, at the GTSAC's award celebration, which starts at 11:45 a.m. The ceremony will be at the DeVos Place during the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning's 26th annual Traffic Safety Summit in Grand Rapids.

As the founder of Wheeler Creative Studios and the creator of Cartoonversation, Wheeler designed his award-winning cartoons and books to help children laugh and talk about life's challenges. Cartoonversation offers free online cartoons that address a host of difficult topics. The program has been designed to help law enforcement engage with kids in a positive, nonthreatening way.

Starting in 2020, Muskegon-area law enforcement and Safe Kids West Michigan partnered with Wheeler and Wheeler Creative Studios. The goal of the partnership was to expand his already successful "Ride With Pride: The Adventures of Riley Wynn Pride" program into elementary schools to reach students at a much younger age.

The results of the endeavor were three Cartoonversation Read-Along books titled "Riley Pledges to Wear a Helmet," "Riley Pledges to Wear a Seat Belt" and "Riley Pledges to be Kind." In 2022, two additional books were released: "Riley Pledges to Ride With Pride" and "Riley Pledges to Get the Most out of School."

The GTSAC was formed in 2002 to serve as the state's forum for identifying key traffic safety challenges and developing and implementing plans to address those issues. The commission includes representatives from the departments of State Police, Transportation, Education, State, and Health & Human Services, as well as the Office of the Governor, the Aging and Adult Services Agency, and the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning. There are also three representatives from local government appointed by the governor.

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Katie Bower, Office of Highway Safety Planning • Steven Kiefer, Governor's Office • Robert Gwizdz, Department of State
• Gregg Brunner, Department of Transportation • Linda Scarpetta, Department of Health and Human Services
Maj. Ryan Pennell, Department of State Police • Ashley Ellsworth, Health and Aging Services Agency • William Miller, Local Representative
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