



SAFETY MATTERS!

WINTER 2010

Dear Safety Partners,

It is tough to pick up a newspaper or magazine these days or watch a newscast without seeing a story regarding the dangers of distracted driving. In fact, since the September 2009 Distracted Driving Summit in Washington, DC that brought together affected families, law enforcement, researchers and traffic safety professionals, much has occurred both nationally and here in New York State.

United States Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and the National Safety Council have announced the creation of FocusDriven, the first national nonprofit organization devoted to educating motorists of the dangers of distracted driving. This group is a grass root organization led by victims of distracted driving crashes. FocusDriven's website, www.focusdriven.org, contains information on distracted driving, help for victims and family members and ways to get involved in the cause. I urge you to visit this site and also the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) new website on distracted driving www.distraction.gov. Both websites show Secretary LaHood's dedication to raising awareness about the dangers of distracted driving and to reducing crashes from this horrible pandemic.

It is no surprise that New York is also at the forefront of trying to solve this new traffic safety concern. Recently, the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC) applied for and was awarded a \$200,000 NHTSA demonstration project grant to conduct four high visibility enforcement waves focusing on distracted driving. The city of Syracuse was selected as the demonstration site. Soon our partners at both the state and local level will be out in force writing citations in a selected area that has previously been saturated with media messages focusing on the dangers of distracted driving. The personal and observational surveys conducted prior to and after the waves will determine if high visibility enforcement waves reduce the occurrence of distracted driving incidents. We anticipate having preliminary results from the first wave for our next newsletter.

From all of your friends at GTSC, we wish you a healthy, happy, and "DISTRACTION-FREE" Spring 2010 and we look forward to our continued partnerships throughout the year.

Sincerely,

Charles R. DeWeese
GTSC Assistant Commissioner



David A. Paterson
Governor

David J. Swarts
GTSC Chair

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PRESS CONFERENCE ON DROWSY DRIVING HELD AT HVCC

Assistant Commissioner Chuck DeWeese of the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC) was joined at a press conference by Emmanuel Laury, a member of the student advocacy group Project Aware, and Dr. Ramez J. Awwad, a certified sleep medicine physician from Capital Region Sleep Wake. The purpose of the event was to help warn motorists of the dangers of drowsy driving. The event was conducted at Hudson Valley Community College in Troy, NY, to highlight the impact of drowsy driving on young drivers, one of the most at-risk groups.

"Drowsy drivers can be just as dangerous on our highways as those who drive while under the influence of alcohol and exhibit other reckless behaviors," Assistant Commissioner DeWeese said. "Fatigue impairs driving ability, lengthens reaction time and increases the risk of a crash. When combined with inexperience, the risk is even greater."

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death of young people ages 16-24 and fatigue is a common contributing factor. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, each year in America drowsy driving causes 100,000 crashes, resulting in an estimated 1,500 fatalities, 71,000 injuries and \$12.5 billion in monetary losses. In fact, in New York State last year there were 4,585 crashes where the driver was identified as having fallen asleep or was drowsy that resulted in 23 fatalities. Studies show that 36 percent of teens drive drowsy on a regular

basis and out of all of the crashes caused by fatigue, a full 55 percent involve drivers under the age of 25.

While falling asleep at the wheel is the most obvious example, drowsy driving can be as simple as not paying attention to driving due to fatigue or sleep deprivation. The warning signs of drowsy driving include difficulty in keeping a person's eyes open, repeated yawning, wandering or disconnected thoughts, drifting from the driving lane and failure to remember the last few miles driven.

To avoid drowsiness while driving, it is recommended that drivers get adequate sleep before they drive and take breaks about every 100 miles or two hours. Drivers on long trips should also bring a passenger to help keep them awake and share the driving responsibilities. Of course, motorists should never drink alcohol before driving and people should be aware of the potential side effects of any medications they might be taking, as some may cause drowsiness.

Opening a window, turning on air conditioning or playing loud music should not be relied upon to overcome sleep deprivation and caffeine provides only a short-term increase in driver alertness. Drivers who experience drowsiness should pull over to find a safe place to rest or to sleep for the night.

Driver safety tips and information are available by visiting the DMV's web site at www.nysdmv.com or the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee web site at www.safeny.com.



L to r: Assistant Commissioner Chuck DeWeese of GTSC and Dr. Ramez J. Awwad

Article and photo provided by GTSC staff.



GTSC STOP-DWI AWARENESS NIGHT Nassau County Coliseum



On December 17th the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC) in cooperation with the DMV Division of Field Investigation (DFI) held its first in a series of eight STOP-DWI Awareness Nights that are scheduled statewide during 2010. This event took place at the Nassau Coliseum in Uniondale, NY before a capacity crowd of over 15,000 for a National Hockey League (NHL) game where the New York Islanders hosted the New York Rangers. Also partnering with GTSC and DMV for the event was NYS DOT, the Nassau County STOP-DWI Program and Traffic Safety Board, the Nassau County District Attorney's Office, and law enforcement agencies of Nassau County.

The purpose and goal of the STOP-DWI Awareness Nights is to assist GTSC in delivering traffic safety messages to thousands of drivers and passengers alike, to heighten awareness, and to educate the public on the risks and consequences associated with impaired driving. These events provide opportunities to deliver our messages through public service announcements, signage, educational materials, giveaways, programs, posters, and PA announcements during the games. Spectators at the games also have the opportunity to test their skills on the DMV Driving Simulator and may also experience first-hand, the effects of alcohol impairment by wearing the Fatal Vision Goggles while being chaperoned. Police departments that participated with us in Nassau

County conducted targeted alcohol enforcement activities in conjunction with the event that resulted in eleven (11) arrests for driving while intoxicated.

The next seven STOP-DWI Awareness Nights will take place in cooperation with the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) at college basketball games, at a minor league baseball game, and a stock car racing event held on the following dates and locations:

- 2/05/10 - Marist College vs. Manhattan College @ Manhattan College, NYC
- 2/08/10 - Fairfield University vs. Siena College @ Times Union Center, Albany
- 2/12/10 - Siena College vs. Niagara University @ Niagara University, Lewiston
- 3/07/10 - MAAC Basketball Tournament Semi-Finals @ Times Union Center, Albany
- 3/08/10 - MAAC Basketball Championship Game @ Times Union Center, Albany
- TBD - Minor League Baseball Game - Spring or Summer 2010
- TBD - Stock Car Racing Event - Spring or Summer 2010

We look forward to having our traffic safety partners across the state join us at these upcoming events. Please contact the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee at 518-474-5777 for information and details.

Article and photo provided by GTSC staff.



NEW YORK STATE MULTICULTURAL OUTREACH PROJECT

The NYS Association of Traffic Safety Boards has an ongoing committee project in partnership with the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC), and the NYS Department of Health (DOH) to support multicultural traffic safety outreach education throughout the state. The committee's mission is to increase the ability of traffic safety professionals to provide effective programs for diverse groups. The committee launched its third project in October 2009, funded through the GTSC. Accomplishments include a statewide multicultural conference, three regional "Building Bridges to Traffic Safety" seminars in 2009, and five conference presentations aimed at promoting multicultural outreach education. The committee has also provided consultation, distributed resources/tool kits, and developed media literacy training materials throughout the region. To order a tool kit or to set up a Building Bridges event, contact Pamela Wanning, Director, Mid-Hudson Health and Safety Institute, SUNY Ulster, wanningp@sunyulster.edu or voice 845-687-5014.

2009 Building Bridges Events in NYS:

- 1.) Utica, April 24, 2009 (Several refugee communities, human service workers, law enforcement, and traffic safety professionals)
- 2.) Newburgh, July 21, 2009 (Latino community, community leaders, law enforcement and traffic safety professionals)
- 3.) Buffalo, Sept. 17, 2009 Native American Community Center Building Bridges Event (Native American, Latino, and Muslim communities, human service workers, law enforcement, traffic safety professionals, and Federal Highway representatives)

KINGSTON HOSPITAL PARTNERS TO TRAIN HEALTH CARE WORKERS IN ULSTER COUNTY

Nurses, interns, student nurses, dulas, midwives, and community health care workers attended an all day class co-sponsored by the Kingston Hospital and SUNY Ulster. The program, *Child Passenger Safety Awareness for Health Care Workers*, provided participants with a platform to educate patients and advocate for Child Passenger Safety (CPS) in their communities. The training addressed the role of health care professionals in CPS, basics of injury prevention, nuts and bolts of restraint systems, current law, and best practices. Adding to the enthusiasm for and success of this project, three bilingual participants, including a doctor, will work with Latino patients and several people expressed an interest in completing CPS Technical Certification in the future. All participants have been empowered with resources and CPS community partnerships to serve their patients.

The program was made possible by a grant through the NYS GTSC. For more information contact: Pamela Wanning, Director Mid-Hudson Health and Safety Institute, SUNY Ulster, wanningp@sunyulster.edu or voice 845-687-5014.



Attendees at the Utica Building Bridges event.

Articles and photo provided by Pamela Wanning, Director, Mid-Hudson Health and Safety Institute.



CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY HIGHLIGHTS

In 2009, the GTSC continued to use the "New York's 4 Steps 4 Kids" slogan in its efforts to provide education and instruction on the proper installation and use of child safety seats to parents and other caregivers, as well as educate the public on child passenger safety (CPS) issues and increase the availability of child safety seats to low income populations.

Seat Check Saturday

Eighteen car seat check events were held across New York State on "Seat Check Saturday", September 12, 2009 which was the first day of National CPS Safety Week; an additional 41 seat check events were conducted during the remainder of the week. This year's event at the Crossgates Mall was held on September 26, two weeks after "National Seat Check Saturday." At this event, which was organized by Capital District Coordinator Bill Van Alstyne, 54 seats were checked and 10 seats given away. CPS technicians, instructors and greeters, including many GTSC staff members, volunteered their Saturday to make this event successful.

Disney Train

On September 22, more than 4,000 people traveled to the Rensselaer Amtrak Station to board the Disney Train. The train was on a 40-city tour to promote Disney's latest movie, a remake of the classic Charles Dickens story "A Christmas Carol." The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) partnered with Disney to spread the word at these events about child passenger seat safety.

DMV and GTSC personnel staffed a display booth to promote child passenger seat safety and educate people on the changes to the state's booster seat law that extends coverage to children up until their eighth birthday.

CPS Conference

The 8th Annual Child Passenger Safety Technical Conference was held September 9-11, 2009 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The conference offered 27 workshops and forums which covered a wide range of topics including manufacturers' updates, special needs installations, protecting yourself and your organization from liability issues, injuries as a result of misuse, instructor development and child passenger safety and occupant protection on school buses.

In addition to the workshops, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania held their state meetings during the conference to pass on new information to their technicians and instructors. At the New York meeting, technician recognition awards were presented to 22 individuals who were nominated by their peers for their outstanding leadership and dedication to child passenger safety in their communities.

Also, the new state CPS coordinator Barbara Formica, was introduced. Prior state coordinator Debbie Lotito was recognized for her dedication and continued involvement in child passenger safety by creation of an award in her name which was presented to her at the state meeting by the members of the CPS Advisory Board.



Volunteers at the Crossgates Car Seat Check Eve



Barbara Formica, Bill Van Alstyne and Santa with a display of car seats at the Disney Train event

Information and photos provided by GTSC staff.



TWO NOTED MEMBERS OF THE TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMUNITY RETIRE



L to r: GTSC Assistant Commissioner Chuck DeWeese, Sami Richie, GTSC Director Jim Allen, NHTSA Regional Administrator Tom Louizou

After a 33 year accomplishment filled career with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Sami Richie decided to retire. A 1971 graduate of Lehigh University, Sami joined the New Jersey Office of Highway Safety as a program evaluator and contributed to a significant motorcycle helmet study that helped counter repeal efforts in the legislature. In addition, he was one of three original instructors representing Federal, state and local governments who taught the Highway Safety Program Evaluation course developed at the Traffic Safety Institute. Sami then moved on to the NHTSA Region 5 office in 1976 and remained there for 12 years. During that time he participated in the MDA-21 debate in the State of Wisconsin supported by then Secretary of Transportation, Elizabeth Dole. While there Sami was also the lead program manager at different times for the states of Indiana, Wisconsin and Minnesota. Fortunately for GTSC, Sami came to NHTSA Region 2 in 1989 where he has been an integral part of the team. Whether it was advancing the agency's traffic records agenda, FARS data base analysis tools, or managing workshops and police leadership conferences, Sami always made things better and added value to his traffic safety partners' work. Sami's assignments also included the leads for the state programs in New Jersey

and New York. If NHTSA ever had a need to "frame, manipulate, craft, cobble, build, or jury-rig" any program or otherwise, it was Sami that always played a critical role and often led the charge. His work and friendship will be missed by all. The Governor's Traffic Safety Committee joins in wishing Sami and his family good health, happiness and much prosperity in the future.



L to r: Renee' Barchitta, Highway Safety Rep, GTSC; Robert Winzinger, Chairman, Rockland Co. Traffic Safety Board; Rosie Jackson, former Rockland Co. Sheriff's Traffic Safety Coordinator; Sheriff James Kralik.

Rosie Jackson, the Rockland County Sheriff's Traffic Safety Coordinator, retired in November after twenty-three years of dedicated service. Rosie will be remembered for her efforts of bringing traffic safety partners together while embodying a "yes we can" attitude. Rosie recently embraced Road Safety Assessments as a way to bring both the three E's together and working with a broad spectrum of traffic safety associates to address local traffic safety problems. Rosie made many contributions with the New York State Association of Traffic Safety Boards. We wish her well in her retirement knowing that her enthusiasm, dedication, and ability to reach both the public and private sector will be missed in New York State's efforts in promoting traffic safety.

Articles and photos provided by GTSC staff.



TOUGH NEW DWI PENALTIES IN NEW YORK STATE

On November 18, 2009, New York State Governor David Paterson signed a new anti-impaired driving law with two major components. The law toughens the penalties for driving while impaired with child passengers and requires interlock devices for those convicted of driving while impaired. "When I introduced The Child Passenger Protection Act - now known as Leandra's Law - it was because too often drivers under the influence of alcohol or drugs chose to compromise not only their own lives, but also the lives of our children. Today, we say enough," Governor Paterson said.

Important provisions of this new law include:

- First time offenders driving while intoxicated (.08 Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) or more) or impaired by drugs with a passenger younger than 16 years old in the vehicle may be charged with a class E felony punishable by up to 4 years in State prison.
- Individuals charged with driving with a blood alcohol level of .08 or greater and with a child under the age of 16 in the vehicle would automatically have their license suspended pending prosecution.
- Courts must order all drivers convicted of misdemeanor or felony DWI to install and maintain an ignition interlock on any vehicle owned and operated by such driver for at least 6 months, in addition to any other penalties imposed. The

Department of Probation and Correctional Alternatives will issue regulations to provide different options for supervising the use of interlocks so counties can choose the most appropriate mechanism for their needs

- Drivers who operate a vehicle while intoxicated or impaired by drugs and cause the death of a child under the age of 16 in the car may be charged with a Class B felony, punishable by up to 25 years in state prison.
- Drivers who drive while intoxicated or impaired by drugs and cause serious physical injury to a child in the vehicle may be charged with a Class C felony, punishable by up to 15 years in state prison.
- Individuals who are a parent, guardian, custodian or otherwise legally responsible for a child that are charged with driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs while that child is a passenger in the car will be reported to the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment by the arresting agency.

The provisions of the new legislation became effective 30 days after the bill was signed into law. Interlock provisions are scheduled to take effect August 15, 2010. Additional regulations may be announced by state agencies to regulate the interlock provision.



OCCUPANT RESTRAINT AND SCHOOL BUSES

Recent modifications in the law pertaining to occupant restraint have prompted many questions over the law’s application to passengers on school buses. According to New York State Vehicle & Traffic law, any child under 4 years of age must be in a federally approved child safety seat, even if the child is riding in a school bus. No person shall operate a school bus for which there are no applicable federal school bus safety standards (a school vehicle) unless all occupants are restrained by a safety belt or, regarding occupants age four or older but under age seven, are restrained in a booster seat if applicable.

The difference between a school bus and a school vehicle is determined by the construction of the vehicle. If the vehicle complies with the standards set forth by the federal government then it would qualify as a school bus. However, if the school vehicle is a car, SUV or minivan, for example, the new booster seat law would apply.

To view the NYS Vehicle & Traffic law pertaining to this topic please visit www.safeny.com. For a brief synopsis of the law please see the chart below:

AGE	WEIGHT	RESTRAINT TYPE	SCHOOL BUS	SCHOOL VEHICLE
Under 4	Under 40 pounds	Car Seat	Yes	Yes
Under 4	Over 40 pounds	Booster*	No	Yes
5-6-7	Under 100 lbs	Booster*	No	Yes
5-6-7	Over 100 pounds	Seat belt	BOE policy	Yes

*Booster seats should only be used with BOTH a shoulder belt and a lap belt – NEVER with a lap belt alone.



Article provided by GTSC staff.

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- February 1 – 8**
Superbowl Sunday Impaired Driving Crackdown
 - March 9 – 17**
St. Patrick’s Day Impaired Driving Crackdown
 - April 15**
Operation Safe Stop Education and Enforcement Day
Semi-annual reports due from grantees
 - May**
National Bike Month
Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month
 - May 4 -5**
Empire State Law Enforcement Traffic Safety Conference (ESLETS) – Syracuse, NY
 - May 15**
2011 grant application submission deadline
 - May 24 – June 6**
Click It or Ticket Mobilization
 - June 7**
Walk – Bike New York Conference – Hauppauge, NY
 - June 21**
National Ride Your Motorcycle to Work Day
 - June 20 – July 4**
Fourth of July Impaired Driving Crackdown
- For a complete list of upcoming traffic safety events, visit our website noted below.

www.safeny.com