

Join The Journey

The Maryland Strategic Highway Safety Plan Newsletter

April 2008



Message From Governor O'Malley

Improving Public Safety is a Top Priority



Motor vehicle crashes, deaths, and associated injuries occurring on our highways continue to take a devastating toll on our citizens and visitors to our great State. More than 600 deaths every year and tens of thousand of injuries are not acceptable. Every lost life leaves families torn, communities changed, dreams destroyed. Startlingly, 93 percent of all crashes are due to driver error, and thus completely preventable. The Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) offers an alternative – it guides Maryland to creating safer drivers and a safer network of roadways.

Improving public safety in every part of our State will always be a top priority of my Administration. Although I strongly believe the purpose of government is to protect its people, we cannot do it alone. Because every Maryland citizen benefits from safer travels, I encourage you to engage non-traditional organizations and individuals to help carry out this life-saving mission. As we apply the best solutions to our most critical highway safety issues, I count on your continued support as we move closer to our ultimate Destination: Saving Lives. Congratulations for putting the SHSP to work!

Maryland Moves Forward on SHSP Implementation

On October 1, 2006, Maryland submitted its Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The purpose of the SHSP is to reduce the number of fatalities and injuries on all Maryland roads. Work began immediately to implement the strategies and action steps identified in the plan's 14 emphasis areas. To ensure the SHSP was implemented on the state, regional, and local level, Maryland held a Leadership Summit in November 2007 that involved representatives from state agencies, city and county governments, state and local law enforcement agencies, emergency medical services personnel, and community traffic safety coalition members. This newsletter will provide an update on the progress being made by state SHSP emphasis area teams, and the efforts occurring at the regional level along with a calendar of upcoming SHSP events and meetings. For more information on the SHSP, contact Jeremy Gunderson in the Maryland Highway Safety Office, 410-787-4072, jgunderson@sha.state.md.us.

Update on State SHSP Activities

Automated Enforcement

Several of the State emphasis area teams recommended the use of automated enforcement to reduce speed on state and local roads. During the 2008 legislative session, transportation and law enforcement officials urged legislators to expand the use of speed cameras in Maryland. Currently Montgomery County is the only local jurisdiction in the state to pilot test these devices, and Baltimore City and Howard are asking for authorization to deploy the cameras. According to the National Study Center at the University of Maryland, more drivers were cited for speeding in Montgomery County in 2004 than any other type of traffic violation (36% of all violations).

Automated speed enforcement also has the support of the Maryland Police Chiefs Association which recently passed a resolution supporting the use of these devices. Legislation proposed by Governor O'Malley that would authorize all counties and specified highway work zones to use speed monitoring systems to enforce highway speed laws died in the Maryland General Assembly but will probably be reintroduced next year.



State SHSP Update Cont.

Road Safety Audit Trainings



A number of the state emphasis area teams recommend road safety audits (RSA) as a strategy to help identify hazardous locations involving intersections, run off the road crashes, pedestrian incidents, and young driver crashes. A

road safety audit is a formal safety performance evaluation that can be conducted on any road segment or intersection.

Unlike other traffic safety reviews an RSA involves a multi-disciplinary team of engineers, planners, law enforcement officers, EMS personnel, community representatives. The Maryland State Highway Administration has adapted the FHWA road safety audit training and is offering sessions to help state and local agencies implement this program. To find out dates, times, and locations of upcoming training sessions, contact Mary Deitz at mdeitz@sha.state.md.us.

Aggressive Driving Initiative

The Aggressive Driving Emphasis Area Team is pilot testing a project in Baltimore County that is being reviewed as a possible model by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The program includes enforcement, education, and engineering initiatives. Six crash/crime corridors have been identified in the county where the Baltimore County Police Department is obligating substantial patrol hours from all patrol, traffic, and special business units. The Smooth Operator program will serve as the education part of the program and will include outdoor advertising, radio spots, and web-based media.

Three road safety audits will be conducted to identify engineering problems including opportunities for low cost safety improvements. To evaluate the program, the National Study Center at the University of Maryland will be analyzing crash reports. Before and after speed studies will also be conducted along with distribution of knowledge and attitude surveys in neighborhoods around the corridors. For more information, contact Tom Gianni at tgianni@sha.state.md.us.



Regional SHSP Update

Baltimore Region

The Baltimore Region Transportation Board (BRTB) approved a resolution on January 22, 2008 to create a Regional Safety Committee which will begin work on the Baltimore regional SHSP plan in the near future. One of the first activities the Committee will undertake is to host a Safety Data workshop where local engineers, transportation planners, and community traffic safety coordinators from the various counties will review local data needs and discuss methods for identifying hazardous locations on local roads. The Committee will also be moving forward on a public information effort on the areas identified in the regional plan. For more information, contact Bala Akundi at bakundi@baltometro.org.



Eastern Shore

Dan Blevins with WILMAPCO, the MPO in northern part of the Eastern Shore, will be meeting with the CTSP coordinators from Eastern Shore counties to determine how best to coordinate SHSP implementation activities and programs. The meeting will be held sometime in March or April 2008. For more information, contact Dan Blevins at dblevins@wilmapco.org.

Southern Maryland

The Southern Maryland Regional SHSP team, led by the Tri-County Council, met in January to begin coordinating activities with the Community Traffic Safety Programs (CTSP) in each of the counties. The region established a Southern Maryland Young Driver Task Force that held a Summit on February 20, 2008 to discuss programs that have been shown to be effective in reducing young driver crashes. The task force will meet quarterly to share best practices and discuss common issues.

More than 50 people attended the Young Driver Summit including county commissioners, representatives from state legislative and U.S. Congressional Offices, local law enforcement representatives, public school and health department officials, the assistant state's attorney, and others. Participants heard from the Young Driver Emphasis Area Team which briefed attendees on the statewide initiatives followed by presentations on several national programs. Participants then determined what regional youth activities they could implement and several agreed to pilot the national initiatives to determine whether they should be offered statewide. For more information on SHSP activities and programs in Southern Maryland, contact Wayne Clark with the Tri-County Council at wclark@tccsmd.org.

Regional SHSP Update Cont.

Washington, DC Region

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments passed a resolution asking Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia to pass tougher guidelines for teen drivers including raising the minimum age for a learner's permit, requiring novice drivers to log more hours behind the wheel, and increased enforcement. The Washington Regional Team will be contacting SHA to obtain specific crash data in the counties and attendees at the Summit will be informed of an upcoming road safety audit (RSA) training. During the Summit specific assignments were created and circulated among all participants with the intent of individual members sharing responsibility. For more information, contact Stephanie Yanovitz at SHA at syanovitz@sha.state.md.us.

Western Maryland Region



As a follow up to the November 30, 2007 Maryland Leadership Summit, various government agencies from the state and local levels in Western Maryland attended a Traffic Safety Summit in Cumberland on March 7, 2008. The event,

hosted by the Allegany County Health Department, included representatives from county sheriff's offices, health departments, engineering professionals from county Departments of Transportation, local law enforcement agencies, and county school systems. The Maryland State Police (MSP) and State Highway Administration (SHA) also attended.

At the Summit participants reviewed the state SHSP emphasis areas, identified those of particular importance to each county, and developed an action plan for implementation. The attendees also agreed to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for each county regarding support and implementation of the county SHSP plans.

News From the National Scene

The Transportation Planner's Safety Desk Reference

The Transportation Planner's Safety Desk Reference identifies and summarizes the information of interest to transportation planners in the initial 17 emphasis area guidebooks - National Cooperative Highway Research Program's (NCHRP) Report 500 Series - Guidance for Implementation of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Go to <http://tsp.trb.org>.

UN Highlights Road Safety

The United Nations recently passed a road safety resolution with 94 countries as co-sponsors, and agreed to host the first ever conference on Road Safety in Russia next year. The Make Roads Safe campaign reports that road deaths are now the number one killer of people aged 10 to 24 worldwide. More than 1 million people die each year in road-related crashes and more than 50 million are injured, on the world's roads and highways. Members of the Commission for Global Road Safety called the situation "an epidemic in the making" particularly given the vehicle in ownership in countries such as China and India which is expected to double in the next 20 years. For more information on the global initiative, visit <http://www.makeroadssafe.org>.

Champion's Corner

For Debbie Jennings - Young Driver Safety Is Personal

Every journey requires leaders, pathfinders, problem solvers, and visionaries, and Maryland is fortunate to have a number of champions who are stepping forward to lead implementation of the SHSP. One such champion is Debbie Jennings, the Community Traffic Safety Coordinator in Calvert County and the leader of the SHSP Young Driver Emphasis Area Team. Debbie has more than a professional interest in young driver safety. As the mother of two teenage daughters, one of whom will be driving in the near future, she is keenly interested in ways to improve safety for these new drivers. "My daughter is not too happy about all I know about the young driver issue, but the time and effort is worth it," she said.

Debbie got involved in traffic safety right out of college when she worked for the Prince George's County Police Department's technical services division which sparked a life long interest in data. When a Community Traffic Safety Coordinator position was advertised in 1999, Debbie decided to take the job, which at the time was listed as a part-time position. Today the job is full time and then some, particularly with the extra responsibilities involved in leading the state SHSP Young Driver team. "When people are asked what is the most serious problem in their community, young drivers always tops the list," she said. "This means a great deal of responsibility, but the Young Driver team is fortunate to have a group of committed, talented people who are serious about reducing crashes involving teens."

Debbie also credits the members of the Calvert County Traffic Safety Council who are very supportive of her efforts on the state level. "I'm fortunate to work with a lot of dedicated people. I just take all this energy, bring it together, and find out what will work," she said.

In the opinion of the state SHSP leaders, Maryland is fortunate to have leaders and champions like Debbie Jennings who are "standing up" for traffic safety and moving forward to make the SHSP a success.

SHSP Calendar of Events

- April Eastern Shore Regional Meeting
Contact Dan Blevins, WILMAPCO,
dblevins@wilmaco.org
- April BMC Regional Safety Committee Meeting
- April 7-11 National Work Zone Safety Awareness Week
- April 23-May 3 Motorcycle Safety Awareness & Media Campaign
Contact: Peter Moe, pmoe@sha.state.md.us
- April 30 Launch of Maryland State Highway Safety Campaign, "Choose Safety For Life"
Contact: Lora Rakowski,
lrakowski@sha.state.md.us
- May National Youth Traffic Safety Month
- May BMC Regional Safety Committee Safety Data Workshop
- May 12-31 Maryland Click It or Ticket Campaign
Contact: Tim Richards,
trichards@sha.state.md.us
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- June 1-7 Smooth Operator Aggressive Driving High Visibility Enforcement Campaign, Wave One, Contact: Tom Gianni,
tgianni@sha.state.md.us
- June 22-July 6 Drunk Driving – Over the Limit, Under Arrest High Visibility Enforcement Campaign
Contact: Liza Lemaster,
laquilalemaster@sha.state.md.us
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- June 27 Topsy Taxi Media Event, 11:30 am
Baltimore, MD
Contact: Myra Wieman, AAA Mid-Atlantic
mwieman@aaamidatlantic.com

July 7-July 12 Smooth Operator Aggressive Driving High Visibility Enforcement Campaign, Wave Two, Contact: Tom Gianni,
tgianni@sha.state.md.us

July 15 Aggressive Driver Emphasis Area Team Meeting, Contact Tom Gianni,
tgianni@sha.state.md.us

August 3-9 National Stop on Red Week

August 3-9 Smooth Operator Aggressive Driving High Visibility Enforcement Campaign, Wave Three, Contact: Tom Gianni,
tgianni@sha.state.md.us



Aug 13-31 Impaired Driving National Enforcement, Contact: Liza Lemaster,
laquilalemaster@sha.state.md.us

Sep 1-13 Smooth Operator Aggressive Driving High Visibility Enforcement Campaign, Wave Four, Contact: Tom Gianni,
tgianni@sha.state.md.us

Oct 3 National Walk to School Month Kickoff

Oct 24-31 Halloween Enforcement, "Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving," Contact: Liza Lemaster,
laquilalemaster@sha.state.md.us



Nov 17-30 Thanksgiving Enforcement – "Click It or Ticket," Contact Tim Richards,
trichards@sha.state.md.us

Dec 14-31 Holiday Enforcement, "Over the Limit Under Arrest," Contact Liza Lemaster,
laquilalemaster@sha.state.md.us