

New Orleans Regional Traffic Safety Coalition

quarterly newsletter

January 2015



Mt. Carmel students develop peer-to-peer safety program



Mt. Carmel Academy's Cubs Against Destructive Decisions (McCADD) is developing a new program intended to improve safety behavior among 6th through 8th graders.

Students representing the group presented to Sudden Impact teams from across the state in December on the program, which is called Impact News and will become the newest addition to the Sudden Impact Program.

Impact News will consist of a video and manual and address topics including safe passenger behavior; driving issues, including distracted and drowsy driving; healthy relationships; how to cope with bullying; and drug and alcohol abuse. It will be distributed statewide through the Sudden Impact program, and will establish a foundation for those who will participate as high school sophomores in the hospital-based Sudden Impact Program.

"In addition to educating teens, it is important to include parent and middle school education," said Sudden Impact Program Director Bridget Gardner, RN, explaining the importance of the new branch of the program targeted at a younger audience. "The more

we can reinforce healthy decisions, the less crashes we will encounter."

The hospital-based Sudden Impact Program consists of several tiers. High school sophomores participating in the program get an up-close look at the ramifications of dangerous driving behavior by attending a mock crash and mock trial, attending a hospital presentation, and hearing testimony from a variety of people involved in traffic crashes, including Louisiana State Police, trauma specialists and trauma victims.



Impact News is intentionally focused on a younger group of students and will be presented by their peers. Sudden Impact is directed by the Interim LSU Hospital. For more information, contact Bridget Gardner at (504) 430-1100.

Two Marrero high schools honored by State Farm for participation in safe-driving campaign

Academy of Our Lady and Archbishop Shaw high schools, both in Marrero, took second place in a campaign sponsored by State Farm to promote safe practices among young drivers. The schools were among just four in Louisiana to place in the competition.

Celebrate My Drive challenged students, parents and community members representing high schools across the U.S. and Canada to make a daily online commitment over the course of the campaign period to driving safely through measures including buckling up, refraining from texting while driving, and being a responsible passenger. Schools with the highest



Follow Buckle Up Louisiana and Sudden Impact Louisiana on Facebook for the latest on occupant protection and teen driver safety.



Representatives of the Academy of Our Lady in Marrero (left) pose with State Farm's Michael Grimes in recognition of the school's placement in a campaign sponsored by the insurance company to promote safe practices among young drivers. The school, along with Archbishop Shaw High School, also in Marrero, was among two in the region to receive a \$25,000 grant through State Farm's Celebrate My Drive program in 2014, and among four schools in the state to receive an award. The other winners were located in Lafayette and Bossier City.

levels of participation received prizes.

The two Marrero schools were each awarded \$25,000 grants. The two grand prize winners were located in Georgia and Iowa. Each received \$100,000 and a concert by The Band Perry.

The other Louisiana schools that placed in the contest were Parkway High School in Bossier City and St. Thomas More Catholic High School in Lafayette. State Farm representative Michael Grimes said the local winners should be proud of their placements. "Having four winners in Louisiana was a major win," Grimes said, noting that there were no winners in neighboring Texas.

State Farm promotes this annual program as a way to reduce the rate of traffic fatalities among young drivers, which are the cause of a disproportionate number of deaths among this demographic.

Smart phone app shuts down phone while owner driving

AT&T has unveiled a new, free smart phone app designed to discourage texting while driving. AT&T DriveMode, available to iPhone and Android users, turns on automatically at 15 miles per hour and turns off after your car stops. When activated, it automatically responds to incoming text messages so the sender knows the recipient is driving. It also allows parents to receive a text message when their young driver's app is turned off.

Lighthouse Louisiana talks blind pedestrian safety



In October, representatives of the group Lighthouse Louisiana, a relatively new member of the New Orleans Regional Transportation Safety Coalition, presented to the group about blind pedestrian safety.

Lighthouse Louisiana is a group that advocates on behalf of and provides vital services for blind and deaf residents of the state.

There are an estimated 30,000 visually-impaired adults living in the New Orleans metro region, according to U.S. Census Bureau statistics cited by Lighthouse.

Lighthouse's presentation coincided with White Cane Safety Day, a commemoration aimed at calling attention to the needs and rights of blind pedestrians. The organization has recently undertaken a campaign focused on blind pedestrian safety, and representatives talked about the importance of improving the landscape in New Orleans for pedestrians of all visual capabilities.

Key to blind pedestrian safety, they said, are focusing on street design and driver behavior. Among the changes that would help improve conditions for blind pedestrians, Lighthouse officials said, are simple, clear, consistent layout of pedestrian zones; barring left turns at some intersections; and improved crossing signals.

Making streets safer for blind pedestrians, Lighthouse officials argued, will ultimately make the streets safer for all pedestrians.

They also talked about the importance of stronger legal protections and enforcement of existing laws protecting pedestrians. Despite existing laws, they said, many drivers fail to grant pedestrian right of way.

Two of the locations Lighthouse officials named as especially challenging for blind pedestrians in New Orleans are the area around Canal Street and City Park Avenue, a key transit hub and transfer point for those moving between Orleans and Jefferson parishes, and State and Tchoupitoulas streets, the site of a fatal crash involving a blind pedestrian in 2006.

Rox'E Homstad, a Lighthouse employee who is blind and deaf, said that every time she steps out of her house, she is risking her life. Her choices are to stay at home and avoid serious hazards or to place her life almost entirely in the control of her dog and drivers.

"I'm a very independent person," she said, "and it's really important to me that I live my life on my terms."

WHAT DRIVERS SHOULD DO:

1. Abide by traffic laws
2. Stop at stop lines (not before or after)
3. Turn down loud music
4. Do not honk or call out to blind pedestrians
5. Minimize engine noise

Source: Lighthouse Louisiana

New Orleans' bike-friendliness improving, according to national group

New Orleans has been named a Silver Level Bicycle Friendly Community, the only city in Louisiana to achieve that status, in recognition of ongoing efforts to improve conditions for cyclists through investment in bicycling infrastructure, education, and pro-bicycling policies.

The city previously held a Bronze Level Bicycle Friendly Community designation.

"Biking is a healthy, safe, and equitable way for residents and visitors to access jobs and recreation," said Mayor Mitch Landrieu when the award was announced in November. "As bicycle ridership increases across New Orleans, we are committed to expanding our bicycle infrastructure."

Before Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans had fewer than 5 miles of designated bikeways. Today, the city boasts approximately 93.5 miles of completed bikeways, including 37 miles of bike lanes, 40 miles of shared lanes, and 16.5 miles of off-street paths. The city expects to have over 100 miles of bikeways by early this year.

The Bicycle Friendly Community program allows communities to evaluate their quality of life, sustainability, and transportation networks, while benchmarking progress toward improving their bicycle-friendliness.

In a release, officials credited a broad array of partners, many of whom are represented on the New Orleans Regional Traffic Safety Coalition, including the City of New Orleans, the Regional Planning

Commission, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, Bike Easy, the Louisiana Public Health Institute, and the Tulane Prevention Research Center, with helping to elevate bicyclists' status in the city.



In September, new results from the American Community Survey showed that New Orleans now ranks fifth among large cities in the U.S. for the rate of people commuting to work by bike. An estimated 3.6 percent of city residents primarily get to work by bike, a ranking that places the city just barely ahead of Seattle, where 3.5 percent of residents bike to work.

Meantime, despite recent gains, New Orleans still faces a serious problem with bicycle and pedestrian injuries and fatalities.

GHSA report highlights national increase in bicyclist fatalities

A report issued in October by the Governor's Highway Safety Association calls attention to a recent surge in bicyclist deaths in the U.S. and encourages states to do a better job of promoting bicyclist safety.

Between 2010 and 2012, U.S. bicyclist deaths increased by 16 percent, from 621 in 2010 to 722 in 2012, during which time motor vehicle deaths increased by 1 percent, according to the report, which relies on statistics from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS).

During that period, deaths increased in 22 states, decreased in 23 states and in the District of Columbia, and remained flat in five. Lack of helmet use and alcohol impairment continue to be major contributing factors in bicycling deaths, according to the report.

The Alliance for Biking & Walking took some issue with the report's findings, noting that the statistics reflected in it don't depict as clear a picture of the relative safety of bicyclists across the nation as they might.

The organization points out that although the number of bicyclist fatalities is on the rise, so is the number of bicyclists. So even while the number of bicyclist fatalities is growing, fatalities as a proportion of the overall number of bicyclists on the streets are trending downward.

In order to promote safety for bicyclists, the GHSA report recommends providing better bicyclist infrastructure, including separated facilities where possible; slowing motor vehicle traffic; stepped up law enforcement and education for drivers and bicyclists; better lighting and warning signs to increase awareness about the presence and rights of bicyclists; efforts to increase bicycle helmet use; and efforts to reduce alcohol-impaired vehicle operation by bicyclists and motorists.

The Alliance for Biking & Walking adds some recommendations of its own. It suggests that states more proactively fund projects and programs to boost bike safety, and points to federal funding available for bike and pedestrian safety measures through the Highway Safety Improvement Program.

Safe Routes to School funds bike racks, training at New Orleans schools

Hundreds of bike racks will be installed and bicycle safety promoted at New Orleans schools through a project aimed at making biking safer for school-age children.

In October, representatives from the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, the City of New Orleans, the Young Leadership Council and others gathered at a New Orleans public school to celebrate the awarding of a \$150,000 grant through DOTD's Safe Routes to School program.

The grant will allow the Young Leadership Council's Where Ya' Rack? program to install 458 bike racks at 72 New Orleans schools and will fund bicycle safety and encouragement programming through a partnership with local bicycle organization Bike Easy.

New Orleans Deputy Mayor Andy Kopplin was among the officials who joined in a ceremonial ribbon cutting on several shiny new bike racks outside Success Preparatory Academy on Bienville Street. Pointing to the variety of bike facilities taking shape across the city, he said the work was part of ongoing efforts to promote biking, fitness and safety for all residents of the city.



New Orleans' 'bike trains' receive national attention

An article on the rising popularity and benefits of bike trains that ran in the Huffington Post in December highlighted New Orleans' work to use the practice to promote bicycle safety and awareness by helping people get safely where they want to go by bike.

Bike trains have nothing to do with rail lines. Rather, they are organized groups of people who meet and bike to work or school together, led by a volunteer "conductor." Currently, New Orleans Regional Traffic Safety Coalition member Bike Easy organizes three New Orleans bike trains. See bikeeasy.org for details.



New Orleans bike trains are helping to teach people how to get where they need to go by bike safely. Photo courtesy noladefender.com

Millions approved for walking/biking enhancements in Greater N.O.

More than \$5 million worth of proposed projects to enhance the built environment for pedestrians and bicyclists in metro New Orleans has been conditionally approved for funding through the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), DOTD announced in December.

Included in that tally are proposed extensions of the Mississippi River levee trail in Jefferson and St. Bernard parishes; Power Blvd. median improvements in Kenner; and an extension of the Wisner Blvd. multi-use path in New Orleans.

The TAP was authorized by federal transportation legislation to provide funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including pedestrian and bicycle facilities and infrastructure projects for improving access to public transportation.

Entities approved for funding conditionally must prove that they can provide the necessary 20 percent local match, among other requirements, in order to be formally accepted into the TAP.

View the full list of projects at: http://www.sp.dotd.la.gov/Inside_LaDOTD/Divisions/Engineering/Project_Management/TAP/

Study finds correlation between traffic stops, drunk driving incidence

A new study finds that strict enforcement of traffic laws in a community significantly decreases drunk driving.

The study, published in *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, is based on statistics from 30 U.S. communities. Jim Fell, a senior research scientist at the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation and the lead researcher on the project, found that in communities with a high number of traffic stops, impaired driving was very low. By contrast, communities with very few traffic stops had higher rates of impaired driving, "on the order of two to three times higher," Fell told NPR.

Fell suggests the phenomenon is related to the fact that word of traffic enforcement spreads very quickly in a community.

You can read the findings in detail here: <http://www.pire.org/documents/FellPaperProof0115.pdf>

FHWA issues new road diet guide

The Federal Highway Administration has issued a new informational guide to road diets, which generally involve the removing or reconfiguring of travel lanes in order to reallocate space for other travel modes and purposes. The most common Road Diet reconfiguration is the conversion of an undivided four-lane roadway to a three-lane undivided roadway made up of two through lanes and a center two-way left-turn lane. The reduction of lanes allows the roadway cross section to be reallocated for other uses, such as bike lanes, pedestrian refuge islands, transit uses, and/or parking.

FHWA has deemed road diets and other roadway reconfigurations a proven safety countermeasure that can help to reduce rear-end, sideswipe, left-turn and bicycle and pedestrian crashes, and has promoted the technique as a safety-focused alternative cross section to a four-lane undivided roadway. The guide is available electronically at http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road_diets/info_guide/rdig.pdf.

New impaired driving laws take effect

January 1, several new laws took effect that revise Louisiana's DWI laws. The changes allow for stricter punishment for those convicted of drinking and driving, says Norma Broussard, who handles DWI cases for the Jefferson Parish district attorney's office. These changes include higher fines and extended jail times, the exact amount to be determined by the offender's blood alcohol content. These rules now apply to underage offenders, who were not previously required to serve time. In addition to stricter punishment, the laws also allow judges to implement substance abuse treatment earlier rather than waiting until someone is convicted multiple times of driving under the influence.

Distracted driving big problem on Causeway

Carlton Dufrechou, general manager of the Greater New Orleans Causeway Commission, presented to the New Orleans Regional Planning Commission in December on what he called the bridge's biggest safety issue: inattentive and distracted drivers. About 1,000 citations are issued by Causeway police each month for infractions like texting and speeding, Dufrechou said.

The 24-mile bridge accommodates about 12 million commutes a year, the high volume creating increased potential for vehicles to crash and even go over the side. The Causeway Commission is currently considering enacting new measures to increase safety on the bridge. Possibilities include replacing guardrails, building segmented shoulders at the turnarounds, and lowering speed limits.

Safety-related infrastructure projects take shape in New Orleans

Two projects that are expected to significantly improve roadway safety were recently completed in New Orleans.

One of the projects involved General DeGaulle Drive and Newton Street, two main transportation arterials in Algiers. This DOTD and Paths to Progress project included installing pedestrian signals, ADA-compliant ramps, and shared bicycle lanes, as well as general improvements to sidewalks and concrete panels. Similar work on MacArthur Boulevard and Sullen Place is slated to begin early this year.

Additionally, DOTD recently completed the installation of cable barriers along the eight miles of the I-10 corridor between I-510 and the Twin Span in New Orleans East.

Cable barriers improve safety by preventing a vehicle that has departed the road from both crossing into oncoming traffic and being pushed haphazardly back into its own lane. With this installation, the entirety of I-10 within Orleans Parish is now protected from crossover collisions.

LRSP announces 2015 deadlines

Local Road Safety Program applications are accepted year-round, but priority consideration will be given to proposals submitted according to the schedule below. The quarterly project selection cutoff dates for 2015 are as follows:

1st Quarter	March 31, 2015
2nd Quarter	June 30, 2015
3rd Quarter	September 30, 2015
4th Quarter	December 31, 2015

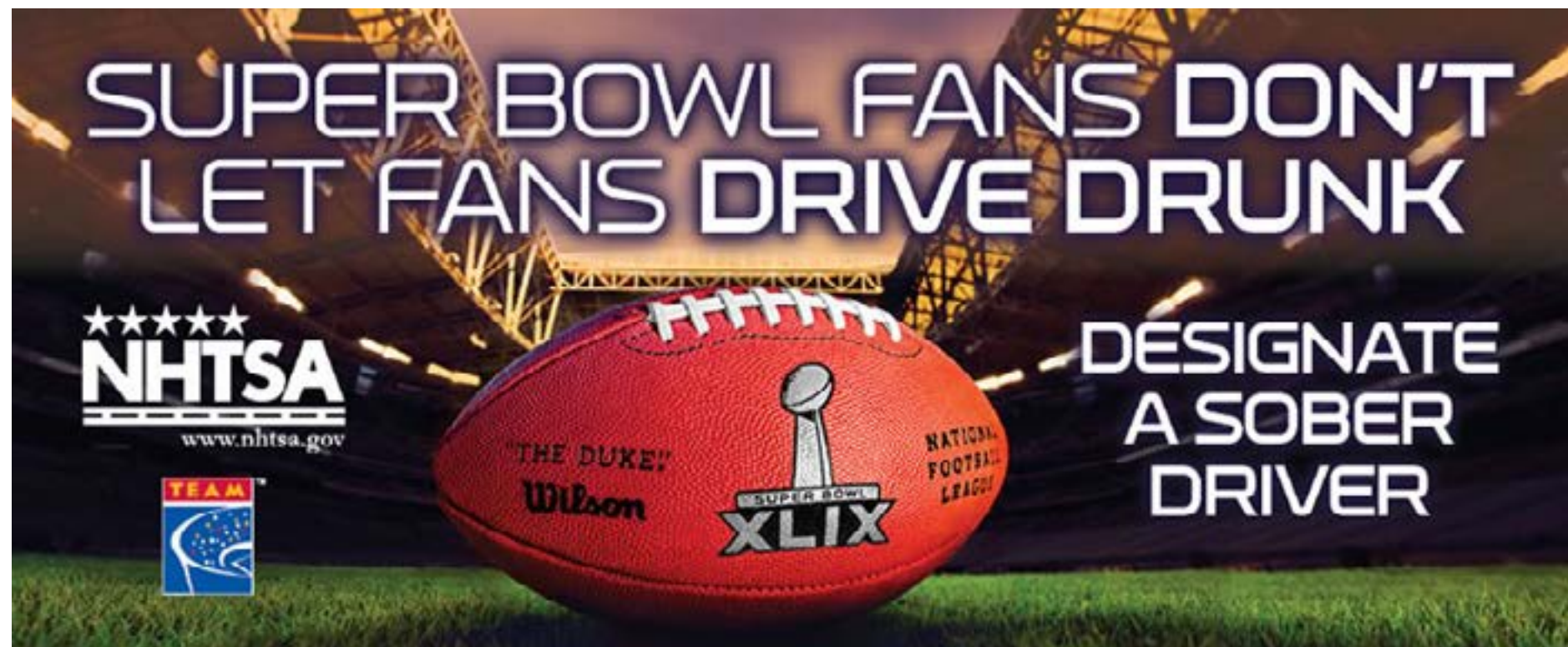
Visit www.louisianalrsp.org for more information.

New coalition webpage live

The New Orleans Regional and North Shore Traffic Safety coalitions have a new webpage where information on the coalitions, partners, and activities can be found. The webpage is housed within the website of the New Orleans Regional Planning Commission and can be accessed through www.norpc.org/safety.html. This webpage is a regional complement to the statewide Destination Zero Deaths website, www.destinationzerodeaths.com/

OMV booklet targets parents of new drivers

The Parent's Supervised Driving Program is a recently published booklet containing information on the Graduated Driver's License program and the requirements teens will have to meet to successfully complete the process. Among other resources, it includes both a section in the booklet and a smartphone app for logging driving hours. Over 200,000 booklets will be distributed by the Office of Motor Vehicles to parents of teen drivers free of charge. This was a major goal of the statewide Young Drivers emphasis area team and an important step toward implementing Louisiana's Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Visit <http://www.theparentssuperviseddrivingprogram.com/states/la.html> to view the booklet online.



Seeking nominations for Saved by the Belt

Please be on the look out for possible nominees for the Saved by the Belt Award, an honor bestowed on residents across the state in recognition and promotion of proper seat belt use. To be eligible, the nominee must have been involved in but not at fault for a crash, and prevented from more serious injury because he or she was wearing a seatbelt. If you have an idea, share it with Bridget Gardner at bgardn@lsuhsc.edu.

Volunteer with Operation Lifesaver

Operation Lifesaver is seeking volunteers to promote safety around railroad tracks and crossings. The organization comprises a network of authorized volunteer speakers and trained instructors offering free rail safety education programs in all fifty states. Representatives speak to school groups, driver education classes, community audiences, professional drivers, law enforcement officers, and emergency responders. Programs are co-sponsored by federal, state and local government agencies, highway safety organizations and America's railroads, and aim to promote the three Es: education, enforcement and engineering. If you think you might be interested, contact Claude Maher at operationlifesaver@la.gov.

Child safety seat fitting stations available on an ongoing basis

Child safety seats can be checked by a nationally-certified Child Passenger Safety Technician at any of the following New Orleans-area fitting stations:

Louisiana State Police Troop B & Interim LSU Trauma Center
2101 I-10 Service Road
Kenner, LA 70065
Contact: Melissa Matey or Bridget Gardner
(504)471-2780 or 504-903-3181
Every Wednesday 1pm – 4pm
No appointment necessary

New Orleans EMS
400 North Jefferson Davis Pkwy
New Orleans, LA 70119
Contact: Elizabeth Belcher
erbelcher@nola.gov
(504)658-2655
By appointment

Plaquemines Parish Sheriff's Office
8344 Hwy 23
Belle Chasse, LA 70037
Contact: Cody Portie or Allen Jolly
cportie@ppso.net
ajolly@ppso.net
(504)391-2004
M-F 8am-4pm
By appointment

Tulane Lakeside Hospital
4700 S. I-10 Service Road
Metairie, LA 70001
Contact: Rene Guilbeau
rene.guilbeau@hcahealthcare.com
(504)780-4363
4th Thurs. of month, 5:30pm – 7pm

West Jefferson Medical Center
1101 Medical Center Boulevard
Marrero, LA 70072
Contact: Mindy Glenn
Melinda.glenn@wjmc.org
(504)391-2173
Wednesdays, by appointment

Ochsner West Bank
2500 Belle Chasse Hwy
Gretna, LA 70056
Contact: Patricia Rodrigue
prodrigue@ochsner.org
(504)391-5246 or (504)391-5529
Every Tuesday and Friday, by appointment

Hahnville Volunteer Fire Department
14890 River Road
Hahnville, LA 70057
Call (985)783-2002
By appointment

Tim's Quality Car Care
725 Aris Avenue
Metairie, LA 70005
Call (504)831-7450
By appointment



COMING UP

FEBRUARY 17: Mardi Gras

FEBRUARY 18: New Orleans Regional Transportation Safety Coalition meeting

FEBRUARY-MARCH: National impaired driving high-visibility enforcement

MARCH 15-17: Lifesavers 2015 Conference in Chicago

MARCH 18: New Orleans Regional Transportation Safety Coalition meeting

MARCH 31: Cutoff date for 1st Quarter Local Road Safety Program applications

MARCH 31-APRIL 4: National Work Zone Awareness Week

APRIL: National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

APRIL 15: New Orleans Regional Transportation Safety Coalition meeting

The New Orleans Regional Traffic Safety Coalition

The New Orleans Regional Traffic Safety Coalition (NORTSC) is one of nine similar bodies across the state formed to implement and sustain Louisiana's Strategic Highway Safety Plan by bridging gaps between the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, local governments, law enforcement, public health representatives, educational leaders, civic organizations, the general public and other safety stakeholders working in Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, and St. Bernard parishes. For information, contact Tricia Keffer at tkeffer@norpc.org or Emilie Bahr at ebahr@norpc.org or visit www.norpc.org/safety.html.

