

# North Shore Regional 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 drowsy and distracted 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 peers. Sudden Impact is directed by the Interim LSU Hospital. For more information, contact Bridget Gardner at (504) 430-1100.

## Red Ribbon Week observance calls attention to young driver safety

Red Ribbon Week 2014 was observed October 23-31, and was marked locally with various events across the North Shore. Sudden Impact activities held in commemoration of the occasion included a mock crash at Fontainebleau High School and presentations that reached over 7,000 students, including those at Boyet Junior High, St. Scholastica, Kehoe France, William Pitcher Junior High, Covington Elementary, and others.

Red Ribbon Week is a national campaign to bring awareness to drug abuse among teens.



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



Photos courtesy Greg Marchand.

## TRACC promotes seat belt usage at Tangipahoa high schools

In May, representatives of Tangipahoa - Reshaping Attitudes for Community Change (TRACC) conducted a baseline survey of seat belt usage at four Tangipahoa Parish high schools. The survey looked at seatbelt usage among more than 1,000 student drivers at Amite, Loranger, Ponchatoula and Hammond high schools.

While the survey found that a majority of students at each high school were found to be wearing their seat belts, a substantial proportion of students at each school were not. The initial survey showed that compliance was at about 74 percent across the high schools, with students in trucks being the least likely to wear their seatbelts. This is significantly lower than the 82.1 percent parish-wide front seatbelt usage rate observed in research sponsored by the the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission.

The school with the highest rate of compliance was Hammond High School, where 76 percent of the 224 student drivers observed were wearing their seatbelts.

As a follow up to the baseline surveys, TRACC conducted seatbelt safety awareness campaigns at each of the high schools and then returned for another survey of seatbelt compliance, using the baseline data to gauge whether the campaign had any significant effect.

The results of of the post-campaign survey are still being processed.

On a related note, at TRACC's urging, Ponchatoula High School has added a provision to its contract for student drivers requiring that they wear their seatbelts. Students found violating the provision risk losing their campus parking privileges.

TRACC seatbelt surveyers pose outside Amite High School.



### 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.

## 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 Bicycling & 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.

## Coalition hears about pedestrian and bike safety concerns and infrastructure plans

The October meeting of the North Shore Traffic Safety Coalition included a discussion of plans to expand bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in the region.

Eric Lundin of the Slidell Planning Department presented on a bicycle master plan underway in his city, which he said was sparked by a desire to improve safety and comfort for non-motorized users while attracting and retaining residents and shoring up the tax base.

"Quality of life is key and bikes are part of that," Lundin said.

Slidell's completed master plan will be used by the city in prioritizing investment and in applying for grants for infrastructure improvements.

Additionally, Covington resident Kyle Boudreaux discussed safety improvements underway along the Tammany Trace, the tremendously popular hike and bike trail that spans 28 miles of St. Tammany Parish. Upgrades focused on improving intersection safety along the Trace where it crosses streets got underway in September and include signage, crosswalks and painted legends.

Boudreaux, an avid cyclist, has advocated for safety improvements along the Trace and in St. Tammany Parish more broadly since he witnessed his friend, 16-year-old Justin Addison, fatally struck by a car while riding along the corridor in 2013.

Addison failed to stop at a stop sign and collided with an SUV where the Trace intersects with Josephine Street.

Planning directors from Mandeville and Tangipahoa Parish were also on-hand for the discussion, as was Ryan Green of Varsity Sports in Mandeville. All expressed interest in continuing to work on improving bike and pedestrian safety on the North Shore.

Although there is not an emphasis area dedicated to pedestrian and bicycle safety under the North Shore Transportation Safety Plan, bicycle and pedestrian safety is addressed in the plan under the Infrastructure and Operations emphasis area.

## Workshop focuses on opportunities for improved North Shore roadway safety

Engineers, planners, law enforcement, public works and other parish officials gathered in Mandeville in November for a Road Safety Assessment (RSA) workshop aimed at educating North Shore stakeholders on the purpose, value, and scope of this important tool used to evaluate the safety of planned or existing road segments or intersections and opportunities for improvement.

Convened by the Louisiana Technical Assistance Program with help from the Federal Highway Administration, St. Tammany Parish Government, and the North Shore Regional Traffic Safety Coalition, the workshop included an overview of the RSA process followed by a field review of sections of Helenberg Road and Harrison Avenue and a discussion of findings.

Findings will be reported at the February meeting of the North Shore Traffic Safety Coalition.

For more information on RSAs, visit [safety.fhwa.dot.gov/rsa](http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/rsa)



RSA workshop participants gather information in the field. Findings will be presented at the Feb. 5 North Shore Traffic Safety Coalition meeting.

## St. Tammany Sheriff's Office offers free rides home for intoxicated New Years revelers

The St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office gave free rides home for people who were too intoxicated to drive this New Year's Eve, according to a press release from the law enforcement agency.

Qualifying residents who were too intoxicated to drive, and were without a designated driver or the ability to arrange for a cab home, were instructed to dial 911. The Sheriff's Office said ahead of the holiday that it would either arrange for a safe ride home for those requesting one, or, as a last resort, would bring the resident home without penalty.

## Millions approved for North Shore walking and biking enhancements

Close to \$5 million worth of proposed projects to enhance the built environment for pedestrians and bicyclists on the North Shore has been conditionally approved for funding through the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), DOTD announced in December.

Included in that tally are a proposed bike path along Highway 21 in St. Tammany Parish, a multi-use path along Spartan Drive in Slidell, and safety improvements to the interchange at LA 1249 in Tangipahoa Parish.

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://wwwsp.dotd.la.gov/Inside\\_LaDOTD/Divisions/Engineering/Project\\_Management/TAP/Documents/TAP%202014%20Project%20Selections.pdf](http://wwwsp.dotd.la.gov/Inside_LaDOTD/Divisions/Engineering/Project_Management/TAP/Documents/TAP%202014%20Project%20Selections.pdf)

## 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](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.

## Tangipahoa announces funding for roadway safety improvements

Tangipahoa Parish recently announced plans for two safety-related infrastructure improvement projects in the parish. Various roadway safety improvements are planned on Wardline Road west of I-55 northwest of Hammond, and on North Hoover Road from I-12 to LA 22 east of Ponchatoula.

According to the Tangipahoa Parish website, the state has awarded an initial appropriation of \$115,000 for the Wardline Road project, which will include engineering design services for drainage and road safety improvements.

East of Ponchatoula, the North Hoover Road project will take an estimated \$2.6 million in state and local funds to complete design, engineering, and various traffic safety improvements that should begin in 2016.

"We are still seeking additional funds for both of these projects so that more work can be done in the near future," Parish President Gordon Burgess said.

## 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

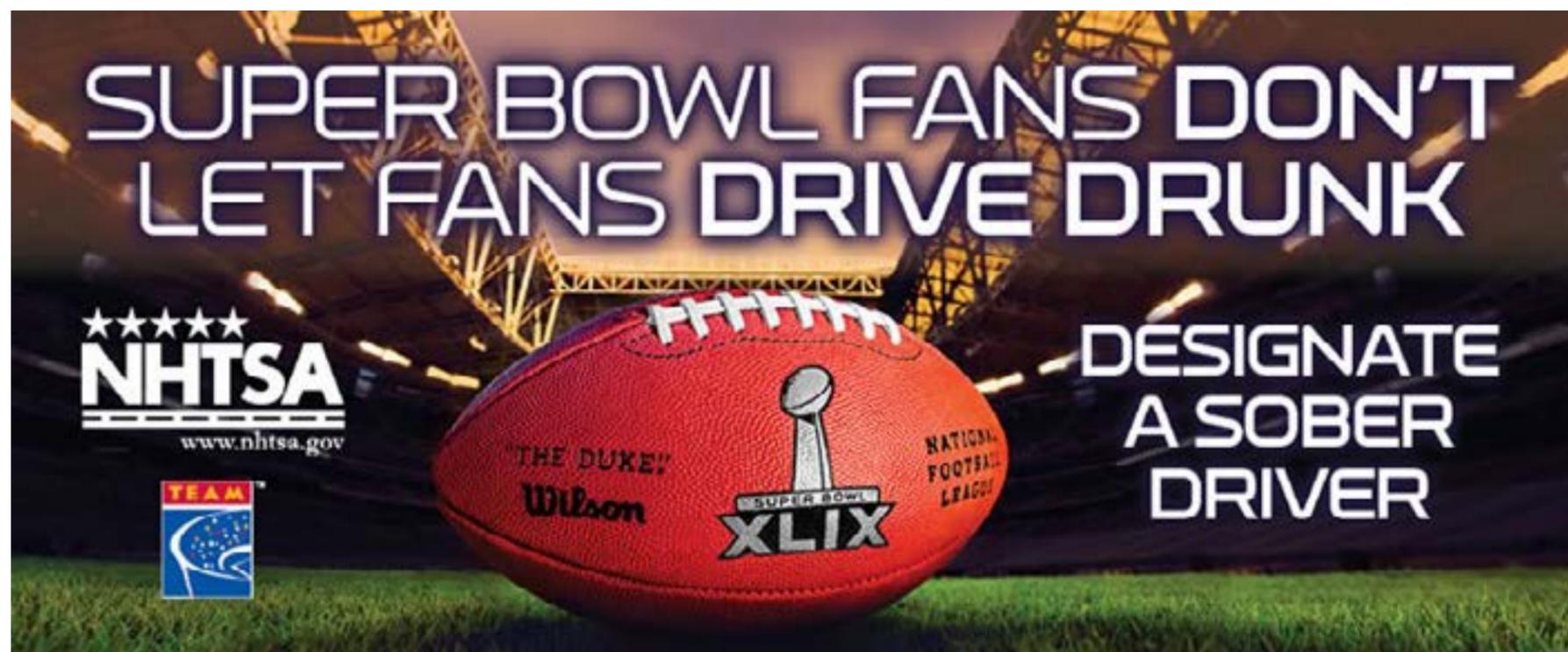
Visit [www.louisianalrsp.org](http://www.louisianalrsp.org) for more information.

## 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](http://www.norpc.org/safety.html). This webpage is a regional complement to the statewide Destination Zero Deaths website, [www.destinationzerodeaths.com/](http://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 North Shore fitting stations:

Louisiana State Police Troop L  
2600 N. Causeway  
Mandeville, LA 70448  
Contact: Greg Marchand  
greg.marchand@la.gov  
(985)893-6250  
Wednesdays, 3pm - 6pm

Mandeville Fire Dept  
24301 Hwy 190  
Mandeville, LA 70448  
Contact: Jeremy Windom  
jwindom@mandevillefire.com  
(985)626-8671  
By appointment

North Oaks Health Care System  
North Oaks Diagnostic Center  
15837 Paul Vega MD Drive  
Hammond, LA 70403  
Contact: Mary Ellen Jenkins  
(985)230-5540  
1st Thursday of every month, 8am-4pm or by appointment



## COMING UP

FEBRUARY 5: North Shore Regional Safety Coalition meeting

FEBRUARY 17: Mardi Gras

FEBRUARY-MARCH: National impaired driving high-visibility enforcement

MARCH 5: North Shore Regional Safety Coalition meeting

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

MARCH 15-17: Lifesavers 2015 Conference in Chicago

MARCH 31-APRIL 4: National Work Zone Awareness Week

APRIL: National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

APRIL 2: North Shore Regional Safety Coalition meeting

## The North Shore Regional Safety Coalition

The North Shore Regional Safety Coalition 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 parishes St. Helena, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, and Washington parishes. For information, contact Tricia Keffer at [tkeffer@norpc.org](mailto:tkeffer@norpc.org) or Emilie Bahr at [ebahr@norpc.org](mailto:ebahr@norpc.org) or visit [www.norpc.org/safety.html](http://www.norpc.org/safety.html).

