National Summit on Rural Safety: Bridging the Gap

Dr. Marie B. Walsh,
Director of Louisiana LTAP Center
December 6, 2018
National **Working** Summit on Transportation in Rural America

**GOALS:**

Define the future for safe rural transportation in America

Articulate important safety and transportation issues that impact economic prosperity and quality-of-life in rural areas

Why is Rural Road Safety Important?

In 2015, about 19% of the U.S. population lived in rural areas. However, rural fatalities accounted for 49% of all traffic fatalities. (NHTSA, 2017)

It takes almost two times as long to get responders to a crash scene in rural areas. (NHTSA, 2006)
Rural …
Rural ...
Rural ...
Rural ...
The Rural Story

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<tr>
<th>Overcome the urban bias - Don’t look through an urban lens when telling a rural story</th>
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<td>Awareness and understanding of rural needs, interests and strategies strengthens the Nation as a whole</td>
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<td>Articulate the consequences that no action has a negative impact on everyone, not just rural communities</td>
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<td>Create a unified voice for rural interests and strategies</td>
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A Call to Action

We have 2 goals (1) save peoples’ lives and (2) make peoples’ lives better, and from a rural perspective, we have a lot we can do and shame on us if we don’t try something new.”

Shailen Bhatt, Executive Director of CDOT

“Effective collaboration and communication among community and safety stakeholders are necessary in order to achieve ambitious yet achievable safety goals.”

Cindy Bobbit, NACo Exec. Committee
“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.”
– Theodore Roosevelt
NEW PARADIGM AHEAD
Bridging the Gap: *Bringing rural issues to the forefront of planning*

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<th><strong>Public Health + Traffic Data</strong></th>
<th><strong>Encourage Local Road Safety Plans</strong></th>
<th><strong>Road to Zero</strong></th>
<th><strong>FHWA-DOT collaboration</strong></th>
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<td>Improve the availability, depth, and accuracy of data collection</td>
<td>Include a wide-range of disciplines, Incorporate similar/parallel plans to identify gaps and overlaps for goals of safety</td>
<td>Create a <em>balance</em> of safety, access, livability, community and economic development</td>
<td>Implement Rural Roadway Departure Action Plans</td>
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<td>Train, educate on the importance of data, and provide funding</td>
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<td>Provide DOTs and locals with resources and assistance in <em>how to use those resources</em> once they have them</td>
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<td>Remember that <em>anecdotal evidence is data</em> and should be taken seriously</td>
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Bridging the Gap: *Bringing rural issues to the forefront of planning*

Public Health + Transportation Safety  = Zero Deaths
Bridging the Gap: Bringing rural issues to the forefront of planning
Bridging the Gap: *Ready to use Strategies and Resources*
Bridging the Gap:

Bringing rural issues to the forefront of planning

REDUCING RURAL ROADWAY DEPARTURES

TWICE AS MANY FATALITIES OCCUR ON RURAL ROADS.

Proven safety countermeasures such as signage, markings, rumble strips, friction treatments, safety edge, and delineations can help keep vehicles in their travel lanes and reduce the incidence and severity of roadway departure crashes.

www.louisianaltap.org
Bridging the Gap: Bringing rural issues to the forefront of planning
“We need to **shift our culture**. Moving people’s culture is uncomfortable. If you aren’t uncomfortable, you aren’t doing enough. We have done all the easy fixes, **we won’t get to zero unless we get uncomfortable**. It will cost more, take longer, and change our whole social structure. If we really want TZD, we have to get uncomfortable. The shift itself is uncomfortable.”

-Nic Ward, Center for Health and Safety Culture
QUESTIONS?

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