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Safety Sidekick Newsletter

As we approach Thanksgiving and reflect on what we are grateful for, I wanted to take a moment to thank each of you for your commitment to being a rural road safety champion. Your continued passion for prioritizing safety, sharing positive safety messages within your communities and agencies, and working towards making rural roads safer for all road users does not go unnoticed.

I hope that each of you will find something in this volume of the Safety Sidekick newsletter that will assist you on your quest for Vision Zero! Throughout the newsletter you will find announcements of upcoming webinars, new resources from our safety partners, and the opening announcement for the Road to Zero's 2022 Community Traffic Safety Grants.

Sincerely,

Jaime Sullivan
Center Director
National Center for Rural Road Safety
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Visit our Website



Safety Center Update

Last year, the Rural Safety Center (RSC) in conjunction with NACE, NLTAPA, and WRTWC announced the creation of the Road Safety Champion Program (RSCP), a nationally recognized certificate program designed to build a knowledgeable, safety minded workforce, responsible for operating, maintaining, and designing local roads. Since then, the RSC has been creating and piloting each of the modules in the RSCP. Over the summer, the RSC made the first five modules in the RSCP available for download by LTAPs. Since then, the RSC has been hard at work finalizing the remainder of the modules for release late next month (December 2021). These modules are available for LTAPs, state DOT trainers, and more to use as the full program or as individual modules. If you are interested in learning more about the program, you can check out our story map [here](#) or join us for the [NNTW webinar](#) on December 15th featuring the RSCP Program. If you are interested in obtaining access to the files, please contact the Rural Safety Center at jaime.sullivan2@montana.edu to request access.

Additionally, the RSC had the privilege of speaking at several event over the past few months including:

- Governors Highway Safety Association Annual Meeting

- National Farm Safety and Health Week
- FHWA Peer Exchange
- Rural ITS Working Group
- National Transportation Safety Board's Safe Road Roundtable
- Drive Smart's Virtual Teen Driver's Event
- Louisiana 2021 Safety Summit

Thank you to all who invited us to speak! We truly appreciate the opportunity to share the rural story!

Coming up at the RSC, please join us as we finish up the remainder of our 6-part webinar series on [Improving Rural Road Safety with the Safe System Approach](#). You can find out more about the last two webinars in the training section below.

Upcoming Opportunities

Road to Zero Grants Program Now Accepting Applications

Road to Zero Coalition



The Road to Zero Coalition is once again launching [applications to fund innovative efforts to improve traffic safety](#) through programming and research. In previous years, the Road to Zero Community Traffic Safety Grants supported 26 grants totaling over \$3 million. These new funds, once again provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, will be awarded over three years to organizations and institutions committed to finding proven ways to reduce traffic fatalities.

Applications for the first year of funds, ranging from \$50,000 to \$250,000, close on Jan 7.

Applicants must be a Road to Zero Coalition member ([join free now](#)) and proposed projects should have measurable objectives and generalizable results.

Join the Road to Zero Coalition on December 7th at 2 PM Eastern for a short [webinar](#) to learn more about this grant opportunity.

FHWA Local and Tribal Road Safety MATCH Program



The Federal Highway Administration recently launched the Mentoring, Assistance, Training, and Communication Help (MATCH) program to provide broad-based technical assistance to local and Tribal agencies facing roadway safety challenges. The program connects agencies requesting assistance (mentees) with peer mentors who have specific expertise to help successfully address the identified challenges. The technical assistance is free for mentees, and mentors volunteer their time to help peers. Local and Tribal agencies own and operate approximately 75 percent of the Nation's roadway network, much of which is in rural areas. These agencies often face unique safety challenges on their roads involving roadway departures, intersection safety, speed management, and pedestrian and bicyclist safety. The MATCH program will augment FHWA efforts and support local and Tribal road practitioners with integrating safety into their roadway programs. The program leverages the mentor's knowledge and experience to provide short-term technical assistance to local and Tribal agencies wanting to resolve safety or safety-related concerns or issues. Mentors will assist in identifying the problem and recommend appropriate implementation strategies when paired with mentees. This enables mentee agencies to benefit from this knowledge to potentially save lives and reduce serious injuries on roadways.

All local and Tribal agencies are eligible to apply for technical assistance from a mentor through the MATCH program. Public agency transportation safety professionals and those from centers of learning who have specific expertise related to local or Tribal road safety can serve as mentors. Mentors must be actively employed by or retired from a public transportation agency and have a minimum of 5 years of continuous transportation safety experience. Both mentors and mentees will be required to produce a short report once the activity is completed to document and share noteworthy practices.

For more information, visit https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/local_rural/MATCH or contact Rosemarie Anderson at rosemarie.anderson@dot.gov.

Crash Reporting Pilot Study - Volunteers Needed!

Volpe Center

DOT's Volpe Center is seeking rural or tribal communities to partner with as pilot users for a new crash data collection tool. Ruina is a user-friendly, free, open source, mobile crash data collection tool that is being developed by computer science and engineering students at the Olin College of Engineering, in partnership with the Santos Family Foundation for Traffic Safety and in coordination with NHTSA and FHWA traffic records and safety engineers. Ruina can be used to collect all the Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria (MMUCC) data elements. Compared to crash data collected on inconsistent paper forms, more accurate and complete crash information can enable transportation planners to make better decisions about which road safety infrastructure countermeasures to plan, seek funding for, and invest in to reduce the serious and fatal crashes.

The Ruina crash reporting app offers:

- Standardization in crash data collection process
- Automated data collection (e.g., driver license scanning) and auto-population of certain data fields
- Different export formats
- Customization of MMUCC elements and jurisdictional language or additional fields
- Crash data collection without internet connection
- Tips to support users through the data collection process

For a video overview of this tool, view this brief video: https://streamable.com/z6p19u?fbclid=IwAR13kmsm9V7M4lVFXbwD6uqyRkdMNRpaj5dnvVD6EKUDKW_dEpLyer_yxk

Development of Ruina is at a crossroads. A partnership with a Tribe or rural community would be valuable to inform the next phase of Ruina development and help it transition from an academic tool to one that realizes its potential to create safety benefits in a real-world setting. The Volpe Center is currently looking for 1-2 more tribal or rural community organizations to provide feedback on the app and perform real-world testing of how it works. Some basic customizations of the app are available to meet your needs. However, it should be noted that currently there is only android capability for this testing and not iOS, so the volunteering organizations would have to have android phones or tablets.

Additionally, for any tribes or rural communities that are looking to improve their crash data collection and reporting and have funding available, Volpe would appreciate the opportunity to discuss a potential collaboration to implement Ruina in a meaningful way. In this scenario, Volpe would be able to discuss development of an iOS version of Ruina. For tribal communities, there is a great opportunity to synergize Ruina with the Tribal Crash Reporting toolkit if a tribe does not have an existing crash database.

If you are interested in participating, or have any questions or concerns, please contact Alexander Epstein (alexander.epstein@dot.gov) or Angie Byrne (angie.byrne@dot.gov).

Engineering

A Capable Workforce to Advance Transportation Safety

Can the next generation workforce be better prepared to solve transportation safety issues? Yes! A career pathways initiative spearheaded by the West Region Transportation Workforce Center (WRTWC) roadmaps opportunities and experiences that attract the next generation to safety careers. Why is this so important? There is an increasing need for transportation professionals with safety-related competencies as evidenced by:

- A recognition that continued safety improvements will “require more road safety experts capable of applying rigorous scientific and systems approaches to safety management.” (TRB Special Report 289)
- Growing industry demand for the development of new safety certifications.
- National and state-level safety initiatives that mandate data-driven safety program development.

The career pathways initiative focused on bringing together academic and industry leadership to identify how workforce needs can be addressed in a dynamic world for the long term. The project recognized that emerging transportation technologies will have a major impact on the types of skills required by safety professionals in the future. The safety career pathways development process took these expected changes into account, seeking education delivery models that are adaptable to a changing world.

Recognizing a diverse and experienced sounding board would be needed, the WRTWC formed a discipline working group (DWG) of national leaders in the transportation industry to identify: critical safety occupations, the core competencies needed by transportation safety professionals, gaps in existing

safety education and training, and innovative methods to deliver the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities. The result is a catalog of career pathways that reach far beyond civil engineering- they address infrastructure construction, maintenance, planning, technicians and more.

One outcome of the career pathways initiative was the recognition that there needs to be an effective means for ensuring that a wide variety of transportation professionals acquire critical safety competencies. The WRTWC partnered with the Rural Safety Center, NACE, and NLTAPA to help launch the Road Safety Champion Program (RSCP) to facilitate road safety training across different transportation career paths. The RSCP will be featured in an upcoming webinar hosted by the WRTWC. To register for the webinar, visit: <https://conta.cc/39CuFxx>

To learn more, see the components of the career pathways implementation plan, and explore six different transportation related career pathways that will positively impact safety, please visit the initiative online [here](#).

FHWA Announces Additional Proven Safety Countermeasures and Corresponding Webinar

In 2008, FHWA began promoting widespread use of certain infrastructure-oriented safety treatments and strategies that can offer significant, measurable impacts as part of any agency's data-driven, systemic approach to improving safety. FHWA updated the PSC in 2012, 2017, and 2021, reaching a current total of 28 PSCs. There are nine new countermeasures: Pavement Friction Management, Crosswalk Visibility Enhancements, Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons, Wider Edge Lines, Speed Safety Cameras, Variable Speed Limits, Appropriate Speed Limits for All Road Users, Bicycle Lanes, and Lighting.

The cumulative list is diverse and broad, and practitioners can implement PSCs to successfully address a variety of crash types and focus areas like speed management, roadway departure, intersection, pedestrian, and bicyclist crashes to save lives and prevent serious injuries.

The [website](#) has new resources to help explain the 28 PSCs. Included are a flyer, multiple memos, and a reference booklet.

The FHWA Office of Safety invites you to register for and attend a webinar on [Federal Highway Administration's Proven Safety Countermeasures 2021 Update](#) which is scheduled for Monday, November 22nd, 2021 from 1:00 to 3:00 PM EST. This webinar is focused on reaching external organizations. This webinar will introduce the nine new countermeasures, go through the updated website with new features, and highlight resources that can assist with implementation.

2021 Roadway Safety Foundation Awards Winners Announced



The National Roadway Safety Awards is a biennial competition sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Roadway Safety Foundation (RSF) to recognize roadway safety achievements that move the United States towards zero deaths and serious injuries on the nation's roadways. According to RSF, "the competition acknowledges successful engineering solutions that agencies have integrated into their roadway safety programs. Awards are given in two categories: Infrastructure and Operational Improvements; and Program Planning, Development, and Evaluation. Selected projects are included in a noteworthy practices guide so they can be replicated nationwide".

The following winners were selected for 2021:

- [Florida Department of Transportation](#) (FDOT) for its use of smart Work Zone Safety Technologies for Arterial Roads, which are burdened with higher fatality rates than interstates.
- [North Carolina Department of Transportation](#) (NCDOT) for its Long-Life Pavement Markings Safety Initiative to reduce lane departure crashes, a major safety challenge in a state where 14,000 fatal and serious-injury lane departure crashes occurred between 2015 and 2019.
- [Village of Whitefish Bay, WI](#) for its Community-Wide Safety Improvements. Confronting a decade-long increase in crashes involving the most vulnerable road users, the Milwaukee suburb deployed a series of low-cost solutions to reduce risks to pedestrians and cyclists.
- [City of Bellevue, WA](#) for its application of a Video Analytics Program that is helping achieve tangible progress toward the city's Vision Zero commitment.
- [Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization](#) for its innovative Complete Streets Master Plan, which is measurably improving safety on Wilton Drive in the Fort Lauderdale area and promises similar benefits on other local roadways.

- [California Department of Transportation](#) (Caltrans) for its transformative 2020-2024 Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) to reverse a trend of rising fatalities and injuries on state roads. With an average of 10 people dying every day on California roads, Caltrans created a highly targeted approach to safety with its SHSP update.
- [Texas Department of Transportation \(TxDOT\)](#) and [Texas A&M Transportation Institute \(TTI\)](#) for its all-new Safety Scoring Tool. With fatalities on Texas rural non-interstate roads occurring at twice the rate of other Texas roads, TxDOT partnered with the Texas A&M Transportation Institute to develop a user-friendly means of evaluating the safety performance of rural highway design elements.

For full details on all of the winners, including a Noteworthy Practices Guide, please visit roadwaysafety.org/awards.

Upcoming Trainings & Events

Rural Safety Center Rounds Out 6-Part Webinar Series on the Safe System Approach

No doubt you have been hearing the terms Safe System Approach and Traffic Safety Culture over the past few years, but are you also wondering:

- how to explain these terms to your peers and superiors?
- how these terms apply to your agency?
- how they fit with the work you do everyday?
- how they can help improve safety on a rural road?

If so, then this 6-part series is for you!

The *Improving Rural Road Safety with the Safe System*

Approach 6-part webinar series will explore how a Safe System Approach (SSA) can be applied to rural areas, discuss strategies rural areas are already using that fit within a SSA, and identify additional SSA techniques that can be applied to improve rural road safety.



Part 5: Safe Roads

Date: November 30, 2021

Time: 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm ET

In Part 5 of the series, we will focus on the Safe Road Element through the lens of actions agencies can take. We will examine how to address the safe road element for roadway departures, pedestrians, and underserved communities. Additionally, we will hear about a comprehensive, systemic rural road safety program. To register, click [here](#).

Part 6: Post-Crash Care

Date: December 9, 2021

Time: 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm ET

In Part 6 of the series, we will focus on the Post-Crash Care Element. We will examine this element through the lens of rural Emergency Medical Services (EMS), rural Traffic Incident Management (TIM), and rural crash investigations and data. To register, click [here](#).

Webinars will be recorded, recordings will be available on the Rural Safety Center [website](#).

Upcoming Webinar: Road to Zero Community Traffic Safety Grants

Date: December 7, 2021

Time: 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm ET



The Road to Zero Coalition is excited to open applications for a new round of its Community Traffic Safety Grants. This webinar will be an opportunity to hear from previous grantees, ask questions about

the application process, and be inspired to submit your idea to save lives on our streets.

To learn more about this webinar, click [here](#).

Link: https://nsc-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_A8JMPyd4SASyQxpOltLinw?utm_source=sfmc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=GOV%20748700&utm_content=

Upcoming Webinar: Improving the Road Safety Workforce - The Road Safety Champion Program



Date: December 15, 2021

Time: 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm ET

Safety is everyone's job, but it can be difficult to find structured training curricula that meet the diverse needs of transportation agency staff with varied responsibilities for the design, construction, maintenance, and operation of safe local roadways. Whether you are a training provider or a transportation organization manager or practitioner, this webinar is for you. Webinar speakers will share information about the Road Safety Champion Program (RSCP), a training curriculum and nationally recognized certificate program that can be implemented by employers and training providers to incentivize safety competency attainment.

Webinar participants will learn about training content, how to access pre-packaged training materials that can be offered in-person or remotely, and about the Virginia Local Technical Assistance Program's pilot of the first local RSCP roll out in Virginia.

To learn more about this webinar, click [here](#).

Link: <https://conta.cc/39CuFxq>

2021 Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) America Annual Meeting



Date: December 7-10, 2021

Location: Charlotte, NC

The ITS America Annual Meeting is a meeting place for the community of intelligent transportation professionals to network, connect, and form the partnerships this environment requires. This event will bring together the entire intelligent transportation community for four (4) days of thought-provoking education, networking, technical tours, and demonstrations exploring products, emerging technologies, and solutions that will enable a better future transformed by intelligent mobility. Join other transportation leaders and influencers to discuss and explore the deployment of intelligent transportation technologies that saves lives, improves mobility, promotes sustainability, and increases efficiency and productivity.

To learn more about this conference, click [here](#).

Link: <https://www.itsamericaevents.com/annual-meeting/en-us.html>

Transportation Research Board (TRB) Annual Meeting 2022



Date: January 9-13, 2022

Location: Washington, DC

The Transportation Research Board (TRB) 101st Annual Meeting will be held in person January 9–13, 2022 in Washington, D.C. The event is expected to attract thousands of transportation professionals from around the world. The meeting program covers all transportation modes, with sessions and workshops addressing topics of interest to policy makers, administrators, practitioners, researchers, and representatives of government, industry, and academic institutions.

A number of sessions and workshops focus on the spotlight theme for the 2022 meeting: *Innovating an Equitable, Resilient, Sustainable, and Safe Transportation System*.

To learn more about this conference, click [here](#).

Link: <https://www.trb.org/AnnualMeeting/AnnualMeeting.aspx>

Lifesavers National Conference on Highway Safety Priorities 2022

Date: March 13-15, 2022

Location: Chicago, IL

Last year, an estimated 36,096 people died in motor vehicle crashes in the U.S. Lifesavers is recognized as the premiere conference to learn about the latest highway safety research, best practices, and cutting-edge initiatives; and to explore innovative technology and strategies used to combat risky driving behaviors and save lives. The Lifesavers Conference is also historically the world's largest gathering of leaders and advocates in traffic safety. Now in its 40th year, the Lifesavers Conference will take place March 13-15, 2022 in Chicago, IL.



To learn more about this conference, click [here](#).

Link: <https://lifesaversconference.org/>

Save the Date: 2022 NACE Annual Conference

Date: April 24-27, 2022

Location: Buffalo, NY



To learn more about this conference, click [here](#).

Link: <https://www.countyengineers.org/annual-conference/>

Save the Date: Small and Rural Law Enforcement Executives Association Annual Meeting

Date: April 27-29, 2022

Location: Tama, IA



SRLEEA events feature the most distinguished lineup of law enforcement leaders, innovators and experts from a cross-section of the profession. Calls for presentations are currently open, interested presenters can submit as many different topics as they like, [here](#).

To learn more about this conference, click [here](#).

Link: <https://smallrural.org/2021-annual-conference/>

What's Hot Off the Press?

New Safe System Strategic Plan Released by FHWA

Federal Highway Administration has recently released a new Safe System Strategic Plan. This plan provides a roadmap for the advancement of the Safe System Approach in the United States. Check out the new plan [here](#)!



FHWA Has Released Four New Videos

FHWA has released four new videos covering a variety of safety topics:

- [3 Approaches to Address Severe Roadway Crashes](#)
- [Driving FoRRRwD to a Safe System](#)
- [Local Road Safety Plans - A California Case Study](#)
- [Continuous Pavement Friction Measurement](#)



TRB NCHRP Pre-Publication Draft of the Rural Transportation Issues Research Roadmap has been Released



The TRB National Cooperative Highway Research Program's pre-publication draft of NCHRP Research Report 988: Rural Transportation Issues: Research Roadmap is designed to assist state departments of transportation and other public agencies and help inform policy-driven investment decisions. Check out the pre-publication draft of this report [here](#).

Rural Roadway Departure Countermeasure Pocket Guide

This guide provides a quick reference of options for reducing roadway departure crashes in your community. The countermeasures in this guide are organized around three objectives: 1) keep vehicles in their lane, 2) reduce the potential for crashes if they do leave their lane, and 3) minimize the severity of a crash if there is one.



To view or download the guide, click [here](#).

'Safer By Design' Tool to Save Lives on Rural Texas Roads, Wins 1 of Just 7 National Roadway Safety Awards

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) were honored with a 2021 National Roadway Safety Award for developing a user-friendly tool for roadway designers to cumulatively assess the safety characteristics of rural highway design. The biennial awards program is sponsored jointly by the Federal Highway Administration and the Roadway Safety Foundation. Check out the tool and how it was used [here](#)!



USDOT: Road Fatalities Spiked in First Half of 2021

According to a report from the U.S. Department of Transportation, the first half of 2021 recorded the largest six-month increase in road fatalities in the Fatality Analysis Reporting System's history. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) "Early Estimate of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities for the First Half (January-June) of 2021" found that an estimated 20,160 people died in motor vehicle crashes during the period, an increase of 18.4 percent over 2020.



[Read more](#) at NHTSA.

GHSA Releases New Report on Traffic Fatalities by Race and Ethnicity

The report identifies actions states and communities can undertake when considering traffic enforcement, safety education and community outreach to better serve BIPOC communities and reduce crashes, injuries and deaths for those who have been most affected by race-related disparities in

transportation. The report is part of a broader GHSA focus on equity and advancing steps that GHSA, State Highway Safety Offices and their partners can take to promote equitable traffic enforcement and more broadly address highway safety needs.

[Read more](#) at GHSA.



Equity in Highway Safety Enforcement and Engagement Programs

GHSA's new report, [Equity in Highway Safety Enforcement and Engagement Programs](#), includes ten recommendations developed by consulting firm Kimley-Horn for the association, State Highway Safety Offices (SHSOs) and their partners, and the traffic safety community to support more equitable outcomes for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC).

[Read more](#) at GHSA.



GHSA's New Report Examines How Law Enforcement, First Responders, and Crash Investigators Can Prepare for Automated Vehicle Technologies

GHSA's new report examines how law enforcement officials, other first responders and crash scene investigators can better prepare for automated vehicle technology and outlines curriculum recommendations to improve training on rapidly changing safety protocols. The report – [Law Enforcement, First Responder and Crash Investigation Preparation for Automated Vehicle Technology](#) – was prepared by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute and made possible by a grant from State Farm®.

[Read more](#) at GHSA.



Trooper Tracy: Making Rural Roads Safer One Social Media Post at a Time

How do you get across the importance of road safety to rural drivers who've gotten a little too comfortable with narrow roads and slow-moving vehicles? How do you make the same point with urban drivers heading to a state park, who have never seen a deer on the road? Illinois State Police (ISP) has a secret weapon for this: the agency's statewide social media coordinator's alter ego, Trooper Tracy. Learn more about this Illinois State Police Initiative [here](#)!



Thanksgiving - Buckle Up

During Thanksgiving, millions will hit our nation's roads, eager to spend time with family and friends. It's one of the busiest travel times of the year. Unfortunately, more people on the roadways means the potential for more vehicle crashes. Please use these social norming marketing tools, offered by NHTSA, which can be distributed to fit your local needs and objectives. [These materials](#) can help partner your office with other States, communities, and organizations on this seat belt safety initiative.



Holiday Season Impaired Driving Prevention

With the holidays around the corner, increased enforcement will be ongoing from December 15 through the New Year to remind all drivers of the dangers of driving impaired. NHTSA has prepared marketing materials to promote safe driving and to remind all drivers of the dangers of driving [drunk](#) or [impaired](#).



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