



Office of Traffic Safety Newsletter



Fall 2009



Trading Places

To support the Traffic Safety Plan Calendar, the Office of Traffic Safety and its stakeholders launched an impaired driving awareness campaign in August featuring a new commercial called **Trading Places**. Click on this [link](#) to view the new spot.

Message from the Executive Director



Welcome to the 2009 fall edition of the *Office of Traffic Safety Newsletter*. In this issue, we are pleased to report that in spite of increases in road users and registered vehicles in our province, the number of casualty collisions decreased in Alberta in 2008. These successes continue to be the results of province-wide, coordinated efforts of all traffic safety partners and our ongoing commitment to the *Traffic Safety Plan*. Our challenge, of course, will be to have continued, sustained progress year by year: Even one death, one family's pain, one community's loss - is too much.

Once again, I would like to thank our traffic safety partners and committee members for all the great work that they do and their commitment to saving lives and reducing injuries in our province.

Jeannette Espie

Traffic fatalities and injuries drop in 2008

The coordinated approach of *Alberta's Traffic Safety Plan* appears to be paying dividends for traffic safety. Traffic fatalities decreased 10.5 per cent from 2007 to 2008, and traffic injuries also dropped 10.3 per cent in the same period - the lowest numbers in four years.

These reductions are good news for all Albertans. Better engineering, province-wide public awareness campaigns, coordinated enforcement, community mobilization, legislative enhancements - all of these things are having an impact.

While the 2008 numbers are encouraging, there is still some room for improvement. Driver error continues to be a contributing factor in 90.2 per cent of traffic collisions - a persistent statistic indicating that changing driver attitudes continues to be a major challenge. Following too closely, running off the road and making a left turn across the path of an oncoming vehicle were the most frequently identified improper driver actions contributing to casualty collisions.

Unsafe speed was a factor in 26.4 per cent of fatal crashes. As well, 22.5 per cent of drivers involved in fatal crashes had consumed alcohol prior to the crash. Fatal collisions occurred most frequently in rural areas, whereas injury and property damage collisions occurred more frequently in urban areas.

Click [here](#) to view the **2008 Alberta Traffic Collision Statistics**.

Engineering Update-Traffic Safety Plan (TSP) Engineering Subject Matter Expert Committee

As part of the *Traffic Safety Plan*, the Engineering Committee has developed a unified approach for identification of high crash risk locations.



Median Cable Barrier on Deerfoot Trail, Calgary

This approach/study will help all road agencies to establish a common practice throughout Alberta, so the results can be compared across jurisdictions.

The next step in this plan is to investigate and develop engineering strategies to address the current and

future collision patterns on all Alberta highways, streets and roads. Opus International Consultants Canada Ltd. has been selected to provide engineering services for this project known as "Methods of Reducing Collisions on Alberta Roads" and it will take approximately one year to complete.

For the year 2009/10, the Engineering Committee has started working on three safety initiatives, including installation of rumble strips, implementation of high-tension cable barriers/flexible barriers on highways, and building more roundabouts. The first two initiatives are intended to help minimize the number and severity of fatal/major injury collisions such as head-on, side-swipe and run-off-the-road collisions.

The installation of a median cable barrier on Deerfoot Trail has proven to be highly effective with no fatal collisions reported in a 22-month period from May 2007 - Feb 2009. In the seven years prior to the barrier being installed, there were seven median-related fatal collisions.

Roundabouts have also been proven effective in improving safety by reducing the severity of intersection related collisions. Our goal is to introduce more roundabouts as an alternative to signalized intersections in new developments across the province, and update existing locations that may warrant their use.

Community Mobilization Strategy Update

Since our last update, we have filled our Peace Country and Northern Lights East (Ft. McMurray and area) Regional Traffic Safety Coordinator (RTSC) positions. We welcome Tanya Thompson and Nancy Stammers to our team!

In collaboration with community partners, we continue to make steady progress in building awareness and knowledge of traffic safety issues, empowering communities to initiate local action based on local issues, and providing connections to provincial activities.

Through the efforts of our RTSCs, regional action plans with locally developed strategies, measurable outcomes are in place in most regions at this point. There are now about 30 Regional Traffic Safety Committees in place with several more under development. As well, over 400 public information meetings have been conducted and our RTSCs have participated in 165 media contacts including interviews for print, radio and television media and articles written for local newspapers. Evaluation of these efforts is currently underway.

We are also making good progress with our provincial Aboriginal Traffic Safety Strategy - a key component of the Alberta Traffic Safety Plan Community Mobilization Strategy - it provides an important framework for RTSCs to mobilize their communities in support of traffic safety, specifically in the priority areas of increasing occupant restraint use and decreasing impaired driving.

The Aboriginal Traffic Safety Strategy, which is the first of its kind in Canada, was briefly introduced in the last OTS Newsletter. In Alberta there are 48 First Nations with more than 40,000 population on-reserve covering 1.73 million acres of land. There are



From left to right: Ron Dyck, Mackenzie County Peace Officer; Sergeant Wade Trotter, Fort Vermilion RCMP; Tammie Peacock, Regional Injury Prevention Liaison, Alberta Health Services; Judy Ostrowski, RTSC-Region 9; Corporal Ryan Dlin, Traffic Services, Fort Vermilion RCMP

also eight Métis Settlements with approximately 9000 people living on 1.25 million acres of land. As well, throughout Alberta there are approximately 76,500 Métis Off-Settlement Albertans. The Aboriginal Traffic Safety Strategy was developed to address the fact that Aboriginal people in Alberta continue to experience higher traffic-related injuries and fatalities than non-Aboriginal Albertans.

The content of the Aboriginal Traffic Safety Strategy was developed to closely align with the format and

recommendations identified at the 2003 Aboriginal Traffic Safety Summit and included recent collaboration and comprehensive consultations with elders, Aboriginal community leaders, Subject Matter Experts, federal government representatives, RTSCs, and Government of Alberta representatives. Ongoing strategic guidance will be provided by an Aboriginal Advisory Committee that is currently being formed.

For RTSC contact information, click on this [link](#).

For questions, concerns, or ideas for improving traffic safety in your community, contact: Dr. Ross Danyluk at 780-644-2663 or Ross.Danyluk@gov.ab.ca

Policy and Legislation

New and amended regulations for vehicles

Alberta's new *Commercial Vehicle Safety Regulation (CVSR)*; the amended *Vehicle Equipment Regulation (VER)*; and *Use of Highway and Rules of the Road Regulation (UHRRR)* came into effect July 1, 2009. The majority of the changes are to update Alberta regulations and ensure they are consistent with current Canadian and North American standards.

The changes are the result of a multi-year review of commercial vehicle safety and equipment regulations which involved extensive consultation with commercial vehicle stakeholders including industry, municipal, and safety organizations.



The CVSR consolidates nine previous regulations and contains changes effecting the operation of commercial vehicles in Alberta. The CVSR, VER, and UHRRR are aimed at enhancing traffic safety and operations, helping Albertan's enforcement agencies understand and enforce the new legislation, and improving vehicle safety in Alberta.

Click on this [link](#) to view the new and amended regulations.

It's No Fun Being Dead!

In May, the Office of Traffic Safety launched a provocative website that uses dark humour to teach young drivers serious traffic safety lessons.



The *No Fun Being Dead* website, geared towards tech-savvy 14 to 24-year-olds, features zombies, games, an interactive quiz, podcasts and the Grim Reaper as a talk-radio host to drive home the message that reckless driving behaviours have serious consequences.

Promotion of the website included an online contest and prizes were sponsored by the Insurance Bureau of Canada. The contest winners were Matt Mallon, Jonathon Schofield, Francy Wong, Stephanie Von Eggers, Christina Stobbart, Scott Ethier, Cherie Truss, Jenelle Pringle-Morris and Josie Anderson.

Prizes included one LG 42" HDTV, one Apple MacBook, two Sony Playstation 3s, and five Apple Ipods.

Commercial vehicle inspections help make our roads safer

More than 4101 commercial vehicles, including 150 buses, were checked for safety during the month of June. The surprise inspections conducted by Alberta Transportation and law enforcement agencies throughout the province resulted in 1202 charges.



These inspections also included 466 out-of-service charges, which remove dangerous vehicles from our roads and help prevent collisions and breakdowns. No motor carrier or person can operate a vehicle designated as out-of-service until it has been repaired.

Transport officers conducted 18-point visual inspections on safety essentials such as load securement, driver credentials, brakes, tires, log books, exhaust systems, coupling devices, fuel systems, turn signals, steering, lamps and wheels. The inspections took about 20 minutes each.

Click [here](#) to get more details.

National Day of Remembrance - Wednesday, November 18

The National Day of Remembrance for Road Crash Victims in Canada is a day set aside to remember those killed on Canadian roads, often in avoidable collisions, and those left to deal with the sudden and unexpected loss of people they love.

This year's theme will be **"Raising awareness of the number of deaths on Canadian roads."**

Click [here](#) to learn more.



Back to School Safety Tips

Now that school is back in, it is up to parents, caregivers, teachers and family members to ensure they provide children with the rules and tools that will allow them to make responsible choices and act safely when crossing the street. The following tips will help remind everyone to put safety into action:

- POINT across the road to show drivers you want to cross.
- PAUSE until the cars stop and you make eye contact with the drivers.
- PROCEED with your arm extended after all cars in all the lanes have stopped. Never run into the street.



Back to School Traffic Safety Day

Each year more than 340 children are injured or killed while walking or bicycling. Many of these fatalities and injuries could easily be prevented if motorists and children follow simple rules of traffic safety.

On September 28th, The Office of Traffic Safety will be holding the **Back to School Traffic Safety Day** at the Alberta Legislature. The goal of the event is to give children the skills they need to stay safe on our roads and to remind parents, teachers and motorists of the key role they play in improving traffic safety in their community.



New Traffic Safety Resources for Teachers

In September, the Office of Traffic Safety launched **Street Safe** a new educational program that teaches pedestrian, school bus and bicycle safety to students in Kindergarten to Grade 3.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the **Street Safe Program**.

How can I get involved in a Subject Matter Expert Committee?

Our Subject Matter Expert groups are always interested in attracting new stakeholders and members. If you would like to join one of these groups,

Please contact
jeanette.espie@gov.ab.ca



Click on this [link](#), to view the new Alberta Traffic Safety Communications Action Plan 2009/2010.



Christina Stobbart won an Ipod Touch in the **No Fun Being Dead** contest

The *Office of Traffic Safety Newsletter* is edited by Paul Oss and designed by Gerry James.

If you have any questions, feedback, or would like to make a submission, please contact: paul.oss@gov.ab.ca