



**South Louisiana Chapter
New Orleans**

Traffic Safety Committee Meeting Minutes Wednesday, June 20, 2007

The meeting was held in the 2nd floor Training Room in the ISH Bldg., 4713 Utica St., Metairie, LA. Lunch was served at 11:30 am. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Del Bosarge, Committee Chairman, at about 12:10 pm. Self introductions were held and the following were present:

Del Bosarge, Jefferson Parish Traffic Engineering, dbosarge@jeffparish.net
Dan Champagne, ISH, dan.champagne@ish1.com
Marc Ducote, Louisiana Highway Safety Commission
Terry Fairchild, Naval Support Activity, terry.fairchild@navy.mil
Dominick Imbornone, Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office
Beth Inbau, National Safety Council, South LA Chapter, beth@metrosafety.org
Dan Jatres, Regional Planning Commission, djatres@norpc.org
Chris Landry, Defensive Driving Instructor
Merrill Maratea, National Safety Council, South LA Chapter
Bea Parisi, First Parish Court of Jefferson Parish, bea@jeffparishcourts.com
Sgt. Antoine Rodrigue Jr., Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office
Karla Shiro, LA Dept. of Transportation & Dev., stevestrength@dtd.state.la.us
Fred Terluin, Louisiana Highway Safety Commission, fterluinjr@cox.net
Milton Thibodeaux, Beverly Industries, ronnies@beverlyinc.com
Betsey Tramonte, LA Operation Lifesaver betsey@laoperationlifesaver.org

The minutes from the past meeting was distributed and accepted with a correction. Ms. Inbau announced that notices and minutes will be posted on the website at www.metrosafety.org under the "Traffic" tab. The corrected minutes will be marked "Final."

Ms. Betsey Tramonte, Executive Director of Louisiana Lifesaver, was our guest speaker. She described the mission and activities of her office. Louisiana Operation Lifesaver is a non-profit, continuing public education program designed to end collisions, deaths and injuries at highway-rail grade crossings and on railroad rights-of-way. (Learn more at <http://www.laoperationlifesaver.org>.)

Ms. Tramonte said they have about 60 certified volunteer presenters in LA and about 3,000 nation-wide. Presentations can be 15 minutes to 1 hour. Any organization or business interested in a presentation, please contact her at 225-925-6995. She added that if there was any interest in an instructor course, she would like to hold one in the New Orleans area. Ms. Inbau offered her classroom. Ms. Tramonte said the instructor training could be as short as 4 hours (for those already certified to teach other topics) to 1.5 days (for those with little to no

National Safety Council, South Louisiana Chapter

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training experience). The instructor class is free and the participants are given videos, PowerPoint slides, charts and pamphlets to distribute at their presentations.

Ms. Tramonte reported that Louisiana has about 6,000 RxR crossings and that about half are privately owned. LA is usually in the top 5 worst states for RxR crashes. In the US, about 50% of the crashes occur at crossings with "active" warnings (lights & gates). Therefore, installing active warnings will not eliminate all the crashes. In LA, about 1/3 of all crossings have active warnings. She added that horns are being installed at the crossings instead of on the engines to reduce noise in neighborhoods and to alert drivers.

Ms. Tramonte described the relationship between a freight train and a car as the same as between a car and a soda can. An average freight train weighs about 4 million pounds vs a passenger car at about 3,000. LA has about 20 deaths annually involving vehicles and another 14 involving pedestrians. Freight trains travel an average speed of 55-60 mph and Amtrak may go 78 mph in LA. Since freight traffic is increasing in LA, it is very important to teach children and adults not to walk along RxR tracks and drivers to approach tracks with caution. She said that each track owner posts their toll-free number at their RxR crossing to call for emergencies. The numbers may be posted on signs or on steel boxes along the track near the road. Of course, 9-1-1 can always be used. Her website also has some of the numbers for the major carriers.

A question was asked about installing rumble strips (similar to those on the shoulders of the interstates) in front of RxR to alert drivers to the tracks. Ms. Schiro with DOTD said that suggestion had not been made but might be worth investigating. However, the reduced traction, especially when wet, might create another hazard particularly for motorcycles.

Mr. Bosarge reported that a recent 5th Circuit Court decision ruled that trains can block intersections indefinitely and are not restricted to the 20 minute limit in LA state law. (He will forward the information to Ms. Inbau who will distribute to the Traffic Safety Committee members.)

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at about 1:10 pm.

The next meeting will be on **Wednesday, July 18, 2007**, 11:30 am. The fee for lunch will be \$15. The meeting adjourned at about * pm.

Submitted by: Beth Inbau, NSC President & CEO

P.S. If anyone has a suggestion for future guest speakers, please submit contact information to Ms. Inbau at 504-888-7618, fax 504-888-7612, beth@metrosafety.org.

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