

**DRAFT**

**Metropolitan Safety Council of the New Orleans Area Inc.**  
**dba National Safety Council, South Louisiana Chapter**  
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## **Traffic Safety Committee Meeting Minutes** **Wednesday, August 19, 2009**

The meeting was held in the second floor training room of the ISH Building, 4713 Utica Street in Metairie, LA. Complimentary lunch was served at 11:45 am. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Del Bosarge at about noon. After a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance, self introductions were held and the following were present:

\* Joe Almerico, Plaquemines Parish Sheriff's Office [jalmerico@ppso.net](mailto:jalmerico@ppso.net)  
Del Bosarge, Jefferson Parish Traffic Engineering, [dbosarge@jeffparish.net](mailto:dbosarge@jeffparish.net)  
Scott Boyle, Louisiana Dept. of Transportation & Dev. [scott.boyle@la.gov](mailto:scott.boyle@la.gov)  
Aaron Chabaud, Louisiana Highway Safety Commission, [AaronChabaud@bellsouth.net](mailto:AaronChabaud@bellsouth.net)  
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\*Maj. David DiMaggio, St. Bernard Sheriff's Office [ddimaggio@sbsso.org](mailto:ddimaggio@sbsso.org)  
Rachel East, DOTD New Orleans Regional TMC, [rachel.east@la.gov](mailto:rachel.east@la.gov)  
John Exnicios, Krebs, LaSalle, Lemieux Consultants, [jexnicios@krebsslalalle.com](mailto:jexnicios@krebsslalalle.com)  
Jeff Haydel, Motorcycle Awareness Committee, [hayjeff@yahoo.com](mailto:hayjeff@yahoo.com)  
Beth Inbau, President & CEO, NSC South Louisiana Chapter [beth@metro-safety.org](mailto:beth@metro-safety.org)  
Dan Jatres, Regional Planning Commission, [djatres@norpc.org](mailto:djatres@norpc.org)  
\*Richard Kinchen, Krebs, LaSalle, Lemieux Consultants [rkirchen@krebsslalalle.com](mailto:rkirchen@krebsslalalle.com)  
Sgt. John Pollard, St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office, [jpollard@stcharlessheriff.org](mailto:jpollard@stcharlessheriff.org)  
Donald Redman, AAA Louisiana, [dredman@aaamissouri.com](mailto:dredman@aaamissouri.com)  
\*Don Robinson, AARP [donmargaret@bellsouth.net](mailto:donmargaret@bellsouth.net)  
Sgt. Antoine Rodrigue, Jr., Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office, [antoine-rodrigue@lpso.net](mailto:antoine-rodrigue@lpso.net)  
\*Lt. Carl Saizan, Louisiana State Police Troop "B" [csaizan@dps.la.gov](mailto:csaizan@dps.la.gov)  
Lt. Allen Sanchez, Plaquemines Parish Sheriff's Office [asanchez@ppso.net](mailto:asanchez@ppso.net)  
Steve Strength, LA Dept. of Transportation & Dev., [stevestrength@la.gov](mailto:stevestrength@la.gov)  
Betsey Tramonte, Federal Highway Administration, [betsey.tramonte@dot.gov](mailto:betsey.tramonte@dot.gov)  
\*Lynn Watson, LA Office of Public Health, Injury Research [lynn.watson@la.gov](mailto:lynn.watson@la.gov)

\* New attendees.

The minutes from the meeting of July 15 were reviewed and approved with notations.

Jeff Haydel made a presentation on behalf of the Motorcycle Awareness Committee on their upcoming Motorcycle Awareness Campaign (MAC). It will include radio spots and billboards, along with information packets, examples of which were passed out to the attendees. They also have a license plate that can be purchased to raise funds for MAC safety activities, and are looking for speakers to present safety information at their meetings.

Sgt. Rodrigue reported the statistics for Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office for July. There were 137 crashes, including 15 hit and run, 1 fatality, and 25 injury crashes. Enforcement activities included 9 DWI arrests, 3 for underage drinking, 37 seat belt violations, and 6 child restraint offenses. For the second quarter, crashes were down by 50% from last year with 662 reported.

Major DiMaggio reported that the St. Bernard Sheriff's Office has a 4 person Motorcycle Division and has been participating in joint checkpoints, rotating between seat belt and DWI enforcement. There have been 2 traffic fatalities in the parish so far this year.

Lt. Saizan reported that he is currently Interim Commander of State Police Troop "B." Capt. Ken Curlee has been promoted to Major and is now assigned to the HQ Crisis Response Unit in Baton Rouge. Troop B normally experiences 40 to 50 fatalities per year, and there have been 23 so far this year. There have been 11 in St. Charles Parish, two in St. Bernard, one in Plaquemines, and 4 to 5 in Jefferson. Troop B also includes Orleans, primarily patrolled by NOPD, and the East Bank of St. John the Baptist Parish. Lt. Saizan also reported that Troop B has investigated approximately 3200 crashes, mostly in Jefferson Parish. They make approximately 1000 DWI arrests, issue 20,000 speeding tickets, and cite 8,000 seat belt violations per year. He also highlighted some of the new laws taking effect between August 15 and October 1 of this year, including the rear seat restraint law and the measure requiring that the left lane be used for passing only. There is also a new law making it easier for the courts to share information about DWI convictions.

Mr. Haydel reported that the Buffalo Soldiers, a motorcycle group, will be holding a rally in the area on Saturday the 22<sup>nd</sup>, with approximately 400 participants.

Sgt. Pollard reported that there were 581 citations issued in July in St. Charles Parish, there were 119 crashes investigated by SCPSO, and 14 DWI arrests made.

Ms. Tramonte reported on recent statistics from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS). For the year 2008 (preliminary data) there have been 915 fatalities reported in Louisiana compared with 993 in 2007. Vehicle Miles Traveled was lower in 2008 (VMT in 2007 was 454 million miles traveled as compared to 449 in 2008). Fatality rates for Louisiana were also lower, from 2.2 in 2007 to 2.0 in 2008. There were 501 fatalities reported on rural roads and 414 on urban roads in 2008. The percentage of unbelted fatalities was 60% and alcohol impairment above the legal limit of .08 was involved in 17% of the fatalities. This is normally in the range of 40% for .08 BAC+. Also there were 81 motorcycle fatalities, of which 32 did not wear a helmet, and there were 154 fatal crashes involving drivers under 21, while 109 pedestrians were killed in 2008. Ms. Tramonte also enumerated 2009 statistics through June 30, indicating that there have been 409 deaths compared with 463 for the same period in 2008. "Dashboard" reviews indicated that approximately 60% of the fatalities were involved in roadway departure crashes, with the majority of those being run-off-road to the right. Fourteen percent of the fatal crashes occurred at intersections, 10% reportedly involved alcohol above the legal limit, and rural fatal crashes outnumbered urban fatal crashes by 198 to 158.

Mr. Robinson reported on AARP road safety activities. AARP Louisiana has 140 instructors and teaches driver safety classes to approximately 9000 individuals per year. He reported that there is a significant amount of confusion about certain laws or best practices for drivers; one example is the misuse of emergency flashers in limited visibility conditions. A discussion ensued regarding procedures and content for licensing instruction and the inconsistency of motorists' knowledge of various traffic laws.

Mr. Champagne reported that according to the US Army Corps of Engineers, Congress has appropriated all the money necessary to complete the levee upgrades promised by 2012. Concerns will include scheduling and manpower, issues common to all construction including that scheduled for the refineries.

Mr. Redman of AAA quoted Voltaire, saying, "Common sense is not so common," while commenting on motorists' knowledge and practice and the need for better driver education. He reported that oil prices are increasing and the economy is down, creating interesting dynamics. AAA is currently conducting its School's Open safety campaign.

Mr. Strength reported that the Louisiana LTAP Center will be conducting a one day Roadway Departure Workshop on October 14 in New Orleans. The I-10 Causeway project will involve the closure of I-10 down to one lane in each direction this Sunday from 6 AM to 6 PM. On Sunday the 30<sup>th</sup> I-10 eastbound at Causeway will be closed completely for 12 hours, with a westbound closure to follow later in September. These closures are needed to allow the contractor to hang girders over the roadway for the new interchange ramps. He also reported that the lane shifts are completed for now on the Twin Span. The Corps of Engineers levee projects will involve as many as 5000 trucks on the road at the peak of the effort, with lane closures on major highways being likely.

Ms. East reported that the new Regional Transportation Management Center will be fully functional November 1, 2009. Several meetings are already being scheduled there, including the Safety Council Traffic Committee on Wednesday, October 21. There will be a tour conducted of the new facility after today's meeting and again on September 16 for the committee members to view the building in advance of the opening.

Mr. Exnicios reported that his firm is designing traffic control plans for the levee work being planned at the south end of the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway. During part of this work traffic will be restricted to one lane in each direction.

Mr. Boyle indicated that a review of school zones has been conducted in the Hammond District of DOTD, along with their work on signal studies and a host of small projects they are required to review. A modern roundabout is being proposed in Covington, and the speed limit in the work zone for the Amite River Bridge widening on I-12 has been raised from 45 to 50 to improve compliance.

Mr. Jatres reported on several projects incorporating the Complete Streets design concept including accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists. He also highlighted the law requiring that motor vehicles give a three foot lateral cushion when overtaking bicycles on the roadway.

Ms. Inbau reported on the National Safety Council Resource Kit and website addressing the issue of distracted driving. The information is available free of charge. The Safe Communities group in Hammond has made application to the World Health Organization for a safety grant.

Mr. Bosarge reported that Jefferson Parish has checked each of their school zone flashing signals in preparation for the school year. The parish is instituting a program for trucks carrying dirt fill for the Corps levee projects which includes a sticker for each truck that will identify them as related to the Corps projects.

The meeting adjourned at about 1:25 pm. A group of nine Traffic Safety Committee members took part in the RTMC tour following the meeting. The next meeting will be on **Wednesday, September 16, 2009**, 11:30 am, at **State Police Troop B**.

Respectfully submitted by Steven C. Strength, PE, PTOE, Recorder