

## LA CROSSE COUNTY HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, February 09, 2011  
 La Crosse County Administration Building Room B390  
 1:30 P.M.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mike Allison, Tim Berg, Matt Gallager, Tim Hammes, Ilona Hansen, Thomas Knoop, Bill Lubinski, Roland Solberg, Evan Stone, Reiny Yahnke  
**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Al Blencoe  
**MEMBERS ABSENT:**  
**OTHERS PRESENT:** Jackie Eastwood

### CALL TO ORDER

Sgt. Bill Lubinski, Committee Coordinator, called the meeting to order.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Mike Allison, seconded by Ilona Hansen, to approve the November 10, 2010 Highway Safety Commission minutes as corrected. Motion carried unanimously.

### LA CROSSE COUNTY CRASH DATA FOR 4<sup>th</sup> QUARTER OF 2010

2010	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Yearly Total
<b>Sheriff Department</b>					
Hit & run	12	7	8	6	33
Car/deer	56	58	38	124	276
Injury	23	24	39	30	116
Property damage	86	38	40	100	264
Fatalities	0	1	1	0	2
Sub-total	177	128	126	260	691
<b>Comparison of Prior Year Totals</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Total
2003	214	190	186	317	907
2004	199	195	162	295	851
2005	224	234	147	313	918
2006	215	192	150	251	808
2007	245	168	182	280	875
2008	228	150	158	284	820
2009	178	137	144	246	705
2010	177	128	126	260	691

Accidents in 2010 were down from 2009. Car/deer accidents increased dramatically in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, as did property damage accidents. The weather most likely played a large role in the increase in property damage crashes.

11 of the 260 crashes involved alcohol usage. Nine of these caused injuries. Of the 136 reportable accidents with 295 occupants, 256 reported using seatbelts at the time of impact, for an 87% compliance rate.

There was discussion about vehicles driving into the cables which are in place to prevent vehicles from crossing over into opposing traffic. These cables are effective. They do cause damage to vehicles, but do prevent cross-overs and more serious injuries.

There was discussion about a particular incident in which a vehicle was stuck on the cable and the wrecker company was having difficulty removing the vehicle. La Crosse County Highway Department personnel took the end of the cable off for them so they could remove the vehicle. Wrecker company personnel should not attempt to take the cable off on their own. Removing a cable disables the cable system.

Another problem observed in accidents during certain weather is that if the passing lane is closed in order to clean up after an accident, this lane can freeze up right away. Then when the lane is open and people are driving as they normally do, they may pass a vehicle in this icy passing lane not realizing that the road conditions have changed in that particular spot, creating a new hazard.

Most crashes on Highway 53 seem to happen south of Holmen into the Onalaska area.

## **WISDOT UPDATES & HIGHWAY SAFETY PLAN SOLICITATION**

A brochure on Teaching Safe Bicycling was handed out. This is to be held in La Crosse on April 30, 2011.

The total number of traffic fatalities in Wisconsin for 2010 was 563, which is 113 less than the 5-year average. Motorcycle fatalities were lower than average and pedestrian fatalities were about average based on other years. (Pedestrian fatalities in 2009 were exceptionally low.)

May and August were the worst months for traffic fatalities. As of today's date there have been 42 fatalities in 2011. This is an increase of 12 or 13 from 2010, but is lower than the 5-year average of 51 on the same date. Pedestrian fatalities in 2011 so far are double that of 2010. One pedestrian fatality occurred when a driver got out of his vehicle to help others and was struck by another vehicle. If a vehicle is out of the way of traffic, it should be left alone off the road until conditions are better to remove it in order to prevent further crashes from occurring.

There were 6 fatalities in La Crosse County in 2010 and 6 in 2009. There has been one fatality so far in 2011.

A handout shows that Wisconsin has the lowest seatbelt compliance rate in the region at 79.2%. Strategies are being discussed to increase seatbelt usage. Enforcement seems to make the difference in the top ten states for seatbelt usage. The average fine in the top ten states is \$81.70. Wisconsin is the lowest at \$10.

The handout entitled 'Alcohol-Impaired Driving for 2009' shows that 32% of the total fatalities in the United States involved a driver with a blood alcohol concentration of .08 or higher. 80% of Wisconsin alcohol-related fatalities involve first-time offenders.

The Law of the Month for February 2011 is 'State law protects children by requiring proper safety restraints in vehicles'.

The Law of the Month for March 2011 is 'Who has the right-of-way when merging onto a freeway?' As a courtesy and for safety reasons, drivers on multiple lane highways are encouraged to change lanes or adjust their speed if possible to allow merging vehicles to enter the traffic flow, but vehicles on the main highway have the right-of-way and are not legally required to move over.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS/DISCUSSION**

The YMCA Triathlon is scheduled for Sunday, June 12, 2011.

The November 10, 2010 Highway Safety Commission minutes mentioned a portable speed indicator sign which the Sheriff's Department uses. The sign attaches to existing signs. This sign is able to record the fastest speed, calculate average speeds at certain times of the day, and record data when the display is not on. It is moved around in the county to areas in which there are speed concerns or where complaints are received from citizens. Downloaded data, to include primary violation times, is then passed on to the patrol. The Sheriff's Department does not put the sign out during winter months as speeding is less of a problem and snowplows could potentially cause damage to it. The Sheriff's Department received its sign from All Traffic Solutions at a cost of \$4800, which included a second rechargeable battery. AAA purchased a speed trailer for the Onalaska Police Department. It was suggested to use the signs during bike races.

Tim Berg reported that a TIME (Traffic Incident Management Enhancement) training had been provided to towing operators regarding how to maneuver the cables between highway lanes. This training is required each November. It was suggested that this TIME training be offered to others including Onalaska Fire Department and Campbell Fire Department personnel. The training includes how to deal with crashes, how to direct traffic, clear crash scenes, manage traffic, etc.

TIME has trained emergency responders, but not media. It was suggested that there should be training for the media about what they can and cannot do. Media personnel can create new traffic hazards by parking their vehicles in dangerous areas and setting up cameras in hazardous places. Onlookers in the area also pose new hazards. Media vehicles should not be located in a way in which they block the lights from emergency vehicles. The question was raised if an agency has opened itself to liability by allowing media to be there. Bill Lubinski will check with Corporate Counsel about this.

Reiny Yahnke handed out the 2011 SW Region TIME meeting schedule. A training manual issued on 09/17/10 is available for those who want to see it. Included in this manual are roundabouts.

Matt Gallager reported that the City of La Crosse purchased two speed indicator signs.

The city has installed unofficial white lines along roads for bicycle lanes.

Jackie Eastwood reported that the Metro Planning Department has \$100,000 to be used for safety studies. Any member of the community can contact the Metro Planning Department with any ideas for safety studies of a particular area.

Tim Hammes stated that the surface of County B by the North Woods School is to be torn up and redone this year.

Mormon Coulee Road between Losey Boulevard and Broadview will be part of a study for the next ten years. This year an overlay is planned for that area and also on Losey Boulevard from La Crosse Street to maybe Madison Street.

The enhanced mile marker project on Highway 53 was discussed. Reiny Yahnke will check on the timeline for this project.

### **AGENDA FOR MAY 11, 2011 MEETING**

Items to be included on the May 11, 2011 agenda are La Crosse County crash data for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2011, WisDOT Updates and Highway Safety Plan Solicitation, and announcements/discussion.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Mike Allison, seconded by Thomas Knoop, to adjourn the meeting at 2:45 P.M. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Approved 05/11/11, Roxanne Felde, Recorder