

Final



**South Louisiana Chapter
New Orleans**

Traffic Safety Committee Meeting Minutes Wednesday, January 21, 2009

The meeting was held in the 2nd floor Training Room in the ISH Bldg., 4713 Utica St., Metairie, LA. Complimentary lunch was served at 11:30 am. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Steve Strength, at about 11:50 am. Mr. Exnicios lead the group in the Prayer and Mr. Strength lead the Pledge. Self introductions were held and the following were present:

Scott Boyle, Department of Transportation and Development, ScottBoyle@dotd.la.gov
Dan Champagne, ISH, dan.champagne@ish1.com, 504-885-6391
Jeffrey Doussan Jr., Consultant for DOTD, Jeffrey@realsnap.net, 504-236-0222
Patricia Edwards, DOTD & Operation Lifesaver, patriciaedwards@dotd.la.gov, 225-921-8381
Tom Ervin, Consultant for DOTD, tom@trafdoc.com, 985-373-0534
John Exnicios, Krebs, LaSalle, Lemieux Consultants, exnicios@kllconsultants.com, 504-887-9470
Beth Inbau, National Safety Council, South LA Chapter, beth@metrosafety.org, 504-888-7618
Dan Jatres, Regional Planning Commission, djatres@norpc.org, 504-568-6608
Sgt. Shawn Michel, Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office, fax 465-1497
Les O'Regan, US Customs & Border Protection, NSC DDC Instructor, lester.oregan@dhs.gov, 670-2284
Sgt. John Pollard, St. Charles Sheriff's Office, jpollard@stcharlessheriff.org
Donald Redman, AAA, dredman@aaamissouri.com, 504-838-7500 x6020
Sgt. Antoine Rodrigue Jr., Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office, antoine-rodrique@lpsa.net,
Steve Strength, LA Dept. of Transportation & Dev., stevestrength@dotd.la.gov
Betsey Tramonte, Federal Highway Administration, betsey.tramonte@fhwa.dot.gov

The minutes from the past meeting was distributed and accepted without corrections. Ms. Inbau announced that notices and minutes will be posted on the website at www.metrosafety.org.

Mr. Boyle reported on the progress on the DOTD projects on Jefferson Hwy at Causeway and the Huey P. Long Bridge.

Mr. Strength reported on the DOTD project on Bonnebel at I-10. Mr. Exnicios requested that the speed limit signs be replaced on the one-way portion of Bonnebel. Mr. Strength agreed to check.

Mr. Strength also reported on the work on the Twin Spans which, by June, will result in changing the lanes to work on one side, then on the other side.

Mr. Doussan reported that the DOTD commissioned him and other consultants to address the 1200 most dangerous intersections in the state using money from a federal grant. The identification phase is complete. Now they will be addressing lost cost corrections, such as striping and signage. Ms. Tramonte will try to bring a list of the locations in the greater New Orleans area.

National Safety Council, South Louisiana Chapter

P O Box 858, Kenner, LA 70063-0858

Tel: 504-888-7618, 800-N-SAFETY, Fax: 504-888-7612, 866-698-1685

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Mr. Redman reported that AAA has learned that refined gasoline has climbed about \$0.22/gallon and crude is now about \$33/barrel. Since production has been reduced, the price of gas has gone up, increasing the profit margin. He said the state has a problem when crude prices go down because it results in less tax money for the state. AAA is studying the draft proposal of the infrastructure program proposed by the federal government. In the package proposal is an increase of \$0.10-\$0.40 tax increase on gas and diesel along with recommendations to institute toll roads to help fund state projects. It is believed that in the long-range future there will be a user fee calculated by the miles driven. As alternative energy sources are used, there will be a need to replace fuel taxes.

Mr. O'Regan reported that the Customs Department has set a 2009 goal of a 3% decrease in "mishaps" including motor vehicles accidents. He also said that he has noticed a recent increase of young women in the DWI classes he teaches for the Council. He is also seeing more traffic offenses involving drugs such as Soma and Methadone.

Sgt. Rodrigue reported that in Lafourche Parish, the Sheriff's Office handled 89 complaints in December 2008, issued 124 citations, 124 crashes without injuries, 79 with injuries, 4 fatal crashes. He also reported that one DWI checkpoint resulted in 5 field sobriety tests administered, 1 arrest (.15 BAC), 1 insurance citation, 2 no drivers license and 1 safety belt citation from the 450 vehicles checked.

Sgt. Michel reported that JPSO issued 770 violations, 11 red light (officer issued), 286 speeding, 56 signs, 193 hazardous, 21 insurance, 33 safety belts, 5 child restraints, 277 crashes without injury, 88 with injury, no fatalities and 6 DWI arrests for December 2008. Jefferson Parish had 16 fatalities for the year. He also reported that plans are underway to install 30 more red light running cameras. Existing and new cameras will also capture those making right turns without stopping and citations will be issued. He noted that for red light running, the camera system is not as strict as an officer would be. He will try to get red light running citation statistics for the next meeting.

Sgt. Pollard reported that the St. Charles Parish DWI checkpoint inspected 108 vehicles, which resulted in 8 screenings, 3 arrests and 324 tickets for the month.

Ms. Inbau distributed the position paper from the National Safety Council that supported the ban of cell phones and similar devices while driving. The issue made national news recently. Sgt. Michel said that it is difficult to verify whether a driver involved in a crash was using such devices, so citations are issued for careless operation.

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Page 3
1/21/09 Traffic Minutes

Ms. Edwards reported that the state has about a 75% safety belt usage while the nation is at about 82%. DOTD and LA Highway Safety Commission are looking into a public awareness campaign. In June, they will begin their annual safety belt survey and hope the state will improve.

Ms. Tramonte reported that the Intersection Safety Workshop will be held 3/10-12/09 at LTC in LSU, BR. The event is designed for local agencies to identify and install low cost safety measures. She also reported that the state's DWI task force meeting is televised at 9:30 am each Monday morning. She added that a work-zone review with DOTD on 18 projects statewide is being conducted.

Mr. Champagne reported that the oil refineries are beginning their 3-year turn-arounds. Although the major companies stagger their closings, the demand for gas with the reduced supply may have an effect on prices at the pump. He also explained the TWIC program which is part of Homeland Security and requires every person who works in near proximity to a major port or waterway to have a federal background check and clearance issued by the Coast Guard. The cost is \$132.50 and must be renewed every 5 years. The backlog is about 4 weeks now, causing a major problem for the refineries.

Ms. Inbau announced that the Alive at 25 training program will be launched with the LA State Police next month in Metairie. The 4-hour class is designed for young drivers 15-24 years old. She also reported on the National Safety Council's recent position policy supporting automated enforcement. These policies and other traffic safety information can be found at www.nsc.org. She also agreed to invite Jefferson Parish Councilman-at-Large, Mr. John Young, to an upcoming meeting, as he led the parish in installing the red light running cameras.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at about 1:15 pm.

The next meeting will be on **Wednesday, February 18, 2009**, 11:30 am. The fee for lunch will be \$10, unless otherwise announced.

Submitted by: Beth Inbau, NSC President & CEO