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**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, July 15, 2009**

The meeting was held in the 2nd floor Training Room of the ISH Building, 4713 Utica Street, Metairie, LA. Complimentary lunch was served at 11:30 am. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Steven Strength at noon. After a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance, self introductions were held and the following were present:

Aaron Chabaud, Louisiana Highway Safety Commission, AaronChabaud@bellsouth.net
Dan Champagne, ISH, dan.champagne@ish1.com
Tom Ervin, Consultant for DOTD, tom@trafdoc.com, 985-373-0534
Dan Jatres, Regional Planning Commission, djatres@norpc.org
Sgt. Wilburn McDowell, Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office, wilburn-mcdowell@lpsso.net
Sgt. Shawn Michel, Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office, fax 504-465-1497
Sgt. Antoine Rodrigue, Jr., Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office, antoine-rodrigue@lpsso.net
Steve Strength, LA Dept. of Transportation & Development, steve.strength@la.gov
Brad Tassin, Beverly Industries, bradt@beverlyinc.com

The minutes from the meeting of June 17 were reviewed and accepted by acclamation.

Mr. Chabaud reported on activities of the Highway Safety Commission, including enforcement, public information, impaired driving, and seatbelt campaigns. Regarding recent legislative matters, the cell phone laws have not changed. There was action doubling the time of suspension for DWI convictions from 6-12 months to 1-2 years, and it is now a criminal offense to drive under a suspended license. The requirement to wear a seat belt now applies to all occupants of a motor vehicle. The legislature failed to act on simplifying the drug schedules for impaired driving, but rules for administrative hearings have been tightened to ease the burden on law enforcement personnel. Efforts to establish a statewide database for first offense DWI arrests and to tighten the probation rules on Article 894 pleas have also borne fruit.

Sgt. Michel reported the number of citations for Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office Traffic Division for June. Of a total of 2,196 tickets issued, 404 were for seat belts, and 4 for DWI. There were 555 crash reports, including 2 fatalities. 1,063 citations were issued by Redflex under the automated red light running program, a significant reduction from previous months.

Sgt. Rodrigue reported on activities in Lafourche Parish including 209 crashes investigated, 248 citations and 13 DWI arrests in June. A DWI checkpoint on July 10 resulted in 1 arrest and 3 drug arrests out of a total of 624 vehicles screened. Discussion ensued regarding the reduction in DWI arrests. Hopefully the message about the ill effects of DWI is getting out, but there is also evidence that information on these checkpoints is being distributed amongst friends via cell phone, texting, etc. Sgt. Rodrigue also reported that the South Central Safe Communities Safety Summit will be held July 23 at Nicholls State University.

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Mr. Champagne reported that the production turnarounds at area refineries have been delayed until after the first of the year. He also discussed problems with speeding on LA 1077 in St. Tammany Parish.

Mr. Jatres reported on the successful media campaign for bicycle and pedestrian safety in New Orleans. Some of the bus billboards are still being displayed. A study group for "Complete Streets" development has been formed, and there is a new State law requiring motorists to give adequate lateral clearance when overtaking bicycles sharing the road with motor vehicles.

Mr. Strength reported on the opening of the new eastbound I-10 Twin Span Bridge on July 9. Westbound traffic will be shifted to the old eastbound bridge, allowing for the abandonment of the old westbound bridge, in about 3 weeks, thereby eliminating the need for lane closures during the week to do bridge maintenance. The I-10 work at Causeway is affecting ground level traffic near Veterans during the day, while the segment from Causeway to the 17th Street Canal will be finished once sign work is completed. The Huey P. Long Bridge approach work continues with temporary closure of several routes on the West Bank for drainage improvements. Mr. Strength promoted the Roadway Departure Workshops being conducted by the Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) around the State and reported that there is a possibility that an additional one day class may be conducted in New Orleans in October.

Mr. Ervin discussed work being conducted by DOTD on I-12, including night work. He expounded on new standards for lighting of work zones at night.

Bob Trahan of the National Safety Council, South Louisiana Chapter, reported that turnout at recent Defensive Driving Course (DDC) classes has been increasing, including attendance at the Alive at 25 class for young drivers from 16 to 24 years old. Special emphasis is being placed on the negative consequences of speeding and on incidents due to distractions in the vehicle.

The meeting adjourned at 1:10 pm.

The next meeting will be on **Wednesday, August 19, 2009**, 11:30 am at the ISH Building on Utica Street in Metairie.

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