



South Louisiana Chapter
New Orleans

Traffic Safety Committee Meeting Minutes Wednesday, July 18, 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
Paul Breaux, Gillis, Ellis, Baker Ins. Co., pbreaux@gillis.com
Bob Canfield, Louisiana Highway Safety Commission, RRCBRLA@aol.com
Dan Champagne, ISH, dan.champagne@ish1.com
Marc Ducote, Louisiana Highway Safety Commission, mcducote@bellsouth.net
John Exnicios, Krebbs, LaSalle, Lemieux Consultants, exnicios@kllconsultants.com
Beth Inbau, National Safety Council, South LA Chapter, beth@metrosafety.org
Dan Jatres, Regional Planning Commission, djatres@norpc.org
Chris Landry, National Safety Council Defensive Driving Instructor, clandry222@bellsouth.net
Sgt. Greg Lowero, Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office
Merrill Maratea, National Safety Council Defensive Driving Instructor, golf_msm@bellsouth.net
Les O'Regan, US Customs, NSC Defensive Driving Instructor, lester.oregan@dhs.gov
Sgt. John Pollard, St. Charles Sheriff's Office, jpollard@stcharlessheriff.org
Donald Redman, AAA, dredman@aaamissouri.com
Sgt. Antoine Rodrigue Jr., Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office, Antoine-rodrigue@lpso.net
Steve Strength, LA Dept. of Transportation & Dev., stevestrength@dotd.state.la.us
Fred Terluin, Louisiana Highway Safety Commission, fterluinj@cox.net
Betsey Tramonte, Louisiana Operation Lifesaver, Betsey@laoperationlifesaver.org

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.

Sgt. Pollard reported that St. Charles Sheriff's Office issued 446 traffic citations, investigated 138 crashes (no fatalities) in June. However, they are investigating one fatal crash so far in July. Most of the citations are for speeding.

Sgt. Lowero reported that JPSO Traffic Division issued 2905 citations in June, mostly for speeding. They investigated 347 crashes with 108 injuries and 9 DWI arrests. He added that the Traffic Division staffing is down from 48 to 26.

Mr. Strength reported that the DOTD work continues on the Twin Spans. One side should be completed by early October 2008. However, speeding and overweight trucks continue

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to be problems. The maximum is 35 tons. He also reported that the signal upgrade in New Orleans is awaiting power. However, maintenance will be a concern, as the City does not have enough technicians. (The standard is 30 signals per tech and N.O. has 455 signals with only 2 techs.) The upgrades will include an electronic control so officers can control the light cycles from the control box, instead of using 4 officers.

Mr. Strength reminded everyone that a flashing signal should be treated as a 2-way stop on the red side and a caution on the yellow side. A signal light completely out should be treated as a 4-way stop.

A question arose about a stop sign on Washington at St. Charles in the City. Since the streetcar repairs obstruct one side, the stop sign is moot and should be removed. The group agreed to refer this to Mr. Elmer Darwin, New Orleans Traffic Engineering.

Mr. Strength reported on other DOTD projects: St. Claude resurfacing, Jefferson Hwy. signal upgrade, I-10 widening in Metairie. He added that the Regional Traffic Control Center, which will include the Regional Planning Commission office, has been let and is expected to open in spring 2009. It will be raised 6 feet and be located on the former Troop B station on Ponchartrain Blvd.

A request for an additional sign requiring trucks to use the right lane on the I-10 High Rise for eastbound traffic was made. Mr. Strength agreed to investigate the request. Apparently truckers who violate this use the additional requirement for "Maintain Speed" as a defense. The on-ramp also slows trucks down.

Mr. Canfield distributed "Technology Exchange" about street improvements on non-state funded roads. He also distributed "Local Road Safety Program Workshops" explaining LTAP funding available. (Contact Marie Walsh for more info.) He distributed "SMSN" newsletter. He reminded the group that about 43,000 are killed on US highways annually. That is the same as 4 commercial airliners crashing PER WEEK killing 200 on each!

Mr. Canfield reported that the State Legislature made some significant changes to the DWI penalties, and when enacted, will make LA DWI laws the strongest in the nation. One change involves over-the-counter and prescription drug usage while driving. The burden will shift from law enforcement to the defendant to prove he/she knowingly took more than the recommended dosage. Another bill allows blood to be taken from any medical professional. Another bill involves requiring the ignition interlock device for anyone convicted of a DWI who is asking for a hardship license. On the 1st offense, it will be required for 1 year, 2nd offense for 2, 3rd for 3 years.

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Mr. Canfield reminded everyone of the Traffic Safety Summit on 7/19/07 at Nicholls University in Thibodeaux. He also said that the Acadiana Safe Communities in Lafayette will have a trailer for teen driver safety on 7/20/07.

Mr. Canfield reported that the DOTD will be installing cable barriers on I-55 and I-12 to reduce the risk of cross-overs (head-on collisions). However, the barriers are expensive to repair if hit. He also said that a new designation of "Highway Safety Corridor" will be imposed on highways which will include upgrades in markings, strict enforcement and increased fines.

Mr. Exnicios reported that the southbound Causeway advisory signs will remind drivers that the speed is decreased from 65 to 55 on the humps. He also reported on the revitalization at Lakeside Shopping Center in Metairie.

Mr. Bosarge reported on several projects in Jefferson Parish: Lakeside S.C. adding a parking garage, Lapalco at Appolo, Kawanee bridge, W. Esplanade closure at Woodland on 7/28 or 8/4, numerous canal projects.

Ms. Tramonte gave a brief overview of the LA Operation Lifesaver programs. She said a new brochure is available for law enforcement. She said that a new series of public service announcements will air soon.

Mr. Redman said gas prices are going up (again), mostly because one major refinery is shut down. Crude may go to \$90/barrel. He commented that Texas has enacted a fuel distribution plan for evacuations, so major stations along routes will be replenished. Mississippi is developing a plan, but Louisiana has no intention to develop a plan. Florida requires major stations along evacuation routes to have working generators. He suggested that everyone keep their tanks full during hurricane season.

Mr. Jatres reported on the "Safe Routes to School" project which has complete federal funding reimbursement. He also reported on the 8/7/07 "National Night Out Against Crime." He said the "Design" course went well and reminded everyone on the upcoming "Law Enforcement" training on bike and pedestrian safety.

Mr. O'Regan reported that the US Customs department experienced a recent fatality involving an aircraft chasing illegal aliens, but no fatalities on the ground recently.

Mr. Champagne thanked the National Safety Council for the new tables, chairs and audiovisual equipment and for painting the training room. He also mentioned that in the 1st quarter of 2008, ExxonMobil and Shell refineries will have major turnarounds. Conoco is planning to be shut down for 50 days in the 2nd quarter. This may also send gas prices up.

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Ms. Inbau told the group that the National Safety Council has a grant to fund “Alive at 25” training to teens in New Orleans for free. However, we lost our location (Lindy Boggs Medical Center) and our 3 instructors (2 from NOPD, 1 from VOA). If anyone is interested in becoming an instructor or has a location, please contact her.

Mr. Strength advised that formal flagger training will be required by contractors on DOTD projects. However, the National Safety Council’s Flagger Training is not on the approved list. He agreed to advise Ms. Inbau of the person to contact at DOTD about approval.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at about 1:35 pm.

The next meeting will be on **Wednesday, August 15, 2007**, 11:30 am. The fee for lunch will be \$10. The meeting adjourned at about 1:35 pm.

Submitted by: Beth Inbau, NSC President & CEO

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