Traffic Safety Council Notes

November 3, 2005

Members present: Major Dan Lonsdorf (BOTS), Mike Schumacher (DTIM), Steve Olson (OPA), Carolyn Bourie (OPBF), Dennis Hughes (BOTS), Bill Bremer (FHWA), Jerry Zogg (DTSD), David Noyce (UW Eng), Xiao Qin (UW-TOPS), Todd Szymkowski (UW-TOPS), John Corbin (DTSD), Patrick Fernan (DMV), Dick Lange (DTSD), and Tim McClain (BOTS)

Also present: Captain Henry Devries (New York State Police), Pat Casey (CTC and Associates), Kim Linsenmayer (CTC and Associates), Karl Kuecker (OPBF), Mike Roper (NHTSA), Phil DeCabooter (DTSD/ITS Unit), Balu Ananthanarayanan (DTSD).

1. Traffic Incident Response Tour Briefing (Capt. Henry Devries-NY State Police)

Captain Devries made a presentation on the Traffic Incident Response Tour he took in Europe (England, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden) in addition to other transportation and emergency response professionals from the U.S. (including John Corbin) The objective of the tour was to examine programs and practices that provide coordinated response to Traffic Incident Response Management (TIRP). The overall goal was to study and apply best practices for TIRP in the United States. Captain Devries indicated that the summary report for the tour has been published and the final report including strategies and recommendations will be finalized later this year. John Corbin indicated that these findings and recommendations would be used to help spawn a National goal for TIRP and that next year, a conference would be held to reconvene interested parties and individuals to develop a national, unified goal as well as to seek strategies to implement the goal. John passed out two brochures from the National Traffic Incident Management Coalition providing more detailed information on promoting a national agenda for TIRP as well as specific, “keys to success.” If you have further questions, please see John who is chairing the national coalition.

2. Strategic Highway Safety Plan Discussion

Major Lonsdorf asked Pat Casey and Kim Linsenmayer of CTC Associates if they could provide their services to help synthesize the efforts of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan work groups into a final, strategic plan. Pat Casey indicated that he would review the products of the work groups to scope out what would be required to finalize the plan. Pat indicated that they could help assimilate the plan and provide suggestions on such items as organization, format and performance measures. However, he noted that the actual substance of the plan would need to come from the work groups themselves. Pat stated that he meet with Carolyn Bourie to focus on the “Improve Data/Decision Support Systems” group’s format since their work represented a good model that other groups could work from.
Major Lonsdorf then led a discussion asking each group to provide a status report re: what work has yet to be completed. The issue areas in the strategic plan include:

1. Increase seat belt use/air bag effectiveness.
2. Improve design/operation of intersections.
3. Improve data/decision support systems.
4. Reduce speed-related crashes.
5. Reduce impaired driving.
7. Design safer work zones.
8. Reduce head-on and cross-median crashes.
10. Increase driver safety awareness.

Of the ten issue areas, #3 (improve design/operation of intersections) has been developed into a “Phase One Report” (including strategies and principal actors to implement initiative). All other issue areas are still under development. **It was proposed, with no objections, that Phase I reports be completed by the end of January by all groups.** All groups were also instructed to submit their current drafts and background materials to Pat Casey and Kim Linsenmayer so that they can begin to piece together a proposed format for the final report. In addition, Dennis Hughes will submit a copy of the environmental scan document to CTC and Associates that was prepared in early 2004 as a scoping exercise and to provide additional background information.

Bill Bremer noted that it is important that the plan seek to incorporate the input, views and opinions of external partners and organizations such as the Governor’s Council on Highway Safety and the county traffic safety commissions. He also indicated the need to monitor the plan after is completed in order to ensure that the plan is a “living document” and not a document that sits on the shelf.

Also, Dennis Hughes noted that WisDOT would be participating in a strategic safety plan peer exchange with representatives of other states in Phoenix, AZ (week of 11/15/05) to share ideas on the development of strategic highway safety plans.

Major Lonsdorf indicated that the Traffic Safety Council would be the major conduit for helping to move the plan up the food chain to the Board of Directors where approval would be required.

It was noted that the deadline for states to finalize their plans per requirements found in federal reauthorization is 10/1/07 (with progress shown by 10/1/06).
3. Update on Safety Elements of SAFETEA-LU

Dennis Hughes suggested that the Traffic Safety Council needs to be aware of all the items in SAFETEA-LU that affect WisDOT/local safety programs. As an example, he highlighted the new, Safe Routes to Schools initiative, which will provide $1.5M in funding to the state to hire a coordinator (to be housed in DTIM) and to implement local Safe Routes to Schools projects.

In addition, there is a child passenger safety bill currently under consideration in the state legislature that would bring Wisconsin into compliance with new or revised SAFETEA-LU grant program criteria, and which, if passed, would qualify the state for incentive grants totaling over $600,000 per year. Mike Roper indicated that NHTSA attorneys had recently reviewed proposed amendments to the bill.

Bill Bremer noted SAFETEA-LU brought changes to the Hazard Elimination Safety (HES) safety program, which will change the current structure of the program to place greater emphasis on evaluation components. Bill indicated that the new structure would allow Wisconsin to take advantage of several technical traffic safety evaluation reports written by the UW-TOPS Laboratory.

Bill also noted the four-year, $25 Million, SAFETEA-LU provision for non-motorized, transportation pilot programs in Sheboygan County proposed to provide infrastructure-based facilities for ped/bike in order to reduce motor vehicle congestion. Further discussion at the federal level is currently taking place as to just how this program will actually be funded and implemented. The Rails-To-Trails Conservancy Program has also taken keen interest in this project.

Carolyn Bourie said OPBF heard from U.S. Representative Petri’s office that a technical corrections bill may be in the works. The bill might possibly correct an oversight in SAFETEA-LU by revising Section 164 (minimum penalties for repeat drunk drivers) to relax the 12-month minimum wait time during a driver license suspension before an occupational license can be issued by allowing states to lower the wait time to 45-days if the occupational license was contingent on installation of an IID. Carolyn indicated that OPBF staff would be briefing the Secretary on the corrections bill possibility.

4. Membership Reports

Patrick Fernan: Patrick (or his designee) will provide a briefing at the next TSC meeting on the new driver license format, the implications of the “Real ID” Act and an update on the TRACS project.

Jerry Zogg: Work continues on the median crossover crash report. He noted that discussions are currently taking place within DTSD regarding the impact of SAFETEA-LU on current WisDOT programs.
Mike Schumacher: Also noted that discussion of SAFETEA-LU and impact on programs is taking place in DTIM next week

No other reports.

Next meeting will be in Room 701 (Waukesha Room) at 9:30AM on Thursday, December 1, 2005.

Submitted by Tim McClain, State Patrol/BOTS (11/4/05)