

# reporter

June - September 08



## SHARE THE ROAD WITH MOTORCYCLES

### 10 Things All Car & Truck Drivers Should Know About Motorcycles

Over half of all fatal motorcycle crashes involve another vehicle. Most of the time, the motorist, not the motorcyclist, is at fault. There are a lot more cars and trucks than motorcycles on the road, and some drivers don't "recognize" a motorcycle - they ignore it (usually unintentionally).

Because of its small size, a motorcycle can be easily hidden in a car's blind spots (door/roof pillars) or masked by objects or backgrounds outside a car (bushes, fences, bridges, etc). Take an extra moment to look for motorcycles, whether you're changing lanes or turning at intersections.

Because of its small size, a motorcycle may look farther away than it is. It may also be difficult to judge a motorcycle's speed. When checking traffic to turn at an intersection or into (or out of) a driveway, predict a motorcycle is closer than it looks.

Motorcyclists often slow by downshifting or merely rolling off the throttle, thus not activating the brake light. Allow more following distance, say 3 or 4 seconds. At intersections, predict a motorcyclist may slow down without visual warning.

**Spotting a motorcycle on the road can be hard.**



Motorcyclists often adjust position within a lane to be seen more easily and to minimize the effects of road debris, passing vehicles, and wind. Understand that motorcyclists adjust lane position for a purpose, not to be reckless or show off or to allow you to share the lane with them.

Turn signals on a motorcycle usually are not self-canceling, thus some riders (especially beginners) sometimes forget to turn them off after a turn or lane change. Make sure a motorcycle's signal is for real.

Maneuverability is one of a motorcycle's better characteristics, especially at slower speeds and with good road conditions, but don't expect a motorcyclist to always be able to dodge out of the way.

Stopping distance for motorcycles is nearly the same as for cars, but slippery pavement makes stopping quickly difficult. Allow more following distance behind a motorcycle because it can't always stop "on a dime."

When a motorcycle is in motion, see more than the motorcycle - see the person under the helmet, who could be your friend, neighbor, or relative.

If a driver crashes into a motorcyclist, bicyclist, or pedestrian and causes serious injury, the driver would likely never forgive himself/herself.

For additional information on motorcycle safety, visit <http://www.forcardrivers.com>, <http://www.msf-usa.org>, or the Tennessee Department of Safety's Motorcycle Rider Education Program at: <http://www.tennessee.gov/safety/mrep.htm> 

Keep an eye out for motorcycles!

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# A Message from the GHSO Director

**F**riends of Highway Safety,

We have just passed the mid-point of the calendar year and have just started the last quarter of the grant year. I want to take a little bit of your time to share some of my thoughts on statistics and the status of highway safety in the State of Tennessee....

We are currently experiencing a significant downturn in roadway fatalities in Tennessee. If you recall, we achieved a 6% decrease in 2007 from 2006. The final numbers for 2006 were 1,284 fatalities and the preliminary numbers for 2007 are 1,210. These numbers are not likely to change much. The 1,210 number represents the third lowest fatality total in 15 years, but more importantly it yielded our **LOWEST FATALITY RATE EVER** recorded. The fatality rate is calculated by the number of deaths per Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in the state, and our rate for 2007 stands at 1.70 per 100 million VMT!



I have set some internal goals for our staff, and wanted to share those with you. The first goal is that we reach the 10% reduction mark that was set by Tennessee's Strategic Highway Safety Plan and signed by Governor Bredesen. At the time the goal of the SHSP was set, it seemed rather ambitious, but here we are midway through 2008 and we are well on track to shatter that figure. Based on our fatality numbers of 2005, which were 1,270, the 10% reduction would mean that we would need to see a number of 1,143 by the end of calendar year 2008. 2006 was

a little tough on us because we increased slightly to 1,284, but last year's reduction set the wheels in motion.

At this point in 2008, statistics from the Tennessee Department of Safety are showing us at 134 fatalities behind where we were at this same time in 2007!

Let me stress that these numbers are very preliminary and we know a few have not been reported as of yet; but a decrease of this magnitude is just short of incredible! I think that we can safely say that the Governor's Highway Safety Office, and you as partners, have worked together to create the safest environment that we possibly can on our roads today. For instance, the 78 hour holiday report for the Fourth of July preliminarily shows that we have tied our lowest fatality total for any year. This is symbolic of what is taking place across Tennessee. March, April, May and June were unbelievable months and July is headed in that direction as well. This brings us to our second goal of reducing our fatalities to the lowest total on record, which is 1,034. That seemed insurmountable a few months ago, but now seems to be a total which is well within our reach. Together, we have truly created an environment that is **CHANGING BEHAVIOR**. Our three year goal would be to get the fatality total below 1,000!



On another positive note, motorcycle deaths have decreased this year as well; but we still have much work to do in this area. Urban area fatalities are dramatically decreasing again and rural areas are following suit this year. Interstate fatalities in rural areas are way down, as well as state routes. County road fatalities are up slightly.

Let me address what I know you are all thinking right now. Gas prices have



Kendell Poole, GHSO Director

never been higher which means fewer people are driving, hence fewer fatalities. Early discussions with the engineers that calculate the VMT show that our VMT for 2008 will drop, but certainly not at the rate that our fatalities have to this point, so our **rate** should continue to drop as well. These decreases can be credited to the combined efforts that we continue to take up on a recurrent basis. Efforts like Education, Enforcement and Engineering- that only get better as time goes by.

Alcohol related fatalities continue to decrease - but we can't forget **BOOZE IT and LOSE IT**. Seatbelt usage numbers will top 80% for the second consecutive year - but we can't forget **CLICK IT or TICKET**.

NHTSA is very pleased with the progress that we are making in Tennessee. We have worked hard to ensure that we will continue to have sufficient funding for our programs. These programs, our grantees, **YOU**, are the ones that make the difference.

Sincerely,  
Kendell Poole

# "Ollie Otter" visits all 95 Tennessee Counties to Champion Child Passenger Safety

A seven-foot-tall "otter" named Ollie completed a triumphant march in May. His travels across Tennessee may save the lives of dozens of children.

"Ollie Otter," a character symbolizing a booster-seat awareness program launched by the Tennessee Road Builders Association (TRBA) and supported by the Governor's Highway Safety Office (GHSO), celebrated an appearance in his 95th Tennessee county, May 19th at a presentation to more than 400 K-4th grade children at the Dan Mills Elementary School in Nashville.

"Today marked an outstanding accomplishment for a program that epitomizes the best of an innovative private-public partnership that has directly impacted more than 55,000 Tennessee students in its very first year," said GHSO Director Kendell Poole. "Their goals were to reach at least 40 schools in 20 counties, but they were able to give programs in 149 schools encompassing 2,284 classrooms in all 95 counties," Poole added.

"In addition to funding from TRBA members (through TRBA's Tennessee Transportation Development Foundation) and GHSO, the program received a major marketing and implementation boost from the Business Media Center at Tennessee Tech University," said TRBA President Rab Summers. "One of the best things TRBA did was partner early on with Tennessee Tech. Their use of the internet to rapidly involve teachers, parents, students, and volunteers was amazing to see," Summers added.

The programs at the schools encompassed a TRBA volunteer presenting Ollie to the students and getting them involved in "measuring up" to see how many were less than 4'9" tall, thus, by law, requiring the children to use a booster seat. Roughly 75% of the students surveyed did not use booster seats, volunteer coordinators reported.



"Ollie's character is a great way to communicate with kids and fulfill our mission to save children's lives," said Carol Coleman, who, as president of the TRBA Ladies Auxiliary two years ago, led the charge to start the program for seat-belt safety. "Ollie teaches the kids that using seat belts and booster seats is cool," she said, "and their reactions to Ollie are so enthusiastic."

The program has already won state and national awards and has been endorsed by the Tennessee Departments of Transportation, Education and Safety. The Department of Safety supports the program by having Highway Patrol officers participate in many programs and provide funds to add Ollie costumes to accelerate the program.

Volunteers are trained online by the Tennessee Board of Regents Online Education Program. The TBR's 26 technology centers throughout the state are providing regional coordination and logistical support for the program.

"We are very pleased with the program's progress to date," Poole said, "but we are even more excited about its continuous contact with Tennessee's future drivers."

For more information or to have "Ollie Otter" come to your county, visit <http://www.seatbeltvolunteer.org/> or <http://www.tntrafficsafety.org> and click the Child Passenger Safety tab.

## CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY WEEK

September 21-27, 2008

visit: <http://www.tntrafficsafety.org> and click Child Passenger Safety Tab

### 4 STEPS FOR KIDS



REAR-FACING



FORWARD-FACING



BOOSTER



SEAT BELT

★★★★★

**NHTSA**

[www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov)

## GHSO 2008 Training\*

### September

ARIDE  
Radar and LIDAR Instructor  
Standardized CPS  
Standardized CPS Recert  
Standardized Field Sobriety Testing  
Verbal Judo Basic

### October

Advanced SFST/ARIDE  
Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) School  
Verbal Judo Basic

### November

Verbal Judo Basic

### December

SFST/Intro to Drugs that Impair Driving  
Verbal Judo Basic

\*Classes are being added often by the State Training Coordinator, please visit <http://tntrafficsafety.org> and click on the Training Icon for current courses.

Remember, you must register online for all classes.

## New Product Announcement



Side A



Side B

TTSRS introduces the new Click It or Ticket and Booze It & Lose It "Power T" vehicle air fresheners. They will be available soon! Place your order today for the **free** air fresheners at 1.800.99BELTS. Please remember to leave a physical address and a telephone number. (Items may be limited.)

## New DRE Course

Officers trained as Drug Recognition Experts (DREs) are valuable tools in combating the adverse impact of drug and alcohol impaired driving in our communities. Register for the new course Oct. 7-10 & Oct. 13-17, 08 online at <http://www.tntrafficsafety.org> and click on the DRE Icon.

## "Lead & Live Youth Conference" Announcement

Please join us for the "Lead & Live Youth Conference" at Paris Landing State Park. For more information visit <http://www.tntrafficsafety.org> and click on the Lead & Live icon.

TENNESSEE TRAFFIC SAFETY

# reporter

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TENNESSEE TRAFFIC SAFETY

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