

Southwest Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths Annual Report October 1, 2020- September 30, 2021

Prepared By:

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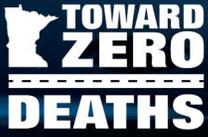


Southwest Central TZD Safe Communities hosted a partner photoshoot including representation from the counties of Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Swift, and Yellow Medicine, along with a future law enforcement officer who came to visit and give thanks to these exceptional men and women.

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MINNESOTA TOWARD ZERO DEATHS

MISSION: to create a culture in which traffic fatalities and serious injuries are no longer acceptable through the integrated application of education, engineering, enforcement, emergency medical and trauma services along with everyone with an interest and investment in traffic safety. The efforts driven by this mission will include data, best practices, and evidenced based research.

VALUES:

- ✓ Continuous improvements and innovative approaches.
- ✓ Engagement with partners and community.
- ✓ Evidence-based practice.

The Southwest Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) Program began in 2007 and is currently demonstrating successful traffic safety solutions throughout all 14 counties in the region.

Each of the following 14 counties are represented by a TZD Safe Roads Coalition: Big Stone, Chippewa, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, McLeod, Meeker, Murray, Pipestone, Redwood, Renville, Swift, and Yellow Medicine.

Amongst the partnership of each county that represents the southwest region, the TZD leadership team is comprised of:

Captain Casey Meagher, Minnesota State Patrol, District 2300
Casey.Meagher@state.mn.us

Jon Huseby, MnDOT District Engineer, District 8
Jon.Huseby@state.mn.us

Melissa Hjelle, MN TZD Regional Coordinator
Melissa.Hjelle@state.mn.us

REGIONAL GOALS:

1. Reduce Fatality and Serious Injury Crashes.

To continuously decrease traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries in southwest Minnesota from the past **5-year average** (2016-2020*) of 25 fatalities and 90 serious injuries.

5-year average (2016-2020*) in Southwest Region

Contributing Factors:

| | Alcohol | Speed | Distraction | Total |
|------------------------------|---------|-------|-------------|-------|
| Fatalities | 9 | 6 | 1 | 25 |
| Fatal Crashes | 8 | 5 | 1 | 22 |
| Severe Injuries | 23 | 21 | 12 | 90 |
| Severe Injury Crashes | 19 | 17 | 10 | 73 |

*2020 Data are Preliminary

Note: a crash may have more than one of the above listed or additional contributing factors

The region strives to accomplish this goal by continuously increasing regional seatbelt use rate of the current 90.5% compliance rate in 2021 (graph shown below), examining the characteristics of the unbelted fatalities and continuing to decrease the contributing crash factors listed above.

Table 2: Observational Seat Belt Survey Trends by TZD Region

| TZD Region | 2021 Observed Belt Use | 2020 Observed Belt Use | 2019 Observed Belt Use | 2018 Observed Belt Use | 2017 Observed Belt Use |
|------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Southwest | 90.5% | 87% | 88% | 81% | 84% |

“Across all eight regions, around half a million (510,000 people) Minnesotans may not be using seat belts as an occupant in a motor vehicle: nearly two-thirds of these (330,000 people) live in Greater Minnesota.”

2. Partnership Goals

To continuously increase TZD awareness and build partnerships across southwest Minnesota to include both the general public and traffic safety professionals.

One priority is to establish the vision of TZD for all regional, county, and city (government) agencies by engaging local government involvement in TZD steering committee and regional workshop efforts, educate and promote traffic safety awareness with city and county officials, and to promote city and county employee education and policy opportunities to facilitate the TZD vision.

An additional priority is to create and strengthen partnerships in the region by engaging stakeholders, develop networking relationships and opportunities, and recruit membership to the TZD program.

Lastly, the region endeavors to promote and implement effective traffic safety initiatives by developing and distributing resource materials, providing enhanced enforcement campaign support in the community, promote evidence-based countermeasures, collect data and statistics within the region along with implementing best practices throughout the region.

Activities that support these efforts include but are not limited to the following events:

- Local presentations.

- Presence of a TZD booth at various public and professional conferences.

- Workplace traffic safety campaigns and policy development.

- Development of community specific campaign and material distribution.

- TZD Regional Workshops.

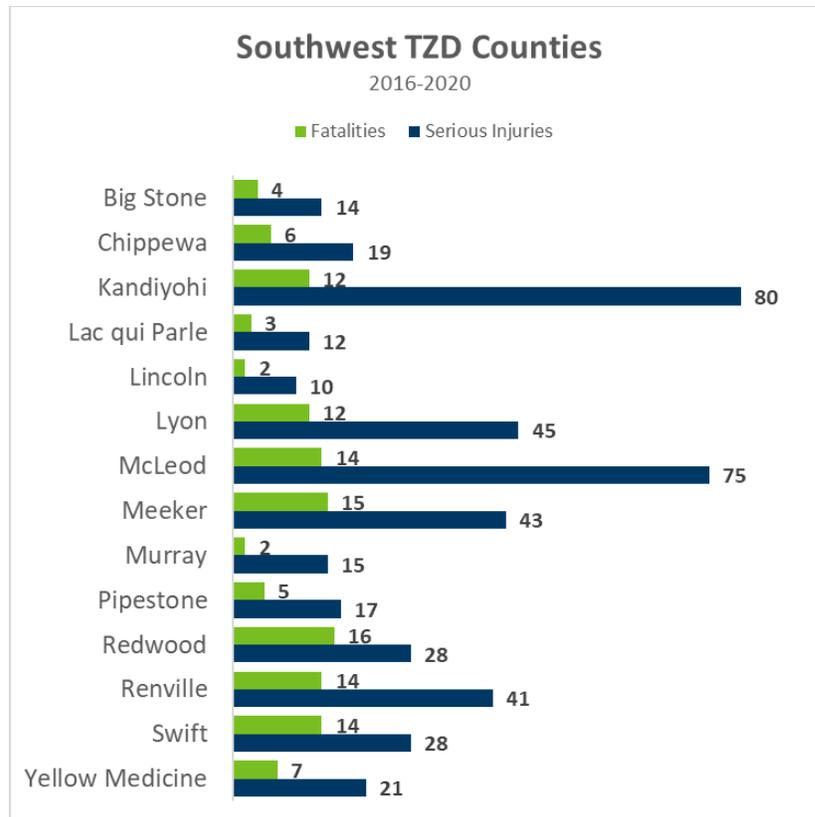
- The development and growth of TZD Safe Roads Coalitions.

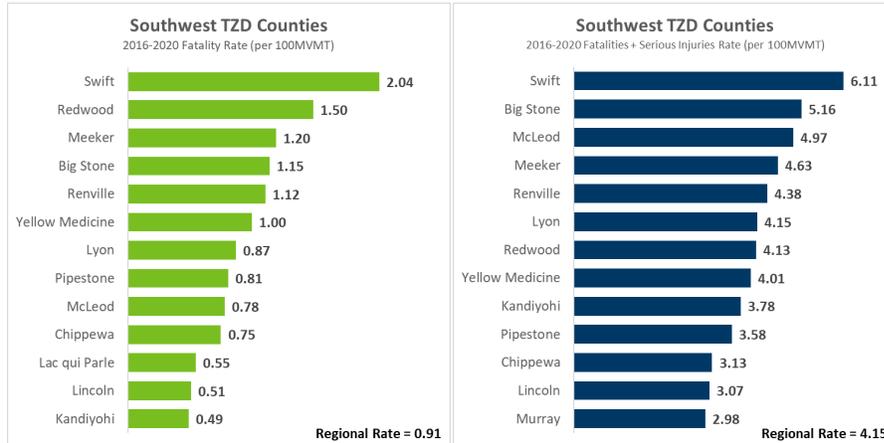
REGIONAL DATA: In 2020, Southwest MN totaled 24 traffic related fatalities, and 87 serious injuries. This compares to 24 traffic related fatalities, and 75 serious injuries in 2019. The following charts break down regional and county specific crash data from 2016-2020 for a 5-year comparison.

*2020 data is still being collected.

Total Southwest Region (2020: Data are Preliminary)

| | Fatalities | Fatal Crashes | Severe Injuries | Severe Injury Crashes |
|-----------------|------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 2020 Total | 24 | 24 | 87 | 74 |
| 2016-2020 Total | 126 | 112 | 449 | 366 |





SOUTHWEST TZD

| | 2016-2020 TOTALS | SOUTHWEST |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 2020 Only | Fatalities | 23 |
| | Serious Injuries | 78 |
| RATES | VMT (2016-2020) | 13,830,572,662 |
| | Fatality Rate | 0.911 |
| | Fatal + Serious Injury Rate | 4.150 |
| TOTAL | Fatalities | 126 |
| | Serious Injuries | 448 |
| | K Crash | 112 |
| | A Crash | 366 |
| IMPAIRED* | Fatalities | 42 |
| | Serious Injuries | 133 |
| | K Crash | 36 |
| | A Crash | 109 |
| SPEED | Fatalities | 30 |
| | Serious Injuries | 105 |
| | K Crash | 28 |
| | A Crash | 86 |
| DISTRACTION | Fatalities | 7 |
| | Serious Injuries | 60 |
| | K Crash | 6 |
| | A Crash | 49 |
| UNBELTED | Unbelted Killed | 52 |
| | Unbelted Seriously Injured | 102 |
| | K Crash | 44 |
| | A Crash | 71 |

After reviewing and analyzing crash data from 2017-2020, the top 5 regional focus areas moving forward will include Speeding/Aggressive drivers, Unbelted occupants, Motorcyclists, Single Vehicle Run-off Road crashes and Bicyclists.

Although the southwest region showed an overall increase of seatbelt compliance rate, the percentage of individuals killed in crashes indicate a lack of seatbelt use for those occupants.

Though not listed as a top tier focus, there is however opportunity to add efforts to prevent pedestrian, train-vehicle, and work zone related crashes as a new strategy looking ahead.

The graph below provides a snapshot of crash data specifically for the southwest:

TABLE 2: SOUTHWEST TZD REGION PROGRESS BY SHSP FOCUS AREA AVERAGE NUMBER OF CRASHES

| Focus Area | K+A Crashes 2017-2019 | K+A Crashes 2018-2020 | Percent Change |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Bicyclist | 2 | 4 | +100% |
| Train-vehicle | 1 | 2 | +100% |
| Work Zone | 3 | 4 | +33% |
| Speed | 54 | 67 | +24% |
| Motorcycle | 36 | 41 | +14% |
| Unbelted Occupant | 64 | 69 | +8% |
| Single Vehicle Run-off-road | 96 | 101 | +5% |
| Pedestrian | 9 | 9 | 0% |
| Total K+A Crashes | 279 | 267 | -4% |
| Impairment | 78 | 74 | -5% |
| Intersection/Interchange | 124 | 112 | -10% |
| Younger Driver | 62 | 55 | -11% |
| Unlicensed Driver | 33 | 29 | -12% |
| Older Driver | 70 | 60 | -14% |
| Head-on | 41 | 33 | -20% |
| Commercial Vehicle | 50 | 39 | -22% |
| Inattentive | 39 | 24 | -38% |

Although it is clear what the challenge areas are, the southwest region has also seen success in its efforts to decrease fatalities and serious injury crashes. Specifically, head-on, intersection/interchange, inattentive driver, and younger roadway user crashes have decreased in this region.

The installation/moving of intersection stop bars throughout District 8 may have been a contributing factor for the success of reducing intersection related events.

Stop bars, also known as stop lines, are 24 inch-wide, solid white lines that extend across all lanes in one direction to indicate where to stop (see attached photos).

In Minnesota, stop lines are placed between 30 and four feet from the nearest edge of the intersecting roadway. Stop lines provide drivers with an additional visual reminder to stop before entering or crossing traffic at an intersection. The project included moving stop bars closer to numerous highway intersections throughout the district to enhance safety. Red reflective strips were also installed on some stop sign posts to make them more noticeable.

Why were stop bars moved?

The stop bars were placed closer to the intersection to provide drivers:

- Better sight lines
- Shorter crossing or merging distances
- Shorter crossing or merging times

In addition, stop bars are easier to see from other legs of the intersection so that drivers can more easily identify an intersection's traffic control, such as a two-way stop versus an all-way stop.



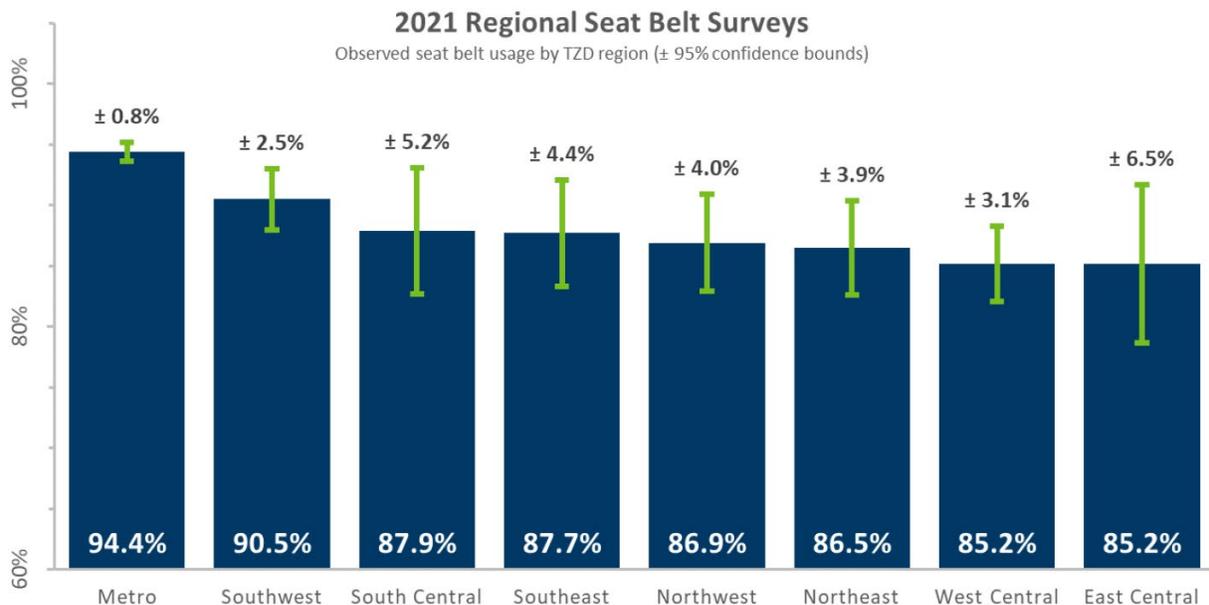
An example of a moved stop bar at Kandiyohi County intersection of State Hwy 9 and State Hwy 71.

To measure trends of seatbelt use rate in the region, an **Observational Seatbelt Survey** is conducted annually during the spring. Observational seatbelt surveys randomly identify and target specific intersections (at minimum three intersections in each county) that are observed during the same timeframe (day/month/time) throughout the region to provide seatbelt compliance data.

Southwest MN demonstrated an 90.5% seatbelt compliance rate for 2021; a statistically significant increase from 87.8% in 2020. Congratulations Southwest!

Currently, 93.4% of motorists statewide are wearing their seatbelt. (Note: due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, no statewide observational survey was conducted in 2020)

The following graph shows the increase of southwest seatbelt usage rate in comparison to rest of the state:



The southwest 2019 and 2020 seatbelt study results are depicted in the following reports:

| | |
|--|---|
| REGION: SOUTHWEST REGION | |
| YEAR: | 2020 |
| FINAL OUTPUT | |
| Seat Belt Use Rate | 87.7% |
| Range | ± 15.5% |
| If the seat belt use rate in 2019 is outside the calculated range (i.e. between 72.2% and 103.2%), the change in use rate is statistically significant ($\alpha = .05$). | |
| DATA COLLECTION | |
| Date Range | Apr 12 - May 18 |
| Counties Sampled | 14 |
| WEIGHTED VALUES | |
| Σ Belted | 3,083.859 |
| Σ Unbelted | 432.292 |
| Σ Total [ΣG_i] | 3,516.152 |
| Σ Rate [ΣR_i] | 33.957 |
| SIGNIFICANCE TESTING | |
| $\Sigma [(G_i \div \Sigma G_i)^2 \times (R_i - \Sigma R_i)^2]$ | 61.066 |
| Count [N] | 40 |
| N / (N-1) | 1.026 |
| Variance [s^2] | 62.632 |
| Standard Deviation [s] | 7.914 |
| Significance [α] | .050 |
| C.I. Lower | 72.194 |
| C.I. Upper | 103.217 |
| Range | 15.512 |
| ANALYSIS: April 30, 2020 | |
| NOTE: | This calculation sheet was updated in March 2019. Prior calculations did not consistently update the count of sites and therefore miscalculated the range for statistical significance. |

| | |
|---|---|
| REGION: SOUTHWEST TZD REGION | |
| YEAR: | 2021 |
| FINAL OUTPUT | |
| Seat Belt Use Rate | 90.5% |
| Relative Error | 1.4% |
| Confidence Interval | ± 2.5% |
| If the seat belt use rate in 2020 is outside the calculated range (i.e. between 88.0% and 92.9%), the change in use rate is statistically significant ($\alpha = .05$). | |
| DATA COLLECTION | |
| Date Range | Mar 31 - Apr 8 |
| Counties Sampled | 14 |
| WEIGHTED VALUES | |
| Σ Belted | 6,467.971 |
| Σ Unbelted | 680.766 |
| Σ Total [ΣG_i] | 7,148.737 |
| Overall Use Rate [ΣR_i] | .905 |
| SIGNIFICANCE TESTING | |
| $\Sigma [(G_i \div \Sigma G_i)^2 \times (R_i - \Sigma R_i)^2]$ | .000155 |
| Count [N] | 40 |
| N / (N-1) | 1.025641 |
| Variance [s^2] | .000159 |
| Standard Deviation [s] | .012597 |
| Significance [α] | .050 |
| C.I. Lower | 88.008 |
| C.I. Upper | 92.946 |
| Range | 2.469 |
| ANALYSIS: April 30, 2021 | |
| NOTE: | This calculation sheet was updated in May 2020. Prior calculations (1) underweighted low volume sites, and (2) overestimated the variance and therefore miscalculated the range for statistical significance. |

To help determine the strategic plan, drive the mission and achieve regional traffic safety goals, the Southwest MN TZD Steering Committee was formed. This committee consists of approximately 40 members who have a passion for traffic safety both professionally and personally. All 4 E's (enforcement, engineering, education, emergency & medical services) are represented, with an ongoing effort to continue recruitment for added membership diversity.

This past year new membership took a pause due to the challenge of newly navigating a virtual environment for outreach as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

To fill membership gaps as an ongoing effort, there is priority to expand member participation to include school district and sheriff department representation from all 14 counties, the Lower and Upper Sioux Tribe's law enforcement departments along with their public health agencies, community and family advocate groups, fire and safety, and students representing both the high school and college levels of education.

The steering committee met on four occasions; due to COVID-19, steering committee visits have all been offered in virtual format via Microsoft TEAMS to accommodate safe interaction and continued engagement.

Highlights of the steering committee this past year included:

- ✓ The purchase and regional deployment of four Dynamic Radar Speed Signs in partnership with the Minnesota State Patrol.
- ✓ The purchase and regional deployment of educational equipment and tools to include a seatbelt convincer, safety town on wheels, distracted driving goggle kit, pedestrian safety yard signs, TZD 6x2ft canvas banners and reflective wristbands.
- ✓ Procurement of 100 Safe and Sober replacement TZD signs to be strategically installed throughout the region.
- ✓ Participation and educational support for a successful Hwy 19 and Hwy 14 Border 2 Border Speed Saturation Event.



A typical steering committee agenda is follows:



AGENDA

Southwest MN Toward Zero Deaths Steering Committee

Date / time 9/14/2021 | 1-3PM *Location* MERIT Center, Marshall MN

Welcome/Introductions- Captain Meagher

Captain Meagher will be present to gather the crew for the facility tour.

Merit Center Facility Tour- Jasmine Desmet, Merit Center Coordinator

Wear comfortable footwear and weather appropriate clothing for walking; please bring and wear masks when indoors and in close groups at any time.

Merit Center Group Discussion- Captain Meagher facilitate

Discuss future opportunities as to how we can potentially partner with this facility to offer community education whether in classroom format, or real-life skills training utilizing the driving track, or ideally both scenarios.

Law Enforcement Update- Law Enforcement Agencies and LELs

Any Law Enforcement Officers to share what they are encountering on the roadways, suggestions for education or activities.

Review Action Items/Updates- Safe Roads Coordinators

Safe Roads Coordinators share current and upcoming activities/ brief recap of recent activities successes and suggestions for improvements moving forward.

Planning Ahead: Enforcement/Education Update- Melissa Hjelle

- o Upcoming 2021 Campaign(s)
 - Seatbelts and Child Restraints September 19-30
 - National Pedestrian Safety Month October

Round Robin- everyone to share anything and everything on their mind!

Next Visit: Tuesday, November 9th 2021 via Microsoft Teams

Save the Date: October 13-14, Virtual [2021 TZD Statewide Conference](#)

In partnership with Annette Larson, South Central TZD Regional Coordinator, preliminary work and effort were put into the planning and execution of the 2021 South Central & Southwest TZD Virtual Regional Workshop. Due to the need for a medical absence, Annette Larson finalized the details and executed the presentation of the workshop held via ZOOM on May 6th, 2021 from 1-3pm. The workshop had a total number of 102 virtual attendees. The agenda for the workshop was as follows:



**South Central & Southwest Minnesota
Toward Zero Deaths Virtual Workshop
May 6, 2021**

Agenda

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 1 p.m. | <p>Welcome <i>Jan Huseby, District Engineer, MnDOT District 8, and southwest TZD regional co-chair</i></p> |
| 1:10 p.m. | <p>TZD 2.0: The Next Generation of the Toward Zero Deaths program <i>Kristine Hernandez, Statewide Toward Zero Deaths program coordinator and TZD 2.0 project manager; Katie Caskey, Strategic Communications Manager, HDR; Keiko Veasey, Senior Consultant, Pinnacle Performance Group</i></p> <p>Did you know Minnesota's Toward Zero Deaths program is 18 years old? While the program achieved tremendous success in reducing fatal and serious injury crashes in its early years, recently we've been experiencing a plateau. In 2019, we asked – <i>what</i> should we be doing differently? We talked with you to identify new strategies and priorities to guide our work (reflected in the updated Strategic Highway Safety Plan). This year, we will be asking – <i>how</i> can we do things differently? We will look at TZD as an organization to see if there are changes we can make to how the program is structured and who is at the table that will help jumpstart our progress toward zero deaths.</p> |
| 1:55 p.m. | <p>Break</p> |
| 2:05 p.m. | <p>Regional updates <i>Capt. Casey Meagher, Minnesota State Patrol, District 2300; and Scott Reiten, Blue Earth/Nicollet County Safe Roads coordinator & Multi-Cultural Grant coordinator</i></p> <p>It's not just Minnesota that has a speeding problem. Driving at high rates of speed, or too fast for conditions, is one of the most prevalent factors contributing to serious and fatal crashes on our nation's roadways. In 2020, fatal and serious injury crashes involving speed are 12 percent greater than average. This is the second highest increase among the Strategic Highway Safety Plan focus areas. Find out what the Southwest TZD Region is doing to combat speed and how you can get involved.</p> <p>To address the lack of services in the area related to traffic safety in diverse communities, an Adult Driver's education class was tailored to meet language and multi-cultural needs. The goal of the grant is to increase the knowledge of the rules of the road, traffic signs and general traffic safety knowledge within the multi-cultural community. Learn about the early stages of the multi-cultural grant and next steps.</p> |
| 2:30 p.m. | <p>TZD 2.0 Findings <i>Katie Caskey, Strategic Communications Manager, HDR; Keiko Veasey, Senior Consultant, Pinnacle Performance Group</i></p> <p>We will share the ideas that were brainstormed earlier in the day to help us identify which challenges are most critical to solve and which positive elements are most important to maintain.</p> |
| 3 p.m. | <p>Wrap up <i>Greg Ous, District Engineer, MnDOT District 7, and south central TZD regional co-chair</i></p> |
| 3:15 p.m. | <p>Optional networking opportunity Feel free to stay on the zoom call for the opportunity to network with others.</p> |

The southwest region's greatest success in achieving the goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries comes from the efforts and support of the TZD Safe Roads Coalitions. It is these coalitions that engage, execute activities, build rapport, and know the day-to-day pulse of the communities they serve to create change in motorist behaviors.

The structure of the safe roads' coalitions aligns with that of the TZD program; bringing together the 4 Es, plus additional parties to address traffic related issues in their community through a multifaceted approach. Along with leading collaborative TZD focused efforts on the local level, safe roads leaders are valued stakeholders involved in regional steering committees and statewide action teams.

The southwest regional TZD Coordinator is a member of all active safe roads' coalitions participating in activities, but also providing guidance and resources.

The coalitions utilize statewide, regional, and county specific data along with fatal and serious injury reviews to determine which focus areas will take precedence as they develop their annual action plans.

Support along with community awareness and education for enhanced enforcement, national, and statewide campaigns are also a priority for the TZD safe roads coalitions.

An example of the TZD Enhanced Enforcement Calendar looks like this (dates are subject to change):



Enforcement Dates

- DWI (optional): Oct. 30-31; 2021 - Halloween
- DWI (optional): Nov. 4-6; 2021 - Deer hunting opener
- DWI: Nov. 24-27; Dec. 2-4; 9-11; 16-18; 23-25; 30-31, 2021
- DWI (optional): Feb. 13, 2022 - Super Bowl
- DWI (optional): March 12 and/or 17, 2022 - St. Patrick's Day celebrations
- Distracted: April 1-30, 2022
- DWI (optional): Every Thursday-Sunday, May 12- Sept. 5, 2022
- Seat belts and child restraints: May 23 - June 5, 2022
- Speed: July 1 - 31, 2022
- DWI: Aug. 19 - Sept. 5, 2022
- Move Over (optional): Aug. 31, 2022
- Seat belts and child restraints: Sept. 18-24, 2022

The southwest region includes 14 counties; and all 14 have TZD safe road representation. There are 11 state funded, and 3 unfunded coalitions. The following coalitions are:

Kandiyohi County Traffic Education & Safety Team (KCTEST), led by Julie Wyffels
Julie.Wyffels@kcmn.us

Lincoln and Pipestone County TZD Safe Road Coalition, led by Deann Holland
Deann.Holland@swmhhs.com

Lyon and Redwood County TZD Safe Road Coalition, led by Deann Holland
Deann.Holland@swmhhs.com

McLeod County TZD Safe Roads Coalition (MCTZDSR), led by Scott Waibel
Scott.Waibel@allina.com

Meeker County TZD Safe Roads Coalition, led by Jesse Hudec
Jesse.Hudec@state.mn.us

Murray County TZD Safe Roads Coalition, led by Jenni Kirchner
Kirchnerj@murraycountymed.org

Renville County TZD Safe Roads Coalition, led by Mary Erickson
Mary-Erickson@hotmail.com

Southwest Central TZD Safe Roads Coalition (Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Swift, Yellow Medicine), led by Maggie Boese
Maggie@countryside.co.swift.mn.us

Notable achievements in the following areas by both the southwest regional coordinator and safe roads coalitions are:

*COVID-19 pandemic has provided an additional challenge to execute community activities due to Center for Disease Control regulations.

Regional Seatbelt & Child Passenger Safety Efforts:

- ✓ Regional observational seatbelt survey completed, submitted to MnDOT research team for data analysis and distributed region wide.
- ✓ Various social media, radio PSA, letters to the editor, blog articles, newsletters, grocery bag stuffers, newspaper advertisements & radio interviews educating on proper seatbelt use shared throughout the region.
- ✓ Buckle Up stencils painted at local schools and businesses throughout 2 counties.
- ✓ Seatbelt Convincer and educational trivia wheel engagement offered at local high schools, 8 county fairs, and 6 additional community events.
- ✓ Car seat clinics hosted by safe road coalitions & Central MN EMS held at daycare centers and business parking lots.
- ✓ Buckle Up for a Buck events held at drive thru windows at bank and fast-food establishments.
- ✓ Mock crash demonstrations that included seatbelt education held at schools within two counties.
- ✓ In Person and Online Seatbelt Challenge held at competing schools in one county.

Canby PD's use of the Seat Belt Convincer has Lasting Impact

If you have not yet made use of the Seat Belt Convincer at a community event, you need to consider doing so. It is a valuable tool in getting the message out that Seat Belts are significant to surviving a crash or avoiding injury, even at slow speeds. Reach out to your local TZD Coordinator or Safe Roads Coalition to check on its availability.

This example of the impact of this tool comes from **Canby PD Chief Eric Diekmann**. (If I recall correctly, some of the occupants of this crash admitted to not being consistent seat belt users prior to their 'convincing' demonstration...)

"A demonstration of the seatbelt convincer was done at the Canby High School on 9-14-2021, with 18 participants. The next day, 9-15-21, 3 juveniles and 1 adult were involved in a single vehicle rollover accident. All occupants were wearing seatbelts, the majority of which actually participated in the seatbelt convincer demonstration the previous day".



Personal Testimony Highlighting the impact of the Seatbelt Convincer.

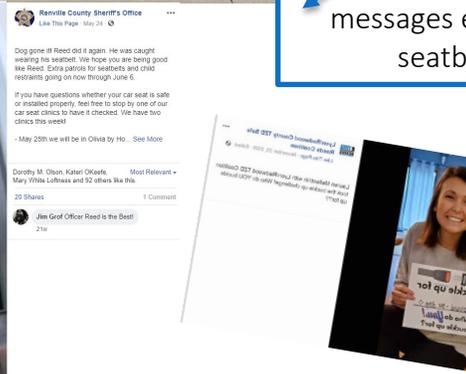
Community Carseat Clinic and Seatbelt Conviner Education.



High School Seatbelt Challenge.



Creative Social Media messages educating on seatbelt use.

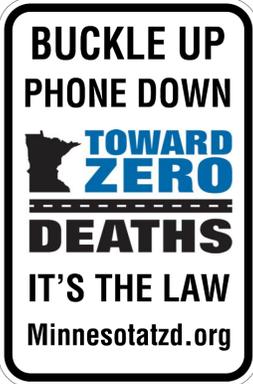


Regional Distracted and Hands Free Driving Efforts:

- ✓ Various social media, radio PSA, letters to the editor, blog articles, newsletters, grocery bag stuffers, newspaper advertisements & radio interviews were shared educating on the risks of distracted driving.
- ✓ Fatal Vision Distracted Driving goggle kit and wheel of distraction used at various community events in one county.
- ✓ Mock crash demonstrations that included distraction free education held at schools within two counties.
- ✓ Distraction free educational trivia wheel and trivia card engagement offered at local high schools, 8 county fairs, and 6 additional community events.
- ✓ Procured 100 Buckle Up, Phones Down TZD Signs and distributed to each county for installation.



Distraction Free Education, Seatbelt Education and Mock Crash Examples.
Image of TZD Buckle Up, Phone Down signs getting installed across the region.



Regional Impaired Driving Efforts:

- ✓ Various social media, radio PSA, letters to the editor, blog articles, newsletters, grocery bag stuffers, newspaper advertisements & radio interviews were shared educating on the risks of impaired driving.
- ✓ JOYRIDE organized for community events in one county.
- ✓ “Sticker Shock” and “Party Checklist” stickers delivered to liquor stores for placement on purchases.
- ✓ Mock crash demonstrations that included impairment free education held at schools within two counties.
- ✓ “Jotting’s from the John” educational posters delivered to various businesses for placement in their bathroom stalls.
- ✓ Table tent cards created with messaging focused on the risks of impaired driving to be placed in lobbies and or liquor selling establishments.
- ✓ Pedal kart with fatal vision drunk goggles demonstrated at 6 county fairs.

Impaired Driving Social Media messages and pedal kart with fatal vision “drunk” goggles demonstration at a community event.



Countyside Safe Roads coalitions honor DWI enforcement efforts

Safe Roads Coordinator **Maggie Boese**, representing Countryside Public Health that coordinates Safe Roads Coalitions in five counties of upper SW MN (Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Yellow Medicine, Swift & Big Stone Counties) recognized the DWI Enforcement efforts of three law enforcement officers with Certificates of Appreciation. To qualify an officer must have arrested a minimum of 11 impaired drivers in the previous year. Earning these awards were:

- **Officer Kyler Jelen, Granite Falls PD**
- **Deputy Eric Burman, Lac qui Parle SO**
- **Deputy Damon Burkel, Swift County SO** (Deputy Burkel could not be present)

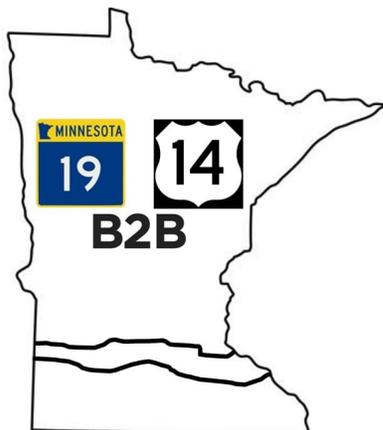
Maggie also coordinated an area Law Enforcement photo shot that day in Montevideo followed by a lunch provided by and served by Countryside Public Health staff. I will report on this further when I receive the photos from this very good day.



Deputy Burman, Maggie Boese, Officer Jelen

Regional Speed and Aggressive Driving Efforts:

- ✓ Various social media, radio PSA, letters to the editor, blog articles, newsletters, grocery bag stuffers, newspaper advertisements & radio interviews were shared educating on the risks of speeding.
- ✓ Specific messaging and images were created to ask motorists to slow down during harvest season shared on social media sites and local newspapers.
- ✓ 3 Dynamic Speed Radar Signs purchased for use in the southwest region for a total of 4 owned.
- ✓ Support and messaging shared for the Hwy 14 & Hwy 19 Border to Border enhanced enforcement campaign.



Social Media message examples, Hwy 14 & Hwy 19 Border 2 Border outreach, and Dynamic Speed Sign.

Pedestrian Safety Efforts:

- The deployment of Safety Town in two counties, at three separate events.
 - Traffic Safety Town on Wheels is an educational resource that allows Minnesota youth to learn, practice, and simulate safe roadway use in a contained and controlled environment. This interactive program includes the demonstration of navigating through a city environment as a roadway pedestrian, bicyclist, or motorist. Various intersections, railroad crossings, sidewalks, and city streets adorned with buildings and vehicles are available in a scaled down version for simulation. In this safe, controlled environment children can learn and make mistakes without the risk of injury. Traffic Safety Town can be constructed in both indoor and outdoor settings.
- Distribution and display of pedestrian safety yard signs and banners at county fairs and community events.
- Outreach, support, and participation provided for the MnDOT “Let’s Move Safely Together” Pedestrian Safety Campaign.



Safety Town



Pedestrian Safety Yard Signs & Banners with these messages were purchased and displayed in multiple counties.

Community Engagement Opportunities are vital to sharing the mission of TZD, the recruitment of new members to the TZD team, to building relationships and gaining ambassadors of the program, and providing a foundation to listen.

The southwest regional coordinator was honored to share TZD, have new traffic safety conversations, network, and listen to community concerns with the following organizations and events:

- MnDOT District 8 Staff; providing TZD and traffic safety related communication and education.
- South West Regional Trauma Advisory Committee; to collaborate on overall injury prevention efforts and how traffic safety plays a vital part in that endeavor.
- County Sheriff's in all 14 counties as an attempt to recruit their participation in TZD initiatives; handwritten cards were sent.
- County Engineers in all 14 counties to gain interest of installation for TZD Buckle Up, Phones Down signs; communication via email.
- The Merit Center in Marshall; in partnership with Captain Meagher, efforts are being made to build a Teen Driver Crash Avoidance Skills course in Marshall, along with offering skills courses for adults that aligns with the current MHSRC program. The Merit Center will also be a secondary location for alternating steering committee visits once safe gathering is resumed.

Merit Center in Marshall Training Center and Driving Track.



Ideas shared and regional goals discussed that took a pause due to COVID-19 are to:

- ✓ Establish CarFit into communities throughout the southwest region; TZD regional coordinator is a trained CarFit Event Coordinator and Technician seeking to host a training and obtain funds for an event kit.
- ✓ Build a stronger relationship with both the Lower and Upper Sioux Indian Communities for greater TZD partnership; conversations and introductions have been made with both communities at this time.
- ✓ Build a driver improvement and skills course at The Merit Center in Marshall.
- ✓ Develop an engagement plan utilizing images, videos, interviews, and more with District 8 Public Affairs Coordinator to consistently highlight traffic safety messages throughout the region.
- ✓ Develop and apply the Positive Culture Framework to fit our specific TZD efforts as trained by the Center for Health & Safety Culture.



Center for Health and Safety Culture. (2026). Positive culture framework: A foundation for cultural transformation. Montana State University.

Seeking out and obtaining educational opportunities for growth and improvement, and to help support new and innovative efforts is integral to keeping the TZD mission progressive. In response to COVID-19 and subsequent regulations to keep our communities safe by minimizing in-person gathering during the pandemic, the southwest regional coordinator had the capacity to join several traffic safety focused virtual webinars and conferences.

These virtual webinars and conferences have provided a space for creative planning, networking, and learning. Various topics and strategies were featured highlighting perspectives and work from all “Es”.

The following virtual webinars along with virtual conferences were attended; not all are listed. Some titles and highlights are as follows:

Rural Road to Safety Virtual Summit 2020
LifeSavers Virtual Conference 2021
Positive Culture Framework
Combating Rural Roadway Departures
Positive Community Norms 101 & 102
Effective Coordination and Consultation with Tribes
Too Fast for Conditions: A Conversation on Speeding
Coalition Capacity-Building the Foundation for Success
Transportation Through Life’s Transitions
Human Centered Design

*** Engagement and educational opportunities for the TZD Southwest Regional Coordinator were put on hold from March 4th 2021, until April 26th 2021 as a result of full time medical leave. Upon returning April 26th 2021, part time to full time status has alternated with strict restriction of no in-person gathering; all efforts by the coordinator since April 26 have been made via phone call, email, and virtual visits. ***

The Southwest Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths Region is one that is robust in its traffic safety initiatives, efforts, and overall passion for eliminating fatalities and serious injuries on our roads. It is a region to certainly be proud of as it is full of compassionate individuals who are the helpers and change agents our culture needs to thrive. This was evident and obvious as work continued on in a strong and focused capacity even as the regional coordinator experienced significant health issues and was not present as is typical or desired.

A letter written by the Southwest Regional Coordinator July 2020:

I have been thrilled to see and am reenergized by the momentum of community activity and engagement happening once again this summer! It feels really good. It also means the great work of community education and outreach is continuing in a more familiar fashion, transitioning from a total virtual world back to more face to face conversations. For an extrovert like me, this is the best.

Traffic safety is no exception to this momentum we see and feel. More than ever we need to get our communities engaged once again with the mission of TZD and what it stands for: **eliminating serious injuries and fatalities on Minnesota roads.**

Like many aspects of our lives, the pandemic caused a shift in priorities; including the way we functioned daily both personally and professionally, how and what we placed our focus on, and ultimately how we operated in the world outside of our homes. Some things improved in a new capacity that were beneficial to our lives, others left us eager to return as we were before the pandemic.

Traffic safety is something I hope we are all eager to return as a top focus and priority. It is no secret and is quite appalling that during the pandemic and continuing today, our traffic crashes and their severity have skyrocketed. We are legitimately in new territory when it comes to the current climate for MN roadway users today. I want to share some words directly from our Department of Public Safety, Office of Traffic Safety Director Mike Hanson depicting our current crisis:

You've seen the numbers, and it's a blood bath on our roads. This keeps me up at night and I really need your help. Minnesotans all over the state need your help. As you are each keenly aware, we are losing the battle to ensure that every Minnesotan can use our transportation system safely and without fear. We are in completely unprecedented territory from a traffic safety perspective. On average over the past several weeks, 2021 traffic crash fatalities are consistently running about 40 percent ahead of where we were in 2020. The fatality patterns we are seeing in 2021 are cause for extreme concern as they are the highest levels in more than a decade. At the pace we are going, we are going to erase 20 years of progress that led to historic lows in fatality rates just three years ago. If we maintain our current pace of fatalities, about 550 people will be violently killed in motor vehicle crashes this year in Minnesota. For more emphasis, in 2020, with significantly less vehicles on our roads than we had in 2019, we still encountered a large increase of fatalities on our roads and are now trending 40% more fatalities each week in 2021 than what we faced in 2020. WHAT. IS. HAPPENING?!

Per the data... excessive speed, impaired driving, unbelted motorists, and distracted driving not too far behind are the causal factors in our crashes.

The theme: behavioral choices. Each of these crash factors are decisions we make. If those decisions are made differently, these crashes are easily **100% preventable**. We must shift our actions, priorities, and focus to include traffic safety once again. We simply can't afford not to.

From a southwest regional standpoint, we leaned toward new approaches and have been able to secure innovative equipment for both enforcement and educational purposes to help our efforts in changing driver behaviors.

New to District 8 are:

4 Roving Dynamic Speed Sign Displays: in partnership with the Minnesota State Patrol, these signs will strategically be deployed throughout the region to capture data that records peak travel times, when a speed violation occurs, and count vehicles. These findings help determine when and where to target education and enforcement efforts. The signs also have the ability in real time to display driver speeds for traffic calming and driver awareness, or, in stealth mode capture data without displaying driver speeds.

Traffic Safety Town on Wheels: a miniature demonstration of a city equipped with roadway, sidewalk, and pedestrian crossing intersections including fully functioning and scaled down versions of traffic signals, traffic signs, and more that allows for all age groups, however specifically targeted for Minnesota youth to learn, practice, and simulate safe roadway use in a contained and controlled environment. This includes the demonstration of navigating through a city environment as a roadway pedestrian, bicyclist, or motorist. Traffic safety town can travel to various communities and be constructed in both indoor and outdoor settings.

Seatbelt Convincer: By simulating a low-impact collision, the Seat Belt Convincer can greatly influence how participants value the importance of wearing a seat belt. The system enables a passenger to experience the actual force generated during a 5-10 mph collision.

Drowsy and Distracted Driving Program Kit: Powered by an app and Bluetooth capability, three separate driving “modes” are simulated through various activities via a goggle set the participant wears.

These are just a few examples of our commitment to tackle traffic safety differently. If any of this equipment interests you for community events, lets get it scheduled! Also, if you see or learn of any new educational resources, I would love to hear about it.

Our Law Enforcement partners are out there doing their part despite the challenges they encounter, and our TZD Safe Roads Coalitions are showing their presence in our communities once again! We are making progress and reinventing ourselves as a traffic safety program, but we need more help. We need **YOU**.

I heard this said in a meeting years ago and it has stayed with me as it took me by surprise in the moment. “The most dangerous thing you’ll do today is drive”. That statement has never been truer than right now.

My ask of District 8: as you hit the roads for summer vacation, travel for your job, return to the office, go to recreational activities, or summer festivals... tell me what you see and think. I want to know your perspective, and I want to know your ideas.

What do you see happening on our roads? Is there something another state is doing that impresses you? Do you have a suggestion of something new or different we could do to help educate, enforce, engage? Nothing is too small or too large to share... now is the time to think outside of the box and get creative in how we change driver behavior. This will always be a collective effort and I look forward to hearing from you! 😊

And, THANK YOU for your support, encouragement, well wishes, thoughts and prayers, and time shared. I feel it all and am grateful to be part of this extraordinary team here at District 8.

We can accomplish great things together. Safe travels and take care!

We can and will create a whole new traffic safety culture and are well on our way!
To join our TZD efforts and have fun with us here in Southwest MN, please contact:

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