Southwest Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths Annual Report
October 25, 2022

Prepared By:
Melissa Hjelle, MN Toward Zero Deaths Regional Coordinator

Mcleod County TZD Safe Roads Coalition hosted a mock crash.
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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 (2017-2021) of 26 fatalities and 93 serious injuries.

   *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 87.7% compliance rate in 2022 (graph shown below), examining the characteristics of the unbelted fatalities and continuing to decrease the contributing crash factors listed above.
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 2021, Southwest MN totaled 24 traffic related fatalities, and 87 serious injuries. This compares to 24 traffic related fatalities, and 87 serious injuries in 2020. The following charts break down regional crash data from 2017-2021 for a 5-year comparison. *2020 data is still being collected.

* K crashes = fatality A crashes= Serious Injury

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2021 Outcomes: Southwest TZZ Region</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K Crashes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Crashes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K+A Crashes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Injuries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K+A Injuries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Baseline Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K Crashes</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>+4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Crashes</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>+2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K+A Crashes</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>+2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatalities</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>-1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Injuries</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>+3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K+A Injuries</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>+2.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes by Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) Focus Areas

NOTE: number of crashes not people killed or seriously injured
After reviewing and analyzing crash data from 2017-2021, the top 5 regional focus areas moving forward will include speeding/aggressive drivers, unbelted occupants, motorcyclists, single vehicle run-off road crashes and work zones.

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, bicyclist, and unlicensed driver related crashes as a new strategy looking ahead.

The graph above provides a snapshot of crash data specifically for the southwest region.
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, older driver and younger roadway user crashes have decreased in this region.

The continued 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 below 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 87.7 seatbelt compliance rate for 2022; a statistically significant decrease from 90.5% in 2021. We have work to do southwest!

However, when we look at the trends in seat belt use over the last 10 years, we see a continued slow progression upwards of seatbelt compliance. Perhaps 2021 was a “good” or “high” compliance rate year, but the region continues to show a steady trend in the right direction. The following graph shows the increase of southwest seatbelt usage rate from 2012 to present:
## Region: Southwest Tzd Region

### Year: 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Output</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seat Belt Use Rate</td>
<td>90.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative Error</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence Interval</td>
<td>± 7.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the seat belt use rate in 2020 is outside the calculated range (i.e., between 88.6% and 92.9%), the change in use rate is statistically significant ($\alpha = .05$).

### Data Collection
- Date Range: March 31 - April 8
- Counties Sampled: 14

### Weighted Values
- Unbelted: 6,467,971
- Total: 580,768
- Overall Use Rate: 90.5%

### Significance Testing

- Significance: 0.000155
- Count: 48
- $N / (N-1)$: 1.025641
- Variance: 0.000159
- Standard Deviation: 0.0650
- C.I. Lower: 88.608
- C.I. Upper: 92.946
- Range: 2.349

**Analysis:** April 30, 2021

**Note:** This calculation sheet was updated in May 2020. Prior calculations (1) underestimated the range for statistical significance.

## Region: Southwest Tzd

### Year: 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Output</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seat Belt Use Rate</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative Error</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence Interval</td>
<td>± 3.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the seat belt use rate in 2021 is outside the calculated range (i.e., between 85.4% and 89.9%), the change in use rate is statistically significant ($\alpha = .05$).

### Data Collection
- Date Range: April 4 - July 26
- Counties Sampled: 14

### Weighted Values
- Unbelted: 5,213,841
- Total: 734,621
- Overall Use Rate: 5,948,465

### Significance Testing

- Significance: 0.000185
- Count: 40
- $N / (N-1)$: 1.025641
- Variance: 0.000190
- Standard Deviation: 0.013781
- C.I. Lower: 85.383
- C.I. Upper: 88.910
- Range: 2.527

**Analysis:** July 28, 2022

**Note:** This calculation sheet was updated in May 2020. Prior calculations (1) underestimated the 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.

Highlights of the steering committee this past year included:

- Implementation of CarFit: 7 technicians certified, 4 occupational therapists recruited, two kits purchased, and two counties ready to schedule an event.
- Regional deployment of four Dynamic Radar Speed Signs in partnership with the Minnesota State Patrol.
- 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.
- Installation of 100 Safe and Sober replacement TZD signs 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 9/13/2022 | 1-8PM Location* In-Person (Granite Falls) & Microsoft Teams

*** Microsoft TEAMS link can be found on the calendar invite***

**Welcome/Introductions**

**SW Regional TZD Updates- Melissa Hjelle**

- Car Fit Sub-Committee Update
- 2022 Farm Fest Update
- 2023 Regional Workshop Update
- Safe Roads by County Update

**Statewide TZD Updates- Melissa Hjelle**

- Statewide Conference: registration & scholarship applications

**Safe Roads Review Action Items/Updates- Safe Roads Coordinators**

- Safe Roads Coordinators share current and upcoming activities.
- Idea solicitation- share ideas for community projects: how to recruit additional volunteers such as student groups?

**Planning Ahead: Enforcement/Education Update- Melissa Hjelle**

- Law Enforcement Agencies/Liaisons update and share anything new.
  - Speed HEAT update- Captain Meagher
  - Dynamic speed signs update- Captain Meagher or Trooper in charge of signs
- Upcoming 2022 Campaign(s):
  - Seatbelt & Child Restraints, September 18-24, 2022

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

**Next Visit:** Tuesday, November 8: MERIT Center and Virtual via TEAMS

**Save the Date:** TZD 2022 Statewide Conference: October 12-13 [2022 Toward Zero Deaths Conference | Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths (minnesctatzd.org)]
Collaborative effort was put into the planning and successful execution of the 2022 Southwest TZD Regional Workshop. The workshop was held on May 5th, 2021 from 1-3pm with 57 attendees. The agenda for the workshop was as follows:

Southwest Minnesota Towards Zero Deaths
Regional Workshop
May 5th, 2022
8:30 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.

Agenda

8:30 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast

9 a.m. Welcome & Regional Roundup
Jon Huzey, District Engineer, MnDOT District 8, and Southwest TZD Regional co-chair

9:15 a.m. TZD 2.0
Kristine Hernandez, Statewide TZD Program Coordinator, MnDOT Office of Traffic Engineering

9:25 a.m. “I wish we were still on the plateau” – Crash Data Presentation
Eric DeVoog, Senior Research Analyst, MnDOT Office of Traffic Engineering
In 2021, the number of year-to-date traffic fatalities were the highest they have been in more than five years. Traffic deaths jumped an alarming 26 percent. Speeding was the leading cause of fatal crashes in Minnesota. What happened and why? What’s the data telling us regarding areas of concern?

9:40 a.m. Making Safe System a Reality: Planning to Implementation
Will Stein, Safety & Design Engineer, Federal Highway Administration
The Safe System Approach is founded on the principles that people make mistakes and that human bodies have limited ability to tolerate crash impacts. Another key principle in the Safe System Approach is shared responsibility, which means that all the “Es” can (and should) be involved. This presentation offers a summary of the Safe System Approach, examine practical methods of what can be done in each of the 4-E domains as well as discuss local perspectives and ideas—the application of which will help us to reach the goal of zero deaths in Minnesota.

10:25 a.m. Five Tips to Grow Traffic Safety Culture
Katie Dively, M.S., MCHES, Research Scientist II - Senior Trainer, Center for Health and Safety Culture, Montana State University
Growing traffic safety culture can seem daunting, but there are actions everyone can take right now to grow a safer traffic safety culture. During this interactive workshop, Katie Dively and Jay Otto, researchers with the Center for Health and Safety Culture, will engage participants in exploring five tips to grow traffic safety culture. Participants will leave with specific actions they can immediately put into practice, regardless of their role. Katie and Jay have led trainings across the U.S. about growing traffic safety culture, based on the Center’s research over the past two decades.

12 p.m. Lunch & Exhibits

12:45 a.m. Five Tips to Grow Traffic Safety Culture Continued

1:45 p.m. What’s our goal for 2022 and beyond?
Katie Dively, M.S., MCHES, Research Scientist II - Senior Trainer, Center for Health and Safety Culture, Montana State University
We invite you to reflect on today’s topics and consider how you can put what you learned into action. We have a goal of zero traffic deaths – how can you use what we learned today to start making these changes in our communities? Let’s brainstorm ideas on how to make Southwest Minnesota safer together!

2:30 p.m. Wrap up and Adjourn
Capt. Casey Meagher, MN State Patrol, District 2300 and Southwest TZD Regional co-chair

Please take time throughout the day to visit the traffic-safety exhibit tables for reference materials and ideas to implement in your communities.
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):
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, led by Kellan Hemmesch  
Kellan.Hemmesch@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 Melissa Hjelle  
Melissa.Hjelle@state.mn.us

Murray County TZD Safe Roads Coalition, led by Denise Halbur  
Halburd@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:

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 3 counties.
- Seatbelt Convincer and educational trivia wheel engagement offered at local high schools, 8 county fairs, Farm Fest, 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.
- Seatbelt challenges held at 5 high schools in the region.
- Mock crash demonstrations that included seatbelt education held at schools within two counties.
High mock crash event, Farm Fest seatbelt education, county fair seatbelt education, Good boy Reed sharing the seatbelt safety message too!
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.
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.
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.

McLeod County Toward Zero Deaths
June 30

As the weather heats up, so do speeds. We all know that traveling faster gives you less time to react to hazards and makes maneuvering more difficult, but did you know that increased speeds create longer stopping distances? It takes more than the length of a football field to stop when traveling at 60 miles per hour! No matter how advanced you think your driving skills may be, speeding is dangerous.

This fourth of July holiday weekend will kick off a statewide speed enforcement and education campaign in support of the Toward Zero Deaths traffic safety program. The Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety coordinates the campaign, which includes extra enforcement, with funding provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. More than 300 law enforcement agencies statewide will participate in the campaign through the entire month of July. If you are stopped – expect a ticket.

Reduce Speed. Reduce Chance of a Crash.
• Allows the driver more vehicle control.
• Allows the driver to respond more quickly to road situations.
• Decreases the severity of the impact during a crash.

Count to Three
• Motorists should keep a three-second following distance to allow for safe stopping and reaction to other vehicles.

Posted speed limits aren’t suggestions – they are there to keep drivers and passengers safe. We can all do our part to be sure that everyone makes it home this holiday weekend.
Pedestrian Safety Efforts:

- The deployment of Safety Town in one county for an interactive community event.
  - 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.

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 Engineers in all 14 counties to collaborate for observational seatbelt surveys.
- The Merit Center in Marshall as a secondary location for alternating steering committee visits once safe gathering is resumed.
- FarmFest: 28,000 attendees walked through the gate and had access to learn about traffic safety.
Ideas shared and regional goals discussed:

✓ Continue to establish CarFit into communities throughout the southwest region; three counties are currently building their CarFit teams.
✓ 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.
✓ Continue to apply the Positive Culture Framework to fit our specific TZD efforts as trained by the Center for Health & Safety Culture.
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 along with in-person offerings.

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 & presentations were attended; not all are listed. Some titles and highlights are as follows:

- Responsible Beverage Server Training 101: opportunity to get the southwest region current with training regulations and offerings.
- TZD Traffic Safety Hotdish: Improving Safety for Aging Drivers...and We Are All Aging.
- ClearGuide Speed Data Analytics demonstration.
- MnCrash Public Portal demonstration.
- Highway of truth telling.
- Seeing the difference: building cultural competence.
- Behind the Scenes of Active Safety Technology Testing- and What’s Coming Next.
- Directing Drivers’ Attention: A State Highway Safety Office Roadmap for Combating Distracted Driving

*** Throughout 2021 to present, the TZD Southwest Regional Coordinator has needed to prioritize personal health appointments due to a serious cancer diagnosis therefore not able to attend as many events as desired ***
A separate effort helping to move forward statewide traffic safety message is the development and implementation of the **TZD Traffic Safety Culture Taskforce**: this taskforce creates and distributes campaign toolkits statewide for all TZD partners finding gaps where support is needed. Some examples include the 2022 Valentines Day Campaign and Stop for Red Campaign. Ongoing efforts of this taskforce occur biweekly.
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, and through the task of transitioning to an entirely new environment following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Together, we can and will create a whole new traffic safety culture and are well on our way! THANK YOU for all that you do to keep our roads safer, we appreciate you. To join our TZD efforts and have fun with us here in Southwest MN, please contact:

Melissa Hjelle
MN Toward Zero Deaths Regional Coordinator, Southwest
Cell 320-905-2319
Melissa.Hjelle@state.mn.us
Home | Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths (minnesotatzd.org)