



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
National Highway  
Traffic Safety  
Administration

# SAFETY

Volume 7, No. 12

October 17, 2001

## “The Transportation Challenges We Face in the Aftermath of September 11th Cut Across Jurisdictional and Modal Boundaries.”

*-U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta*

**September 25, 2001. Washington, DC.**

*Secretary Norman Y. Mineta held an “all-hands” meeting in the Nassif Building courtyard in the wake of the tragedy of September 11. Following is the text of his remarks.*

Two weeks ago our nation, indeed the entire world, watched in stunned disbelief as a determined enemy piloted hijacked airliners

terrible events. Words alone cannot adequately express the depth of my sorrow.

Even those not directly touched by tragedy may experience a range of emotions— anxiety, anger, helplessness, fear, sadness or shock. None of us can comprehend how or why these terrorist attacks occurred, and only two weeks removed, the process of coping and healing may seem nearly impossible.

Reach out to those around you. Practice patience and kindness during these painful times. Remember to utilize the resources the Department has put in place to assist employees and loved ones in times such as these. The

DOT Connection Worklife Center can help with referrals, and if you wish, the Employee Assistance Program gives you the opportunity to speak confidentially with a counselor.

I also want to thank everyone in the Department for your extraordinary efforts in the face of these attacks, and for all your hard work in helping return our Nation’s transportation systems back to full operations. From the very first hours of this crisis, DOT employees have stepped up to the plate.

Thanks to all the folks at the FAA, who first alerted the country that some commercial aircraft had veered dangerously off course on that fateful morning, and then who responded so efficiently and calmly to my order to close down America’s airspace for the first time ever.

After the immediate threat had passed, these same professionals have led the way in restoring operation of America’s civil aviation

**Continued on p. 2**



into two of our greatest landmarks, deliberately and without warning, murdering thousands. The aftermath of this attack is more horrible than any of us could have imagined.

In these past days, we have sought solace by turning to others—loved ones, friends, and colleagues. I offer my personal condolences to all of those in the DOT family who lost a friend or a loved one as a result of these

**Secretary Mineta speaks at the “all-hands” meeting in the Nassif Building courtyard on Sept. 25, 2001.**



# The Events of September 11th Has Created a New Set of Safety Challenges

Continued from p. 1

system with an array of heightened security measures in place.

Thanks also to the Coast Guard for answering the call. Within hours of the attack, the Coast Guard had cutters, small boats, and helicopters on the scene supporting disaster relief operations, and providing maritime anti-terrorism and force protection in the vicinity of New York Harbor.

Across the nation, the Coast Guard went on high alert, doing what it does best—protecting the homeland against foreign threats and helping those in need.

Throughout the Department, from RSPA to Motor Carriers to FTA, DOT employees have gone above and beyond in their service to our country. Over the last two weeks, America has witnessed so many acts of heroism that they have become almost commonplace. And still, the efforts put forth by all of you here stand out.

On behalf of President Bush, I extend our nation's heartfelt gratitude for what you are doing. Thanks to all of your efforts, I have never felt prouder to be Secretary of Transportation than I have in the last two weeks.

I wish I could tell you that your efforts are drawing to a close, but I cannot.

As the President said to the nation last Thursday night, we are a country awakened to danger, and called to defend freedom. America faces a cunning and remorseless enemy. Two weeks ago, they cruelly turned our own aircraft against us.

But, if those who brought down two of America's proudest buildings, also believe they can bring down our faith in our transportation systems, we will emphatically prove them wrong.

As we move forward from September 11, we must increase our vigilance, and we must take new steps to move people and commerce safely and efficiently, recognizing that the nature of the threat has changed.

DOT has, as one of the key elements in its Strategic Plan, the goal of ensuring the security of the transportation system for the movement of goods and people. Now more than ever, we need to make that goal a reality. In the weeks and months ahead, we need to reexamine the adequacy of our objectives and

accelerate their implementation. This is a mission for all DOT employees, bottom to top.

The transportation challenges we face in the aftermath of September 11th cut across jurisdictional and modal boundaries. In the coming days, stove piping and turf guarding are out; crosscutting and collaboration are in. We can and we will improve communication throughout the organization beginning today.

This is not business as usual. We can rise to the challenges facing our nation, but only if we recognize that each of us here has a solemn responsibility to help create a safer, more secure transportation system for the American people.

The mission of the DOT has never been more vital than it is today. Based on the efforts I saw put forth in the last two weeks, I know we are an agency equal to the challenge.

Again, thanks a million for all your efforts and your dedication to the DOT family. Keep up the good work. ■

## "Thanks A Million!"

Thanks to every one of you at the U.S. Department of Transportation for helping lead our Nation's recovery from the terrible terrorist attacks of September 11.

Thanks to the FAA, which first alerted America to the fact that some commercial flights were dangerously off course that fateful morning. And, thanks to the same agency, which responded quickly and effectively to my order that all planes be directed to land at the nearest available airport. That was accomplished, and over 4500 planes were brought down safe and secure landings.

Thanks to the U.S. Coast Guard, and our other agencies, which are aiding rescue and recovery efforts, and which are helping to protect all modes of transportation in our country.

Thanks to each and every DOT employee for your service to our country, and to this Department. The mission of DOT has never been more vital than it is today, and I know I speak for every American – including the President and Vice President – when I say "Thank you! Thanks a million for your dedication and for a job well done!"  
— NORM



## NFL Players Partner with NHTSA to Bring Safety Message to Schools

by Kristen Lynn Allen, Region III

**October 9, 2001. Baltimore, MD.** Region III Administrator, Dr. Elizabeth Baker, addressed 300 eleventh and twelve grade students at the "NFL Teens Driving for Safety" assembly at Dunbar High School. This was the third program in a 10-city tour of high schools featuring an NFL player from the city's home team and other speakers who talk about teen driver safety issues and seat belt use.

Dr. Baker shared the stage with Ray Lewis, linebacker for the Baltimore Ravens and Super Bowl XXXV MVP, and Edith Morgan, mother of the late Kansas City Chiefs linebacker Derrick Thomas, and founder of the Mom2Mom 58 (a faith-based organization of mothers of pro athletes). As Dr. Baker was being introduced, Ray Lewis was being led into the auditorium. Screaming students rushed the stage and had to be quieted down by school administrators. Once calm was restored, Dr. Baker had the difficult tasks of speaking to the students on the importance of



**Pictured from left to right: Edith Morgan, Mom2Mom 58; Ian Swain, Director of Minority and Community Partnerships, ICIP, DC Office; Dr. Dennis Brooks, Johns Hopkins Hospital; Ray Lewis, Baltimore Ravens; Dr. Elizabeth Baker, RA; Rod Harris, Program Manager, ICIP, DC Officer; Frankie Madden, ICIP, DC Officer.**

wearing seat belts and driving safely. She turned to Ray and asked, "Mr. Lewis, would you make a tackle in an NFL game without wearing your helmet and pads?" he answered

with a definitive "No"!!! She told the students that seat belts are their best protective equipment in a vehicle.

The 10-city "NFL Teens Driving for Safety" tour is a program funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation and administered by the International Center for Injury Prevention and a host of other partners including Mom2Mom, the National Medical Association, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, (NOBLE) and the National Football League Players Association.

The program is designed to highlight responsible driving with a specific focus on increasing seat belt use among teen drivers. There are two components to the program. The first is outreach to one high school in the 10-cities targeted by the tour with a video PSA and engaging traffic safety materials, and an assembly featuring compelling spokespeople. In addition to the assemblies, NOBLE will work with the Ellis Group to conduct observational surveys of seat belt use and focus groups intended to explore the opinions and behaviors of teens with regard to seat belt use. The second component is a giveaway of 100 child safety seats to be distributed to area residents through the coordination of each city's child passenger safety community. ■

# Progress, Setbacks for Highway Safety in 2000 Child Deaths, Injuries Are Down; Alcohol, Motorcycle Deaths Rise

by Rae Tyson,  
Office of Public and Consumer Affairs

**September 25, 2001. Washington, DC.** U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta today announced that highway fatalities involving children ages 0–15 dropped in 2000 to the lowest level since record keeping began in 1975. Deaths in the 0–4 age group dropped 3.9 percent from 735 in 1999 to 706 in 2000 while fatalities for ages 5–15 dropped 4.6 percent from 2,207 in 1999 to 2,105 in 2000.

All told, 41,821 people died on the nation's highways in 2000, compared to 41,717 in 1999. The rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) remained unchanged at the historic low level of 1.6. The number of crash-related injuries dropped 1.5 percent from 3.24 million in 1999 to 3.19 million in 2000.

While the number of highway fatalities is virtually unchanged, there were measurable declines in fatalities in some key safety areas. Pedalcyclist fatalities declined significantly, by 8.5 percent. Large truck crash fatalities declined 3 percent and pedestrian deaths decreased by 4 percent.

"America's highways are safer than ever for children, and the historic low for last year underscores the effectiveness of our highway

safety efforts," Secretary Mineta said. "Unfortunately, we are still losing far too many lives to highway crashes every year, and we need to re-double our efforts."

In 2000, 40 percent of all fatalities involved alcohol, up from the historic low of 38 percent in 1999. It was the first increase in alcohol-related deaths since 1995. In 2000, 16,653 fatalities were alcohol-related, compared to 15,976 in 1999.

Alcohol impaired or intoxicated drivers and pedestrians put themselves and others at greater risk in motor vehicle crashes. Years of data show they are about 50 percent more likely to be involved in crashes resulting in a fatality or an injury.

Motorcycle deaths rose 15.3 percent from 2,483 in 1999 to 2,862 in 2000. While increases in registrations and VMT may account for some of the increase, it was, nevertheless, the third straight year with higher motorcycle fatalities following 17 years of steady declines.

Seat belts and child safety seats clearly save lives. Fifty-five percent of passenger car and light truck occupants killed in 2000 were unrestrained. Data show that a driver or passenger can cut the risk of dying in a crash almost in half by buckling up. Placing a child

in an age-appropriate safety seat will reduce the infant's or youngster's risk of dying by as much as two-thirds.

"My years in the emergency department have convinced me that seat belts and car seats are what separates the patients who go home after a crash from those who do not," said NHTSA Administrator Jeffrey Runge, M.D. "Using proper restraints is the single most important thing you can do to protect yourself because crashes do happen, even to the most careful driver."

The 2000 Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) assessment by NHTSA also found that population, total registered vehicles, and miles traveled all increased slightly in 2000 compared to 1999. The FARS assessment for 2000 also indicates that:

- Pedestrian deaths dropped from 4,939 in 1999 to 4,739 in 2000.
- Pedalcyclist fatalities fell from 754 in 1999 to 690 in 2000.
- Fatalities involving large trucks dropped from 5,380 in 1999 to 5,211 in 2000.
- Single vehicle rollover fatalities decreased for every vehicle type except one—the sport utility vehicle (SUV). SUV single vehicle rollover deaths increased 8.9 percent from 1,546 in 1999 to 1,684 in 2000.

NHTSA collects crash statistics from the 50 states and the District of Columbia to produce the annual FARS assessment. The final printed report will be available later this year. Additional information is available at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov). ■

## Dr. Runge Launches North Carolina's Labor Day "Click It or Ticket" Mobilization

by Daniel Robinson, Region IV

**August 27, 2001. Durham, North Carolina.** Dr. Jeffrey Runge, NHTSA Administrator, visited North Carolina to help announce the Labor Day mobilization of their "Click It or Ticket" campaign at a press conference where he was flanked by nearly 200 police officers from around the state as well as other state leaders. Lt. Governor Beverly Perdue kicked off the press event announcing her commitment in continuing to make North Carolina's roads safer. The Lt. Governor was joined by Mr. Don Nail, Acting Director of the North Carolina Highway Safety Program, and Ms. Barbara Crocker, the mother of an unbelted victim of an automobile crash. Media from around the state notified the citizens of North Carolina that strict enforcement of their safety belt law was to begin today and last for the next 21 days.

Dr. Runge commended law enforcement officers for their vigilant support of North Carolina's seat belt and child passenger safety laws. "Because of you, more people will make it home safely, and more families will enjoy

safe and happy futures," he said. Dr. Runge reflected on his experiences as a North Carolina emergency room physician by recalling the many instances of injury and death resulting from unbelted vehicle occupants. The use of safety belts remains an

individual's best defense in the event of a crash.

During the press conference, Dr. Runge was presented with an award from Lt. Governor Beverly Perdue for his work involving traffic safety in North Carolina prior to his appointment as NHTSA Administrator. Dr. Runge was obviously surprised and honored to receive such a prestigious award from the state. He advised everyone in attendance that he would continue to advocate North Carolina's life saving message with a national focus. ■



# Region VI Labor Day Fatalities Drop Sharply after Crash Crackdown

by Bruce Shults, Region VI

During the recent Labor Day weekend, more than 74,000 law enforcement officers in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas and the Indian Nations joined together to help prevent injury and death in motor vehicle crashes by conducting *Operation Blue TALON 3: Crash Crackdown*. Their efforts met with a large measure of success. Early reports show only 36 persons were killed in traffic crashes during the 2001 holiday weekend period in Region VI states, 21 fewer than in 2000 and 49 fewer than 1999.

Operation Blue TALON (an acronym for the Region's five states and Bureau of Indian Affairs) was piloted in 1998 by soliciting written commitments from law enforcement agencies to increase their public information, education, and enforcement strategies of traffic laws. The initial commitment numbered some 500 policing agencies mostly in the target state of Texas. During the pilot campaign, *Operation Blue TALON* helped reduce Texas' Memorial Day holiday weekend fatalities from 34 in 1997 to only 19 in 1998. The campaign theme was not used in 1999, but it was expanded into all states in Region VI in 2000 by Law Enforcement Liaisons who promoted increased traffic enforcement and public awareness to local police agencies.

Today, written pledges have increased to well over 1,600 agencies in Region VI. The campaign targets extra emphasis to the Labor Day weekend when other national enforcement mobilizations are not being conducted. Campaign objectives are to:

- Champion highway safety and elevate traffic law enforcement to a higher priority in Region VI states by giving police agencies increased ownership of motor vehicle injury prevention efforts and



establishing a common identity that crosses municipal boundaries and state borders.

- Combine high-level enforcement activities with increased public awareness and high-visibility campaign branding.
- Increase coordination of enforcement efforts across the Region by forging new partnerships among law enforcement agencies and traffic safety advocates, utilizing state and region Law Enforcement Liaisons to promote the effort.

Press events are held in each state to announce the joint law enforcement venture to the public. Numerous local enforcement agencies also conducted their own media events and awareness activities prior to the holiday. The Law Enforcement Television Network (LETN) satellite transmitted information and highlights of the events to subscribers nationwide and made satellite/Internet feeds available to Region VI media outlets. In addition, LETN donated production of Crash Crackdown enforcement videos for State Police to use in their respective states.

Region VI delivered media releases custom-tailored to states, distributed live copy radio PSAs and op-eds to media, and facilitated media events. The Region also developed community support packages for use by highway safety offices, Safe Communities, and other partners, including materials for employer programs and diverse populations, as well as how-to kits to get editorials and to conduct letter-to-the-editor initiatives in support of the campaign's lifesaving goals.

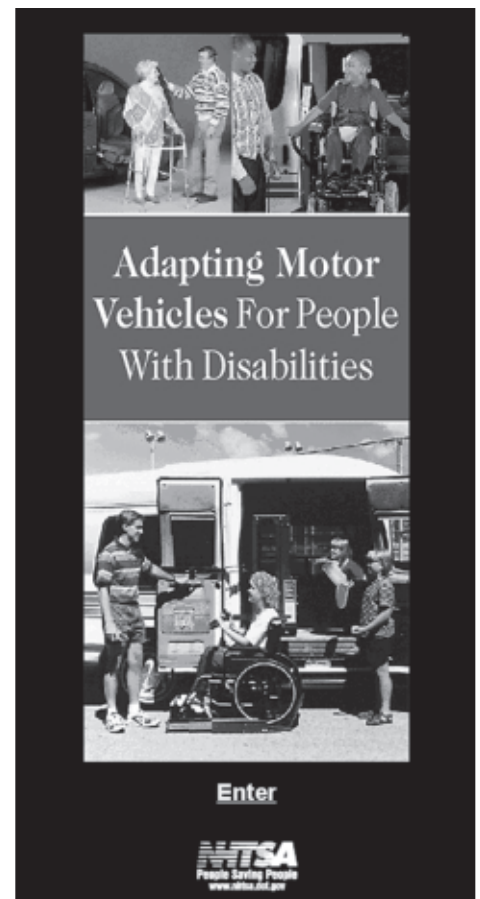
"There is no question that this large-scale, coordinated enforcement and awareness Labor Day campaign is saving many lives and

preventing untold injuries," said Regional Administrator Georgia S. Chakiris.

*Operation Blue TALON: Crash Crackdown* was recently nominated for a National Association of Governors' Highway Safety Representatives special award. ■

## NHTSA's Internet Publication for People with Disabilities Chosen as Site of the Week

NHTSA's website featuring the internet version of the publication, "Adapting Motor Vehicles for People with Disabilities," was chosen as a "Site of the Week" by *The Disability Resources Monthly (DRM) Guide to Disability Resources on the Internet*. The award-winning *DRM Guide* is considered one of the most authoritative guides to disability-related resources on the Internet. "Adapting Motor Vehicles for People with Disabilities," released in February 1999, was NHTSA's first publication specifically directed at meeting the vehicle safety needs of people with disabilities. To view the site go to: [www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/rules/adaptive/brochure/index.html](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/rules/adaptive/brochure/index.html) ■



State	Labor Day Fatalities		
	1999	2000	2001
Arkansas	11	8	4
Louisiana	11	4	4
New Mexico	10	3	2
Oklahoma	8	8	8
Texas	45	34	18
<b>Region VI Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>36</b>

NHTSA Now is an official publication of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Office of Public and Consumer Affairs.

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## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Cultivate in yourself what you admire in others."