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Secretary Mineta Announces Safety Belts Account for More Than Half Lives Saved by Safety Features

by Rae Tyson, Office of Communications and Consumer Information

January 18, 2005. Washington, DC. Secretary Mineta announced today that nearly 329,000 lives have been saved by vehicle safety technologies since 1960. A new NHTSA study indicates of all the safety features added since 1960, one – safety belts – account for over half of all lives saved.

The study also says government-mandated safety standards have added about \$839 in costs and 125 pounds to the average passenger car when compared to pre-1968 vehicles.

“The Department has worked diligently to reduce highway deaths,” Mineta said. “Thousands of our friends, neighbors and family members are alive today because of these safety innovations.”

According to the study, the number of lives saved annually increased steadily from 115 per year in 1960 to nearly 25,000 per year in 2002.

“These reports showcase the achievements of NHTSA and the automotive industry,” said NHTSA Administrator Dr. Jeff Runge. “Vehicle safety technology is truly a lifesaver, especially the simple safety belt.”

The study examined a myriad of safety features, including braking improvements, safety belts, air bags, energy-absorbing steering columns, child safety seats, improved roof strength and side impact protection, shatter-resistant windshields and instrument panel upgrades. It did not evaluate relatively new technologies like side air bags and electronic stability control systems.

Assessing the costs, NHTSA estimated that safety technologies cost about \$544,000 for every life saved. They added about the same cost to a new vehicle as popular options like CD players, sun roofs, leather seats or custom wheels. ■

Southeast Region States Get Motivated for Challenges in 05' At Law Enforcement Liaison Conference

By Chris Broome, Southeast Region

In preparation for both national mobilizations scheduled for 2005, the Fall Southeast Regional Law Enforcement Liaison Conference was recently conducted in Lexington, Kentucky. The aim of the conference was to discuss the branding of highway safety messages, to strengthen the safety belt and impaired driver mobilizations, and to secure a commitment from the Governor's representatives to conduct a summer speed program. NHTSA staff representing both the region and headquarters participated during the conference and were available throughout the conference for specific questions. The region was delighted to have each of the Southeast Highway Safety Office Coordinators represented along with more than 100 law enforcement liaisons representing the region.

Southeast Regional Administrator, Terrence D. Schiavone, welcomed the traffic safety partners to the conference and greeted the Governor's Representative Mark Miller, Commissioner, Kentucky

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Securing our future...one child at a time



Marlene Markison, Associate Administrator, ICOR and Judy Hammond, Highway Safety Specialist, ICOR, discuss keynote address.

Saratoga, New York. October 10-13. Marlene Markison, Associate Administrator of Injury Control, Operations, and Resources (ICOR) provided the keynote address at the opening session of the Fourth Annual Regional Child Passenger Safety Conference. While noting that significant progress has been made over the past several years, Markison stressed that if fatalities and

injuries to children are to continue to decrease, child passenger safety technicians must use all teachable moments and “diligently continue to educate parents and caregivers on the four steps for kids, from the first ride home from the hospital in an infant seat, to toddlers in forward facing seats, to booster seats for 4-8 year olds, and finally seat belts for everyone.”

The conference drew more than 450 child passenger safety technicians and advocates from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Puerto Rico, Pennsylvania, and Vermont. The ongoing success of this conference is due in large part to the dedication and commitment of the Highway Safety Offices of New York and New Jersey and the many sponsors, such as AAA, SAFE KIDS, Greater New York Auto Dealers, Burlington Coat Factory, State Farm, and others who have provided the necessary resources. ■

Jonathan White Receives NHTSA Administrator's Award Posthumously



defects in motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment, have had a broad and lasting impact on the transportation industry and the safety of all Americans.

December 14, 2004. Washington, DC. Jonathan White, Chief of NHTSA's Defects Assessment Division, was awarded an Administrator's award for his outstanding service. The inscription read:

For 30 years of service dedicated to improving transportation safety through identification and correction of motor vehicle safety defects. Mr. White's achievements, including his leadership in efforts to promptly identify safety de-



Secretary Mineta meets with Hideaki Oida, a career professional from the Japanese National Police Agency. Mr. Oida has responsibilities for traffic safety and traffic control. He is serving a five month internship with the DOT, including assignments with the FTA, NHTSA, and FHWA. While at NHTSA, he shared information on a variety of topics, including an alternative transportation program that has been effective at reducing impaired driving in Japan. ■

Glendale Arizona Police Taxi Company Opens for Business!

The Glendale Police Taxi Company officially opened for business during the holiday season of 2004. The targeted clientele, impaired drivers! While the car may look like a taxicab, it is really a fully functional police cruiser. The purpose of the taxi is to raise awareness of alternate methods to get home safely after holiday celebrations. The bottom line - if you drive impaired you will go to jail!

The idea for the taxicab came from Officer Max Merritt of the Glendale Police Motorcycle Squad who described the car as “possibly the most expensive taxi ride in the country”. With support from the Glendale Police Command staff and the Arizona Governors Office of Highway Safety the idea became a reality and the taxi hit the streets, *continued on page 4*

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Southeast Region States Get Motivated for Challenges in 05' At Law Enforcement Liaison Conference

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State Police. Mr. Schiavone detailed the Southeast region's top priorities. Foremost, increase the safety belt use rate. Secondly, reduce impaired driving through high visibility sustained DWI enforcement. Third, decrease speeding by incorporating the summertime integrated speed enforcement campaign and expanding partnerships. The partnerships in the Southeast region will target inter-agency participation, judicial issues, and medical organizations.

Sue Gorcowski, Associate Administrator, Communications and Consumer Information, provided insight to the importance of sustaining "*Click It Or Ticket*" and "*You Drink & Drive. You Lose.*", as branded messages. Her presentation illustrated how branding of a message provides consistency in presentations, promotes geographical coverage, and generates a presence in the highway safety market.

Regional law enforcement representatives were encouraged to begin using crash data to determine opportune times to conduct checkpoints and saturation patrols. The region requested that LEL coordinators begin to promote enforcement activities throughout rural communities in the region and among other law enforcement agencies that traditionally do not participate during mobilizations, including colleges, universities, military installations and the Indian Nation.

During 2005 the Southeast region plans to increase both participation and reporting during mobilizations, increase the number of LEL's working for the states, and promote inter-agency working relationships of law enforcement officers who work to save lives and reduce injuries associated with motor vehicle crashes. ■

Jonathan White Receives NHTSA Administrator's Award Posthumously

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The Department of Transportation expresses its deepest gratitude for Mr. White's contributions to motor vehicle safety.

White, a metallurgical engineer by training, joined NHTSA in 1976. Since then, the agency has recalled more than 300 million defective vehicles, along with 150 million pieces of motor vehicle safety equipment, such as child safety seats. White played a lead role in many of those recalls and the defect investigations that often precede recalls. Inside NHTSA he was known for his exhaustive knowledge of past

recalls and his finesse in gaining industry cooperation to ensure that recall campaigns are carried out in accord with federal law. In his most recent position as chief of NHTSA's Defects Assessment Division, White oversaw the agency's two-year-old "Early Warning Reporting System," designed to detect problems before they become serious. White, 51, lived in Prince Frederick, MD. He is survived by his wife, Jeanne, and their three daughters. ■



NHTSA Wins Top Honors in First Intermodal Public Affairs Cookoff!

NHTSA's Office of Communications and Consumer Information's entry, NHTSA Firestone Re-Hash, had stiff competition, narrowly edging out FAA and FTA for first place. The judges, including Secretary Mineta, Chet Lunner and Lenny Alcivar, finally agreed that our presentation was second to none. The casserole was fitted inside a tread-separated Firestone Wilderness AT tire (thanks ODI) and tastefully presented by the out-of-retirement dummies Vince and Larry. The judges were served a sample of the hash in a small tire-shaped dish. Many thanks to Tina Foley (the chef) and Dorothy Mason. A special thanks to Jameise Kelley, who joined Moniqua in the role of Vince and Larry. Jameise and Moniqua accepted the award from Secretary Mineta on behalf of NHTSA. It can be viewed in the OCCI office. Unfortunately, the hash is all gone. ■

Quote of the Month

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams"

– Eleanor Roosevelt



**(Taken from the Obituary section
of the Los Angeles Times - 2-18-05)**

Samuel W. Alderson, a multifaceted inventor who created crash test dummies such as those used in automobile safety tests, has died. He was 90.

Alderson died Friday at his home in Marina del Rey of complications associated with myelofibrosis, said his son Jeremy.

The mechanically inclined Alderson, who grew up putting in his father's custom sheet-metal shop, built the first automobile test dummy at his Alderson Research Labs in 1960. But the idea caught on, he said, only when Ralph Nader's consumer protection book "Unsafe at Any Speed" was published five years later.

Reacting to consumer outrage engendered by Nader's book, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration began buying Alderson's dummies to test seat belts, air bags and other devices designed to minimize deaths and injuries in car crashes. Various dummies, including the Vince and Larry models popular in television advertising, were standardized over the years as Alderson and his colleagues improved the technology.

In 1973, Alderson left his original company and formed a competitor, Humanoid Systems. The two firms dominated the crash test dummy market until they merged in 1990 to become First Technology Safety Systems.

Alderson was the last surviving founder, his son said, of the Stapp Car Crash Conference, an early organization that fostered automobile safety research.

When Alderson created Alderson Research Labs in 1952, nobody was thinking about testing the survivability of car crashes.

His customers were the military and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

He first landed a contract to make anthropomorphic dummies for use in testing jet ejection seats and parachutes, and later for the Apollo nose cone's planned water landing.

"The manlike test dummies duplicate not only the shape, size and weight of future astronauts," a Times story said in 1964, "but their motions as well, and their skulls, necks, stomachs and chests contain a variety of instruments to record landing forces."

The drop tests, the article continued, were "designed to ensure that the spacecraft and its systems provide maximum safety for the return of Apollo explorers."

In the 1950s, Alderson also was under contract to develop "phantoms," or dummies that could measure radiation doses, originally during nuclear testing. Based on that experience, he formed another company that he managed until shortly before his death, Radiology Support Devices, to supply the health-care industry.

Born in Cleveland, Alderson moved to Southern California with his family as a toddler. Because of limited money during the Depression, he studied intermittently at Reed College, Caltech, Columbia and UC Berkeley.

During World War II, he helped develop an optical coating to enhance vision in submarine periscopes at dawn and dusk, helped devise electronic equipment to aid planes in dropping depth charges on German submarines, and worked on missile guidance systems.

Married four times, Alderson is survived by two sons from his marriage to Betty Weir, William of St. Augustine, Fla., and Jeremy of Hector, N.Y.; and four grandchildren. ■

**Glendale Arizona Police Taxi
Company Opens for Business!**

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ready to transport impaired drivers from their cars to jail cells. The cab was unveiled in November at the Arizona DUI kick-off ceremony and has been featured on several local media outlets.

The taxi itself is an unmarked traffic enforcement unit that sports a taxi cab "top hat", that reads "Glendale Police" and "DUI Enforcement", a price list and the Glendale Taxi Co. emblems. While it looks like an average taxi, closer inspection reveals a price list on the back doors with prices ranging from a "free" traffic stop to a minimum of 4 months in jail for an aggravated DUI. The price list also encourages the public to "Call 911 if you see someone who needs a ride!"

The emblems on the front doors incorporate the Glendale Police Badge with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's "You Drink & Drive. You Lose." campaign logo. All of the markings for the taxi are magnetic, which allows the taxi to be quickly transformed from a highly visible taxicab to an un-marked enforcement vehicle. ■

Editor's Note:

I want to say what an honor and privilege it has been to serve as editor of *NHTSA Now* for the past 10 years. It's been wonderful being somewhat of a historian for many of the people and events that have shaped this great agency of ours. Thanks to all the contributors over the years who have never failed to provide articles and photos from their area of expertise that proved to be of interest to the agency at large. Without your contributions, the issues wouldn't have been as informative and entertaining.

My colleague, Pat Oladeinde, will assume editor's responsibilities beginning with the next issue, Volume 11, Issue 2.

If you would like to submit articles or photographs, please email them to patricia.oladeinde@nhtsa.dot.gov or mail them to:

400 7th Street, SW, Suite 5236,
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Sincerely,
Kathryn L. Henry