

LA CROSSE COUNTY HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 11, 2011
 La Crosse County Administration Building Room B390
 1:30 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tim Berg, Matt Gallagher, Ilona Hansen, Thomas Knoop, Robert Koenen, Bill Lubinski, Roland Solberg, Evan Stone, Reiny Yahnke
MEMBERS EXCUSED: Al Blencoe
MEMBERS ABSENT: Tim Hammes
OTHERS PRESENT:

CALL TO ORDER

Sgt. Bill Lubinski, Committee Coordinator, called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Ilona Hansen, seconded by Tim Berg, to approve the February 9, 2011 Highway Safety Commission minutes as printed. Motion carried unanimously.

LA CROSSE COUNTY CRASH DATA FOR 1ST QUARTER OF 2011

2011	1 st quarter	2 nd quarter	3 rd quarter	4 th quarter	Yearly Total
Sheriff Department					
Hit & run	15				
Car/deer	34				
Injury	30				
Property damage	100				
Fatalities	1				
Sub-total	180				
Comparison of Prior Year Totals	1 st quarter	2 nd quarter	3 rd quarter	4 th quarter	Total
2003	214	190	186	317	907
2004	199	195	162	295	851
2005	224	234	147	313	918
2006	215	192	150	251	808
2007	245	168	182	280	875
2008	228	150	158	284	820
2009	178	137	144	246	705
2010	177	128	126	260	691
2010	180				

The 10-year average of 1st quarter accidents in La Crosse County is 207.

Of the 9 alcohol-related crashes in the 1st quarter of 2011, 5 were personal injury and 4 were property damage. Of the 247 occupants involved in 146 crashes, 222 reported using seatbelts. This would be 90% compliance. Of the 15 hit & run crashes, 2 were personal injury (1 involving alcohol) and 13 were property damage (2 involving alcohol).

There was one fatality in the 1st quarter. This occurred on 01/29/11 at 1749 hours on County Road C near County Road T. It involved two vehicles. Ice was a factor. No seatbelts were in use and no alcohol was involved. Two females in the other vehicle were transported to a hospital and released.

Year-to-date there have been four fatalities in the county. One of these was on the interstate in Onalaska. The vehicle appeared to be going the wrong way trying to get to the Onalaska Gundersen Clinic. There was discussion about the difficulty law enforcement has in trying to get to the scene and stop a vehicle traveling the wrong way on the interstate.

It was suggested that guide signs be put up for Gundersen Clinic as this seems to be an ongoing problem spot. It could be suggested that the clinic put up a sign, but the clinic would need permission from WisDOT to put up a sign. Reiny Yahnke will look into this problem of lack of signs. Gundersen Clinic owns the land and should be able to put up a sign on its own property. There is a problem when drivers on Highway 16 and I-90 see the clinic and try to get there the shortest way possible which sometimes involves going the wrong direction on a roadway.

Tim Berg and Bill Lubinski will contact Jerry Arndt at Gundersen Lutheran to get the clinic's viewpoint of the problem. There are rules of advertising versus WisDOT rules. A question was raised if Franciscan Skemp would also request a sign if Gundersen Lutheran gets a sign. This would set a precedent for future decisions involving signs. Crossovers on the interstate are for plowing and emergency personnel only, but lost drivers are using them to turn around.

WISDOT UPDATES & HIGHWAY SAFETY PLAN SOLICITATION

As of May 8, 2011 there have been 137 fatalities in 122 crashes in Wisconsin year-to-date compared to 148 fatalities with 138 crashes in 2010. Motorcycle fatalities have decreased by nine, probably due to poor weather. The number of pedestrian fatalities is 17, which is average. La Crosse County has a low number of fatalities per capita.

Thomas Knoop distributed preliminary year-end 2010 crash statistics. 2010 fatalities increased over 2009 fatalities, but were still lower than the 5-year average. The number of pedestrian fatalities in 2010 increased by 54% over 2009. Construction zone fatalities also showed an increase from the previous year. The OWI statistics are for 2009 because not all the 2010 cases have been adjudicated. $\frac{3}{4}$ of alcohol-related fatalities in Wisconsin involve first-time offenders.

Legislative updates include:

- The increased coverage which had been required for insurance has been rolled back to previous dollar amounts.
- SB-15 (Traffic Stop Racial Data): The bill to repeal the requirement that law enforcement officers capture racial data on every traffic stop passed in the first house and is awaiting action in the second house.
- SB-76 (OWI Test Cots): A bill to require individuals found guilty of OWI to reimburse law enforcement agencies for the cost of administering blood draw and testing was introduced.

- AB-55 (Failure to Yield): A bill to increase the penalty for violations (especially violations causing injury or death) and shift burden of enforcement from courts to DOT was introduced.
- AB-64 (Mobile Home Transport): A bill to allow issuance of a single permit to move multiple sections of the same home on a single transport was introduced.
- AB-80 (OWL/OAR/OWS): A bill to create/increase penalties for violations of operating without a license, operating after revocation, and operating while suspended (especially violations causing injury or death) was introduced.
- AB-81 (Disabled Parking Cards): A bill to increase the penalty for fraudulent production, sale, and/or use of disabled parking cards was introduced.
- A proposal to eliminate license plate stickers was pulled.

Laws of the Month include:

- May 2011: Tailgating increases your risks of a traffic ticket and a crash.
- June 2011: Slower traffic keep right. Drivers must allow faster traffic to pass in the left lane on divided highways.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/DISCUSSION

The federal government proposed increasing the weight limit from 80,000 lb. to 98,000 lb. An extra axle would have to be added to vehicles. Local governments are against this proposal. No money is budgeted to improve the infrastructure. Maintenance is not kept up as it is with the 80,000 lb. weight limit.

Reiny Yahnke reported that mile markers are being installed this summer on Highway 53 north of I-90, ending where the freeway ends.

Bill Lubinski will contact Tim Hammes about grading East Tilson Street prior to the triathlon.

A portable speed indicator sign is to be set up in St. Joseph with the week. No good location was found to place the sign on County Road FO.

The sheriff received a letter in April from a New Amsterdam citizen regarding a portable speed indicator sign on County Road XX & NA from November 9th to the 15th. The citizen noticed that vehicles were slowing down when the sign was on. The speed limit in this area is 35 mph. The sign registers speeds even when it is turned off at night. The sign recorded 2753 vehicles traveling northbound with the following data:

16	1-10 mph	.6%	(may include tractors, farm equipment, school buses)
435	11-20 mph	15.8%	
1537	21-30 mph	55.8%	
751	31-40 mph	27.3%	
14	41-50 mph	.5%	(these were sporadic at all times of day; would be difficult to target)
-0-	50+ mph	.0%	

A sign has also been set up in Mindoro. There is no data for that yet.

Motorcycle usage may increase because of higher gas prices, but it depends on other things, too – weather, enjoyment, etc. On rare good weather days early in the year it seems everyone wants to get out on their motorcycles.

Tim Berg noted that the Highway 53 southbound off-ramp to Main Street seems to have had an increase number of crashes which have involved full lane closures. Improvements are to be made next year to Highway 53 northbound at Sand Lake Road.

Tim Berg brought up the concern of media present at crash scenes on the interstate. Media personnel sometimes get in the way and add to the chaos. Law enforcement has to wait for them to clean up their area and leave. The Wisconsin State Patrol tells the media personnel to leave. It was suggested that a countywide effort be attempted to keep TV stations from getting in the way. Motion by Ilona Hansen, seconded by Roland Solberg, to have a sub-committee of Bill Lubinski and Tim Berg draft a letter to the media pointing out that they could be given a citation for this. A draft of this letter is to be e-mailed to HSC members for suggestions. Motion carried.

AGENDA FOR AUGUST 10, 2011 MEETING

Items to be included on the August 10, 2011 agenda are La Crosse County crash data for the 2nd quarter of 2011, WisDOT Updates and Highway Safety Plan Solicitation, Gundersen Lutheran input, outcome of media letter, and announcements/discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Tim Berg, seconded by Thomas Knoop, to adjourn the meeting at 2:39 P.M. Motion carried. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Approved 08/10/11, Roxanne Felde, Recorder