

LA CROSSE COUNTY HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, August 10, 2011
La Crosse County Administration Building Room B390
1:30 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Allison, Tim Berg, Matt Gallagher, Tim Hammes, Ilona Hansen, Thomas Knoop, Bill Lubinski, Reiny Yahnke
MEMBERS EXCUSED: Evan Stone
MEMBERS ABSENT: Roland Solberg
OTHERS PRESENT: Jackie Eastwood, Mike Richards (Gundersen Lutheran)

CALL TO ORDER:
Sgt. Bill Lubinski, Committee Coordinator, called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Thomas Knoop, seconded by Mike Allison, to approve the May 11, 2011 Highway Safety Commission minutes as printed. Motion carried unanimously.

INTERSTATE 90 CONCERNS & SIGNAGE

GUNDERSEN LUTHERAN

There was discussion about the problem of drivers going the wrong way on the interstate and using crossovers to try to correct their mistakes. It is illegal to use the crossovers. A major area of concern involves the eastbound off-ramp of Highway 16. Some drivers presume the Gundersen Lutheran sign to be where there are supposed to drive and end up on the ramp to the interstate. Mike Richards of Gundersen Lutheran was present at this meeting.

A Gundersen Lutheran sign cannot be placed on the interstate. There was discussion about why the sign for the shrine is allowed on the interstate, but it was explained this was done through a special procedure involving Madison. Signage on both eastbound and westbound sides would have to go through WisDOT and this is not likely to happen. A blue 'Hospital' sign cannot be used because this is a clinic, not a hospital. A sign stating 'Use exit 5 for clinics' was suggested.

Mike Richards will take the concern to the Gundersen Lutheran Facilities manager. He will also speak with Mayo personnel and report back to Bill Lubinski.

Photos of the current Gundersen Lutheran sign were reviewed. It was felt that the arrow on the Gundersen Lutheran sign could be more distinct.

The Kwik Trip intersection before the Gundersen Lutheran Clinic is a bad intersection. There is one way in and one way out for the clinic.

WisDOT is to do a project between County Road OS and Gillette Street. It was suggested this project include the Gundersen Lutheran area. A WisDOT project manager could come to a Highway Safety Commission meeting.

MEDIA PRESENCE AT CRASH SCENES

Bill Lubinski distributed a drafted letter concerning media presence at crash scenes on the interstate system. It was felt that media will go to the crash scene anyway and that they do not want to have to wait. Obviously officers' primary duties are with the crash itself. There was concern that parts of the letter would set a policy that police and public would have to follow.

Tim Berg and Bill Lubinski will revise the drafted letter and show it to Captain Horstman. The final letter would be directed to television stations and newspapers. It could also be forwarded to all county law enforcement agencies for informational purposes.

LA CROSSE COUNTY CRASH DATA FOR 2ND QUARTER OF 2011

2011	1 st quarter	2 nd quarter	3 rd quarter	4 th quarter	Yearly Total
Sheriff Department					
Hit & run	15	9			24
Car/deer	34	63			97
Injury	30	38			68
Property damage	100	57			157
Fatalities	1	1			2
Sub-total	180	168			348
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
2011	180	168			

The average of 2nd quarter accidents in La Crosse County is 174.

The fatality on April 9, 2011 at 7:46 P.M. involved one vehicle where a new driver went off onto the gravel and overcorrected. The State Patrol handled a fatal accident at Coaches involving a drunk driver.

There was discussion about media emphasizing the fact a driver in a fatality was wearing a seatbelt or also stating things like 'it wouldn't have made a difference if the victim would have been wearing a seatbelt'. These statements do no good in helping the public realize that seatbelts do save lives and more serious injuries.

Fatalities have been up so far in the 3rd quarter.

Of 168 crashes, 10 included the use of alcohol (5 property damage and 5 personal injuries). Of 104 reportable crashes, 74% of the occupants reported using seatbelts.

Vehicle/deer crashes appear to have increased everywhere.

WISDOT UPDATES & HIGHWAY SAFETY PLAN SOLICITATION

Thomas Knoop reported that preliminary data shows that as of August 7, 2011 there have been 297 fatalities in 269 crashes. These figures are lower than the five-year average. 51 motorcyclists have died from crashes (some including crashes with wolves, turkeys, deer, or bears). There have been 13 fatalities in La Crosse County year-to-date. This figure is already above the average for the whole year.

A governor's conference will be held August 30-31.

Legislative updates include:

- Act 29 (Traffic Stop Racial Data): Effective June 30, 2011 repeals the requirement that law enforcement officers capture racial data on every traffic stop.
- Act 35 (Concealed Carry): Effective November 1, 2011, creates concealed carry permit with training required. This would allow concealed carry into a business unless the business has a sign posted prohibiting it.
- AB-80 (OWL/OAR/OWS): Introduced to create/increase penalties for violations of operating without a license, operating after revocation, and operating while suspended.
- SB-142 (Pedal Pubs): Introduced to prohibit municipalities from banning alcohol on commercial quadricycles and to exempt quadricycles from alcohol licensing requirements.
- SB-152 (Criminalize First OWI at 0.15): Introduced to criminalize first offense OWI with BAC at 0.15 or higher and to increase penalties for second offense.
- SB-154 (OWI Penalty Increase): Introduced to create felony for third OWI offense and to increase felony class for all subsequent offenses.
- AB-131 (School Bus Cell Phones): Introduced to ban the use of cell phones by a driver transporting, loading, or unloading children on a school bus.

The 'Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over' program will be in effect August 19 to September 5, 2011. Wisconsin has the highest rate of drunken driving in the nation. 9000 people in Wisconsin have been ordered to use an alcohol detecting device before driving.

An interesting 'State Traffic Data for 2009' handout was distributed. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration records snowmobile and ATV statistics also. Wisconsin is lagging behind in seatbelt usage.

Laws of the Month include:

- August 2011: Intersection crashes can be prevented by obeying traffic signals.
- September 2011: Drivers must be even more vigilant when school starts.

It is the responsibility of the vehicle occupant not to open a vehicle door onto a passing bicyclist.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/DISCUSSION

The May speed sign study in St. Joseph showed that .4% of eastbound traffic was traveling at 51-60 mph. 10.9% were 6-15 mph over the speed limit. Those occurred mainly between noon and 5:00 P.M. The study lasted a little over a week.

Mike Allison of the State Patrol will be retiring. Taking his place on the Highway Safety Commission will be Robert Koenen.

AGENDA FOR NOVEMBER 9, 2011 MEETING

Items to be included on the November 9, 2011 agenda are La Crosse County crash data for the 3rd quarter of 2011, WisDOT Updates and Highway Safety Plan Solicitation, Interstate concerns (Gundersen Lutheran and media letter), announcements/discussion, and set agenda for February 8, 2012 meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mike Allison, seconded by Matt Gallagher, to adjourn the meeting at 2:48 P.M. Motion carried. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Approved November 9, 2011, Roxanne Felde, Recorder