

Louisiana working with the parishes toward “zero deaths” on all roadways

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Where state efforts intersect with local initiatives

As all roads lead to vacation cabins and beaches this summer, Louisiana’s dedicated team of highway safety professionals is focused on making sure everyone arrives safely to their respective destinations. Louisiana’s highway safety vision after all is *Destination Zero Deaths (DZD)* using the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) as the vehicle to get there. The goal is to reduce roadway fatalities and serious injuries by 50% in 2030. This is a challenging goal as deaths on Louisiana’s roads went up from 757 in 2016 to 772 in 2017, representing a 2% increase.

While there are many causes of crashes that lead to deaths and serious injuries, the SHSP is based on data to focus on the state’s most serious traffic safety problems. Crash statistics tell us to narrow the focus on top contributing factors, which are called Emphasis Areas (EA). These EAs are impaired driving, occupant protection, crashes involving young drivers, distracted driving, and infrastructure and operations (intersections and roadway departures). Crashes involving bicyclists and pedestrians are also a concern being addressed.

The SHSP Implementation Team met this summer in Baton Rouge to re-emphasize the overall vision of zero deaths that drives this data-driven, collaborative and multidisciplinary *Destination Zero Deaths* initiative. This effort is led by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD), Louisiana Highway Safety Commission (LHSC) and Louisiana State Police (LSP) in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Hundreds of stakeholders including law enforcement officers, engineers, educators, planners, emergency responders, road crew members, health practitioners, parishes and municipalities and citizens have all pitched in their time and energy to contribute to the attainment of *Destination Zero Deaths*. Since SHSP’s *DZD* initiative was first launched in 2006, the state has seen a tremendous increase of multijurisdictional partnerships between public agencies including parishes, cities and municipalities vested in safety. Nine *DZD* regional safety coalitions have been established across the state to implement SHSP at the local level. These coalitions leverage resources and provide opportunities for local citizens and community leaders to be involved in efforts aimed at solving road safety issues that are common in their regions.



It’s inspiring to see how much work Louisiana has done to improve the safety of state highways and local roads. Thousands of miles of cable median barriers have been installed. Millions of federal-aid dollars have been spent for safety improvements such as rumble strips, high visibility signage and roundabouts. More marketing and awareness efforts have been done to promote safety campaigns such as Click It or Ticket, Buckle Up in Your Truck, Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over, and many more. During the Labor Day period, from August 15 to September 3, the state will be conducting the national “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over” mobilization campaign.

On the infrastructure side, DOTD is continually working on site specific safety improvements based on statewide network screening process for state routes and crash data profiles created for locally owned routes. DOTD is also working on two districtwide Investment Plans and a Statewide Roadway Departure Implementation Plan both for state and locally owned roads. Louisiana Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) continues to accept applications for the Local Road Safety Program (LRSP) that provides parishes and other Local Public Agencies (LPA) an opportunity to develop local road safety plans and implement low-cost safety infrastructure improvements that address issues related to intersections and rural curves. Another program for LPAs, the Safe Routes to Public Places Program (SRTPPP) has just kicked off which will devote approximately \$3million in construction funds to address issues related to bicycles and pedestrians on state and locally owned roads. If you have a road safety issue in your parish or community, call LTAP’s LRSP Team at 225-767-9122 for help.

As earlier mentioned, the Destination Zero Deaths initiative is mobilized at the local level through the nine regional safety coalitions, housed within the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) or the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) of each region. In addition to the infrastructure safety projects funded through DOTD’s Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), here are some additional safety initiatives of interest to PJAL members:

The New Orleans coalition conducted the “Safe Streets for Everyone” media campaign promoting safe bicycling and walking as they work toward a more coordinated data-driven approach in transportation implementation, including efforts to engage the smaller parishes in the region. The North Shore coalition continues to use data-driven efforts such as road safety assessments (RSA) to engage partners from St. Tammany and Tangipahoa in implementing local road safety improvements while

The Acadiana coalition is busy promoting safety messages on News 15 TV and is actively working with their member parishes to develop local road safety plans. The Capital Region coalition piloted a “Pledge to End Distracted Driving” campaign that gained 5,000 views on social media and 1,500 actual pledges from young drivers, as DOTD and Parish engineers/planners pitched in to revise the regional infrastructure and operations action plan.

The CenLA coalition just hired their new coordinator who will take the lead in re-engaging the different localities to deploy behavioral and infrastructure safety efforts, including implementation of the Alexandria / Pineville bicycle and pedestrian plan. The Northeast coalition is proud to share the recent implementation of striping and pavement markings on Desiard Street in Monroe funded through the LRSP. With their meeting scheduled on July 25th they’re encouraging the 12-member Northeast parishes to participate in the safety journey with them. As for the Northwest coalition, there’s a plan to conduct a Super Safety Saturday in September and Young Drivers Week events in October, in addition to the work they do with the Traffic Management Center and Motorist Patrol.

The South Central coalition has just on-boarded new team leaders for the distracted driving and occupant protection emphasis areas as they continue to work with their six parishes in implementing low-cost safety solutions at high-crash intersections and rural horizontal curves. The Southwest coalition has not just helped Lake Charles in fitting eight buses with child passenger safety seats but has also been actively preaching safety messages monthly on KPLC TV’s Midday program.

The state’s goal of halving fatalities and serious injuries by 2030 cannot be attained without the collaboration of local agencies from parishes and municipalities (all unified through the nine regional safety coalitions). To find out how to get involved with your regional coalition, please visit <http://www.destinationzerodeaths.com/Home/LouisianaSafetyCoalitions>.

As leaders in your parishes and communities, you are important to these life-saving efforts. Please join our journey toward helping Louisiana reach reach zero deaths on all roadways. Remember: one death is one too many.



From July 8-14, Louisiana pilots the “Move It Law” campaign, which reminds all motorists to move their vehicle from travel lane in an event of a minor crash to avoid secondary crashes.