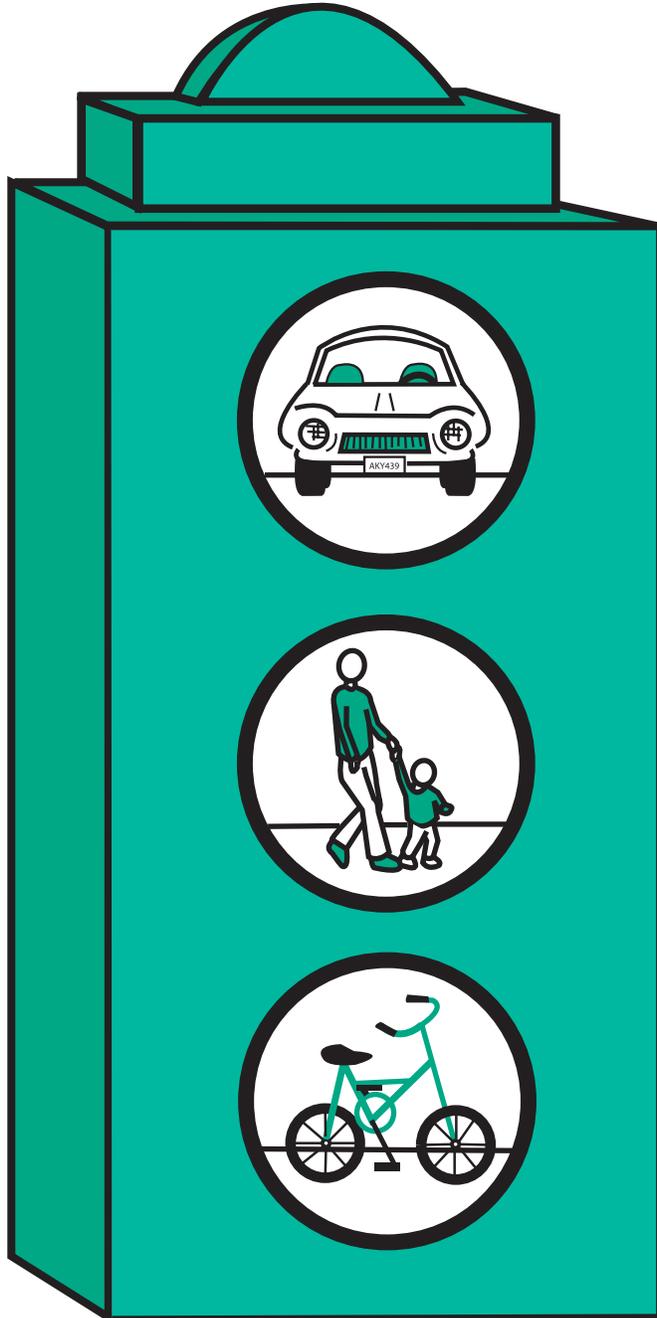


Iowa's First  
Multidisciplinary Traffic Safety Teams  
Peer Exchange Report

October 23, 2001



Sponsored by

Iowa  
Safety Management System  
Coordinating Committee  
(SMS)

Iowa Governor's  
Traffic Safety Bureau,  
Iowa Department  
of Public Safety  
(GTSB)

Iowa Traffic Control  
and Safety Association  
(ITCSA)

**Iowa's First**

**MULTIDISCIPLINARY TRAFFIC SAFETY TEAMS**  
**PEER EXCHANGE**

**Report**

**October 23, 2001**

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Iowa Traffic Control and Safety Association

This summary was prepared by the Center for Transportation Research and Education, Iowa State University. The views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the sponsors.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Iowa's first Multidisciplinary Traffic Safety Teams Peer Exchange, focusing on the state's nine metropolitan areas, was held in Des Moines, Iowa, on October 23, 2001. Believing that some of the best ideas and programs for reducing crashes and improving safety come from interjurisdictional teams working together, the sponsors organized this informal venue so that several traffic safety teams from across the state could share know-how and suggestions. The event also provided an opportunity for state agencies to provide information about programs, funding, and other resources available to help support local safety initiatives.

The half-day event, held just prior to the annual conference of the Iowa Traffic Control and Safety Association, was offered at no cost to participants. Sponsors were

- Iowa Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau, Iowa Department of Public Safety (GTSB),
- Iowa Safety Management System Coordinating Committee (SMS), and
- Iowa Traffic Control and Safety Association (ITCSA).

Jack Latterell, traffic safety consultant and former FHWA safety engineer, served as facilitator. The agenda, in general, followed this format:

- Welcoming remarks
- Guest presentation
- "Success stories" shared by several teams
- Open-ended discussions about a variety of topics:
  - handling meetings and other logistics
  - broadening/strengthening membership
  - identifying needs and developing initiatives
  - collaborating with groups having similar interests
- Brief presentations about funding and other support available for safety teams
- Summary of information shared during the exchange

A copy of the agenda is included in the Appendix.

## **PARTICIPATING TEAMS**

About 75 people attended the peer exchange. They represented local and state transportation agencies, highway engineering, traffic engineering, planning, law enforcement, public health, medical care facilities, metropolitan planning organizations, councils of government, emergency response/management, and community safety initiatives. A list of participants, with contact information, is included in the Appendix.

No two participating teams were exactly alike. Some focused on enforcement issues, others on incident management, traffic engineering, or pedestrian/bicycle safety; for some, the emphasis has evolved over time. Many have been active for several years; some are relatively new. Some participants represented communities that do not have formally organized teams but have occasionally conducted multidisciplinary safety efforts. The diversity of team experience, membership, size, operations, and goals enhanced the exchange.

The following teams that participated in the exchange are well established, multidisciplinary safety groups:

- Dubuque County Multidisciplinary Safety Team
- Metropolitan Traffic Management Team (Polk County 1)
- Des Moines Safe Kids Coalition (Polk County 2)
- Central Iowa Safety Task Force (Polk County 3)
- Southwest Iowa Freeway Team (SWIFT) (Pottawattamie County)
- Citizen Awareness on Roadway Safety (CARS) (Scott County/Quad Cities)

Representatives of the following counties and metro areas, several with safety initiatives but not necessarily “multidisciplinary teams,” as such, also attended:

- Black Hawk County/Arrive Alive
- Johnson County
- Lee County
- Linn County
- Sioux City/Woodbury County
- Story County

### **WELCOMES (summaries)**

**J. Michael (Mike) Laski**, director of the GTSB, invited participants to “circle the wagons” around their tables to focus on safety. He emphasized that, with about 41,000 traffic-related deaths annually across the country, improving traffic safety continues to be a national priority. However, there’s no cookbook approach to reducing the number and severity of crashes. The peer exchange philosophy is to magnify individual team efforts by exchanging ideas and expertise among several groups; that is, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

**Tom Welch**, safety engineer at the Iowa DOT, said that Iowa continues to take the lead on many safety initiatives. It is one of only a few states to continue a statewide Safety Management System after the national mandate for such programs ended. Iowa’s SMS is accomplishing some important projects, including a soon-to-be-published toolbox of traffic safety information and resources. But grassroots efforts are critical. After seeing first-hand the successes of traffic safety teams in Dane County, Wisconsin, and in Davenport and Dubuque, he is committed to supporting similar efforts across Iowa through the Iowa DOT’s Office of Traffic and Safety.

### **GUEST PRESENTATION (summary)**

**Cheryl Wittke**, executive director of the Safe Community Coalition of Madison and Dane County (Wisconsin) (SCCMDC), acknowledged the challenges involved in multidisciplinary teams. A common barrier is team members’ unfamiliarity with and difficulty understanding the “different ways of thinking” represented by other organizations on the team. When team members make the effort to broaden their focus and consider other approaches to safety issues, however, multidisciplinary teams can meet their goals—and the results can be “beautiful.” In addition, multidisciplinary projects result in more efficient use of funds by reducing duplication

of effort, and can generate positive media coverage and public awareness of traffic safety initiatives and the organizations involved in them.

Within her own team, Wittke acts as a “generalist” who facilitates inter-organizational understanding. One of about 1,000 multidisciplinary safety teams across the country, SCCMDC has been recognized by the National Highway Traffic Safety Association for its effective, community-based strategies to improve traffic safety. Wittke believes the coalition owes its success to

- connecting with one key decision maker/collaborator in each of several safety-related organizations,
- focusing on achievable goals, and
- generating support from political leaders and the public.

Neighborhood associations are very active in SCCMDC, which began with a meeting between law enforcement officers and AAA that resulted in AAA’s funding of some speed signs in a neighborhood. Successful community-based campaigns have included “Walk Our Children to School Week,” which raised area drivers’ awareness of the beginning of the school year and the increased number of school-age pedestrians/bicyclists on sidewalks and streets; a “Slow Down Yard Sign” campaign; and a “Community Traffic Summit” that involved about 75 people from the surrounding area in developing a two-year plan for traffic safety initiatives.

Wittke suggested that teams formalize their efforts by

- developing a workable organizational structure, including a strong, active board and a regular meeting schedule,
- raising funds (including identifying “champions/guardian angels” to fund particular initiatives),
- marketing the coalition and its projects, and
- scientifically evaluating results through data analysis.

See the appendix for copies of Wittke’s presentation slides and her handout of tips for developing a successful traffic safety coalition.

## **IOWA’S INITIATIVES**

Teams represented at the exchange were asked to describe the status of their group, leadership/membership, meeting logistics (location, agenda, minutes), and one or two success stories.

### **Dubuque County Multidisciplinary Safety Team**

(Contact: Mike Rettenmeier, Dubuque Police Department)

#### **Status/meetings**

An active group has met once every six weeks since 1996. They currently meet in the City Hall annex.

**Membership/leadership**

The current chair, Mike Rettenmeier (selected by the “railroad method”), represents law enforcement. Only the city and county engineer, along with Mark Campbell, GTSB, and Jack Latterell, attended the team’s first meeting in 1997, but it was the beginning of new, open discussions on safety issues. The team now includes city and county engineers, sheriff, Iowa DOT area engineer and maintenance supervisor, state trooper, and representatives from Dubuque’s police and fire departments, MPO, GTSB, civil defense agency, county’s 911 center, and Dubuque County Emergency Management. Sometimes agencies from neighboring Wisconsin participate.

**Agenda/minutes**

Mike faxes an agenda to members before meetings. It takes him only about an hour to compile notes after the meetings, which he then faxes to members and Jack Latterell within a few days of each meeting.

**Example success story**

The team’s first project was developing an incident management manual, which included alternate routes for a highway segment with high crash rates. Currently the team is planning the state’s first installment and study of automated red light running enforcement.

**Polk County 1: Metropolitan Traffic Management Team**

(Contact: Cy Quick, Iowa DOT)

**Status/meetings**

This active group has met monthly since 1989. They currently meet in the offices of the West Des Moines Police Dept.

**Membership/leadership**

The Iowa DOT has generally assumed a leadership role. Of about 45 members, anywhere from 5–15 attend each meeting. Members represent city, county, and state enforcement, FHWA, Iowa DOT, fire departments, MPO, county engineer(s), city traffic engineer, and county emergency management.

**Agenda/minutes**

Cy Quick prepares an agenda of current issues and faxes it to team members shortly before each meeting, along with minutes from the last meeting. A former member who took minutes recently retired; Cy now takes them.

**Example success story**

This multijurisdiction, multiagency incident management initiative, begun in 1989, has resulted in the development and ongoing improvement of an incident management manual for I-235. The Iowa DOT maintains and the state highway patrol patrols I-235, but various city police departments also respond to crashes and reroute traffic off the nearest I-235 interchanges. The agencies and communities initially met to identify common crash locations, reasons for high crash rates, and possible solutions. Additional signing, lengthened gore markings, and impact attenuators were installed on I-235, and full mile and 1/10-mile

markers were placed along the entire length of I-235. In 1991, the group drafted a freeway incident management manual for all agencies along the I-235 route and other jurisdictions in the area. The manual includes a list of signs, contact information, a policy for dealing with hazardous materials, maps showing the mile markers at I-235 interchanges plus incident detour routes (including surrounding streets) for potential problem areas on I-235, and more. The maps have since been revised by the City of Des Moines Police Department to include locations where Des Moines police officers are stationed during an incident detour.

## **Polk County 2: Greater Des Moines SAFE KIDS Coalition**

(Contact: Linda Plummer, Blank Children's Hospital)

### **Status/meetings**

This group has met monthly since 1992, with quarterly steering meetings. Meetings are brief, usually less than an hour, and are currently held at the Department of Public Health.

### **Membership/leadership**

Blank Children's Hospital leads this effort. Generally about 15 people from 35 member agencies attend each meeting. Membership changes periodically. In addition to the regulars—police, private groups, public health, hospitals, emergency response/management—representatives of insurance companies and private safety product companies have also participated.

### **Agenda/minutes**

Co-coordinators try to distribute an agenda before the meetings, and minutes are distributed shortly after meetings to remind members of action items they've committed to.

### **Example success story**

In fall 2001 data were requested from the Iowa DOT about the extent of pedestrian injuries in Polk County. Iowa State University's Center for Transportation Research and Education (CTRE) sent maps indicating the location and numbers of child pedestrian incidents. Schools with high levels of injury in their attendance areas were invited to participate in "Walk This Way," a pedestrian safety program. First, safety presentations were given to all grade levels at three elementary schools, and then students, accompanied by adult volunteers, took a planned walk around their school neighborhoods to identify pedestrian hazards. Hazards were documented with disposable cameras. A "Walkability Survey" was completed in which students ranked a number of factors related to the safety of their walking route. The information collected by students was forwarded to the public works department. Since that event, two of the participating schools have learned they are located in areas eligible to receive Neighborhood Infrastructure Rehabilitation Program (NIRP) funds. The defective sidewalks identified by students will be replaced at no charge to neighborhood residents.

Also, a Pedestrian Safety Task Force has been formed. This multidisciplinary task force consists of representatives from city traffic engineering, police department, schools, neighborhood associations, business partner, a leadership institute, and the SAFE KIDS coalition. A small grant has been secured, and most likely will be used to implement a public awareness campaign addressing pedestrian safety.

### **Polk County 3: Central Iowa Safety Task Force**

(Contact: John Brodersen, Clive Police Department, or Kirk Lundgren, Iowa State Patrol)

#### **Status/meetings**

The task force has been active and meeting monthly since 1997. Meeting venues alternate among members' offices.

#### **Membership/leadership**

A three-person board consisting of a chair, second chair, and past chair leads the group. Each year the second chair rotates to the chair position, the former past chair leaves the board, and a new second chair is elected by the general membership. The group has 16 members, primarily representing law enforcement agencies and the National Guard but also receives personnel support with projects from many other local groups such as Safe Kids, local hospitals and the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy. Usually about 90 percent of members attend meetings.

#### **Agenda/minutes**

Although an agenda is rarely distributed in advance, minutes are mailed to members about a week after meetings.

#### **Example success story**

New in 1997 and growing, this group continues to learn how members can work together. Three initiatives are working well:

- (1) Saturn auto dealership is providing free space every Thursday evening for Polk County law enforcement agencies to install and inspect car seats for free; Saturn also provides free advertising for these events. U.S. Cellular (a former host-partner for these events) provides a cellular phone number that parents can call for information about car seats.
- (2) Well's Dairy recently partnered with the task force to celebrate National Child Passenger Safety Week. The company provided coupons which officers carried with them while on patrol. If a child was noted being transported properly in either a child safety seat or if a young person was properly fitted in a safety belt then a "positive" enforcement stop was made on that motorist. The driver was given a coupon, endorsed as "Bunny Money" which entitled them to a free half gallon of Blue Bunny Ice Cream or Yogurt.
- (3) The task force is also doing an "Operation Safe Street" initiative (modeled after Kansas City's "Operation Impact"). Signs were made and installed in the various jurisdictions of the task force to remind drivers of the community enforcement atmosphere. In an effort to improve coordination among police departments in the county, they are working together as designated "host" departments or "rider" departments. Now, during special enforcement projects, patrol cars in the county may carry "two different uniforms" (an officer from both host and rider departments). This cooperative effort has improved rapport among departments and increased their ability to work together effectively.

**Pottawattamie County/Southwest Iowa Freeway Team (SWIFT)**  
(Contact: Blake Redfield, City of Council Bluffs Traffic Supervisor)

**Status/meetings**

SWIFT, begun in 1998, meets regularly, either monthly or quarterly. The date for the next meeting is set at the current meeting. The group generally meets at the local Iowa DOT office.

**Membership/leadership**

The metropolitan planning agency leads the SWIFT initiative. Membership includes representatives of Iowa DOT, law enforcement, metropolitan planning agency, public works departments of Council Bluffs and other communities, traffic engineering, emergency management, and University of Nebraska–Lincoln. SWIFT has four teams, and the chairs of those teams make up a fifth, leadership team. Average attendance at team meetings is 20–25.

**Agenda/minutes**

The metro area planning agency solicits items for the agenda about a week before meetings. SWIFT rarely has minutes, only when a written record of a particular item is deemed important. The subcommittees, however, generate a lot of notes/minutes.

**Example success story**

SWIFT's primary focus has been incident management; members represent a variety of agencies and organizations in the region. The team has developed a level of interagency communication unknown before in this metro area. After several crashes on the interstate caused major gridlock and/or rerouting of traffic through Council Bluffs, SWIFT became more formally organized to deal with incident management more effectively.

**Scott County-Quad Cities/Citizen Awareness on Roadway Safety (CARS)**  
(Contact: John Marxen, Scott County Sheriff's Office)

**Status/meetings**

The group has met monthly for 12 years and currently meets in the sheriff's office.

**Membership/leadership**

Leadership of the group rotates; the chair is currently from law enforcement. However, the GTSB continues to participate in the meetings, offering help and advice as needed. Members include representatives from law enforcement agencies in the area, county and state engineers, Iowa DOT construction and maintenance engineers, emergency response and fire departments, Bi-State MPO, hospital, schools, Iowa and Illinois railroads, and public health agency.

**Agenda/minutes**

Mark Campbell, GTSB, takes notes at the meetings. He also calls members a couple weeks in advance of meetings to solicit agenda items, then prepares an agenda and e-mails or faxes it, along with minutes from the last meeting, to members.

### **Example success stories**

(1) Using SMS seed money, the team developed Highway Enforcement Action Team (HEAT), a countywide program to reduce traffic speeds along a particular corridor. The Iowa State Patrol and the Davenport, Bettendorf, LeClaire, Blue Grass, and Eldridge Police Departments also participate in this project. Once a month, the Scott County Sheriff's Office advertises that extra patrol cars will be dispatched along the corridor and then put HEAT signs on the squad cars. Although the office do not necessarily dispatch more officers, motorists perceive more police activity and reduce their speeds.

(2) Historically, several agencies—emergency response, squad cars, Iowa DOT enforcement officers and/or maintenance offices—often received calls about the same disabled vehicle. Now whichever agency arrives first at the scene applies reflective orange (not yellow) tape to the vehicle to signal it's being taken care of. This simple policy has reduced such calls to agencies by 90 percent and reduced the number of unnecessary (duplicate) trips to stranded vehicles.

### **Counties with “informal” or evolving multidisciplinary teams, or contemplating the formation of one**

#### **Black Hawk County**

(Contact: Dick King, County Engineer)

Although there's no formal countywide multidisciplinary group in Black Hawk County, the county engineer's office would like to move in that direction. Law enforcement agencies have met regularly for 12 years, and an Arrive Alive (safe driving) group meets monthly. Regarding Arrive Alive, the County Health Department takes the lead and hosts the meetings, mailing an agenda to members about a week in advance along with minutes from the previous meeting. Four to eight people generally attend, primarily law enforcement and health-related staff.

Successful recent safety initiatives through the engineer's office include using safety funds to analyze truck movements on Highway 218 from Cedar Falls to Waverly to evaluate the safety situation before crashes occur; developing an incident management system (currently switching to Cartegraph); and improving pavement markings maintenance, in particular painting county road edge lines.

#### **Johnson County**

(Contact: Matt Johnson, Iowa City Police Department)

The Iowa City Police Department and the University of Iowa Police work closely together. For example, two or three nights every couple months officers from the two departments pair up to conduct joint alcohol enforcement activities in Iowa City's bar district.

#### **Lee County**

(Gary Ramaker, Keokuk Police Department)

There is no formal multidisciplinary team in Lee County. However, with 44 places of business where liquor can be purchased (including taverns, liquor stores, etc.) in the City of Keokuk, alcohol-related crashes have historically been a big problem, and in 1992 the

Keokuk Police Department decided to get some help turning the situation around. In spite of some initial reservations about working with “Big Brother” (!), the department collaborated with GTSB to develop a plan for increasing enforcement of legal alcohol limits for drivers. In addition to providing advice, GTSB funded enforcement radar equipment and preliminary breath testers. Since 1992, there have been no alcohol-related fatalities in the city.

### **Linn County**

(Contact: Steve Gannon, County Engineer)

Although there is no formal multidisciplinary group in the region, an emergency management task force meets about four times a year. In addition, a technical review group meets monthly to focus on development issues throughout the county. It consists of representatives from various county offices, including engineer’s office, sheriff’s office, health department, emergency management, conservation agency, planning, development, soil service, and the Iowa DOT.

### **Story County**

(Contact: Charles Cychosz, Ames Police Department)

Again, the county doesn’t have a formal multidisciplinary group, but the Ames Police Department, Story County Sheriff’s Office, and Iowa State University’s Department of Public Safety have historically worked closely together on routine traffic problems as well as major events. Agencies have also worked with GTSB on a variety of issues.

### **Woodbury County**

(Contact Lori Baldwin, Sioux City Public Health Nurse)

There is no formal, countywide multidisciplinary group; however, there are several safety initiatives in the metro area. The Sioux City Public Health Nurse works with various groups to improve bicycle, pedestrian, and car seat safety. Efforts include promoting the use of bike helmets, supporting local requirements for bike safety and registration, and making free car seat checks available 24/7 through paramedic services.

The nurse also works with school safety coordinators on the School Traffic Safety Task Force to develop educational efforts like teaching children about Walk/Don’t Walk signs. Federal Express has been a partner in a “Walk Your Child to School” campaign. Area media have responded enthusiastically to these children-focused safety activities. The school safety task force meets monthly at the superintendent’s direction; the superintendent hosts meetings at the district administrative offices, establishes the agenda, and distributes minutes of previous meetings.

Various participants in these efforts include the police department, city engineer, and the sheriff’s department. Members of the safe schools group include the school superintendent, school operations/maintenance staff, school insurance representative, school transportation supervisor, principals, and the school district health office.

There may be interest in establishing a metro-wide citizens traffic advisory group. Possibly these various efforts could integrate.

## **SELECTING INITIATIVES/DEVELOPING TEAMS**

There was not enough time for groups to share how they selected traffic safety initiatives, but the following ideas can be generalized from the discussions:

- Initiatives are need-driven, not team-driven. That is, someone sees a problem or need and assembles a group to address it. That need, e.g., incident management, may be ongoing, and so the team may continue to meet regularly.
- Once representatives of different disciplines begin working together to address one issue, a climate can develop in which information about other joint concerns is shared, and the group may decide to address other safety challenges.
- As different needs are identified and addressed, membership in multidisciplinary teams can and often does fluctuate.
- It may be more common for public agencies—state, city, and county engineers; law enforcement; metropolitan planning organizations and councils of government, etc.—to cooperate together than to include representatives of community- or neighborhood-based initiatives. Groups may want to consider broadening their membership to involve the public through community safety groups.
- Several of the participating teams have used the services of GTSB to help them organize.

## **RESOURCES FOR MULTIDISCIPLINARY SAFETY TEAMS**

Presenters described resources and assistance available through the Iowa DOT's Office of Traffic and Safety, the statewide Safety Management System's Coordinating Committee, Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau, Iowa Traffic Safety Data Service, Center for Transportation Research and Education, and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Handouts for these programs, including contact information, are included in the Appendix.

### **Iowa DOT's Office of Traffic and Safety (TAS)**

(Contact: Mary Stahlhut, Iowa DOT, 515-239-1169, mary.stahlhut@dot.state.ia.us)

TAS can provide programmatic, funding, and events/publications/online resources for local projects.

#### **Programmatic resources**

These include assistance or advice regarding traffic safety studies, safety audits, design plan reviews, safety improvement programs, hazard elimination programs, utilities and access, intelligent transportation systems (ITS), and work zones; statewide crash data accumulation and safety research; traffic engineering studies; and signing/advertising management.

### **Funding resources**

- Hazard Elimination Safety Program (HES)
- Traffic Engineering Assistance Program (TEAP) (free to cities (under 5,000) and counties)
- Traffic Safety Improvements Program (TSIP), funded by “Half Percent” funds (one-half percent of Iowa’s Road Use Tax Fund). Funded projects can involve traffic control devices, a site-specific application to improve safety, or research/public information/education. **Applications for TSIP are due August 15.**

### **Publications/events/websites**

- Traffic and Safety Engineering Conference in October
- Traffic and Safety Informational Sheets, or “Frequently Asked Questions” ([www.ctre.iastate.edu/pubs/tsinfo](http://www.ctre.iastate.edu/pubs/tsinfo))
- Access Management Handbook and Toolkit, including Frequently Asked Questions ([www.ctre.iastate.edu/research/access/amhandbook](http://www.ctre.iastate.edu/research/access/amhandbook))
- Crash Analysis Toolkit website ([www.dot.state.ia.us/ alas](http://www.dot.state.ia.us/ alas))
- Iowa DOT and Iowa Highway Research Board research reports ([www.ctre.iastate.edu/index](http://www.ctre.iastate.edu/index))
- TAS website ([www.dot.state.ia.us/traffic\\_safety](http://www.dot.state.ia.us/traffic_safety))

### **Safety Management System’s Coordinating Committee**

(Contact: Mary Stahlhut, Iowa DOT, 515-239-1169, [mary.stahlhut@dot.state.ia.us](mailto:mary.stahlhut@dot.state.ia.us))

Iowa’s statewide SMS helps local safety practitioners identify, evaluate, and remedy local safety problems by providing data, technical assistance, and funding. Each year SMS competes for funds with other statewide management systems, then distributes much of its award via grants to local entities. SMS funds are intended to assist projects that benefit a number of agencies and disciplines; therefore, they are a good resource for multidisciplinary team projects. SMS also applies for FHWA and GTSB grants and partners with other safety stakeholders to leverage resources and achieve common goals.

SMS has also conducted a statewide public opinion survey about traffic safety issues, developed a strategic safety plan for the state, and supported and published the proceedings of this multidisciplinary traffic safety team peer exchange. Coming in spring 2002: Toolbox of Highway Safety Strategies. ([www.iowasms.org/](http://www.iowasms.org/))

### **Governor’s Traffic Safety Bureau (GTSB)**

(Contact Mark Campbell, GTSB, 515-281-3907, [gtsbinfo@dps.state.ia.us](mailto:gtsbinfo@dps.state.ia.us))

The GTSB’s mission is specifically to work with local and state agencies to identify safety problems and develop/implement programs to remedy them. Program coordinators at GTSB work closely with various multidisciplinary teams across the state and are available to support anyone interested in forming such a team by helping with funding applications, membership building, team operations, etc.

### **Programming resources**

The bureau administers and coordinates several programs: alcohol limits and enforcement, youth and police traffic services, occupant protection, law enforcement coordination, Special Traffic Enforcement Program (sTEP), data and records, and a video library. It is also Iowa's liaison with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. ([www.state.ia.us/government/dps/gtsb/index.htm](http://www.state.ia.us/government/dps/gtsb/index.htm))

### **Funding resources**

The bureau administers various federal safety funds authorized under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21):

- **Section 402 Funds** (alcohol, occupant protection, police traffic services, emergency medical services, traffic records, engineering, motorcycles, and pedestrian/bicycle safety),
- **Section 157 Funds** (occupant protection education/enforcement mini-grants),
- **Section 405a Funds** (child occupant protection, instructor and technician training, child safety seat fitting stations),
- **Section 411 Funds** (traffic records data improvement, and
- **Section 2003b Funds** (public service announcement regarding child safety seats).

### **Iowa Traffic Safety Data Service (ITSDS)**

(Contact 515-292-5004, [itsds@iastate.edu](mailto:itsds@iastate.edu))

This service helps agencies take advantage of new safety and geographic information systems (GIS) data analysis tools when agencies don't have time to learn to use the tools or conduct queries. ITSDS staff perform the queries and provide the results in the form of graphical reports and maps, facilitating decision-making, education, and effective information presentation.

Local agencies' requests for custom analyses may be sent to ITSDS through either the GTSB or Iowa DOT's Office of Traffic and Safety. ITSDS is funded by GTSB and administered at Iowa State University's Center for Transportation Research and Education. ([www.ctre.iastate.edu/itsds](http://www.ctre.iastate.edu/itsds))

### **Center for Transportation Research and Education (CTRE)**

(Contact: Tom McDonald, 515-294-6384, [tmcdonal@iastate.edu](mailto:tmcdonal@iastate.edu); Duane Smith, 515-294-8103, [desmith@iastate.edu](mailto:desmith@iastate.edu); or Jim Hogan, 515-294-8103, [hoganj@iastate.edu](mailto:hoganj@iastate.edu))

Resources available through this Iowa State University center include

- Local Technical Assistance Program (training, information, and referrals),
- Safety Circuit Rider (training, technical assistance with safety programs), and
- a transportation library, with many safety-related holdings.

CTRE also administers the ITSDS and hosts several of the websites mentioned above.

## **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)**

NHTSA's "Safe Communities" materials provide a variety of information useful for multidisciplinary safety teams. These materials are not included in the Appendix; see instead [www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/outreach/safecomm/](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/outreach/safecomm/).

## **Iowa Traffic Control and Safety Association (ITCSA)**

(Contact Blake Redfield, president, 712-328-4907, [cbtraffic@neonramp.com](mailto:cbtraffic@neonramp.com); or Tom McDonald, membership chair, 515-294-6384, [tmcdonal@iastate.edu](mailto:tmcdonal@iastate.edu))

This nonprofit, multidisciplinary professional organization encourages excellence in the "four E's," engineering, enforcement, education, and emergency response. Members from all over Iowa bring diverse perspectives to traffic safety issues. ITCSA provides networking opportunities and state-of-the-art information on technology, equipment, materials, products, and programs. In addition to sponsoring an annual conference, ITCSA publishes a biannual newsletter and a website. ([www.ctre.iastate.edu/itcsa/](http://www.ctre.iastate.edu/itcsa/))

## **SUMMARY**

Guest speaker Cheryl Wittke summarized important themes from the peer exchange and briefly mentioned ideas for strengthening safety teams:

Iowa's safety teams are doing a lot with few resources. For example, they are

- effectively addressing critical safety issues, like incident management and alcohol enforcement,
- breaking down bureaucratic barriers and laying the groundwork for strong collaborative efforts,
- implementing collaborative traffic safety projects,
- exercising strong leadership, and creating an effective organizational structure to guide their interaction, and
- drawing in key community partners such as SAFE KIDS coalitions, hospitals, fire and emergency medical services departments, and private sector partners.

Following are some suggestions for ways in which safety teams can build on and expand their efforts:

- Iowa has fantastic sources of useful local traffic safety data through ITSDS/CTRE and the Iowa DOT. Tap into these data to identify problem locations and pervasive traffic safety issues when establishing priorities for action.
- Build on neighborhood/community interest in traffic safety by drawing community efforts into your initiatives. The public can be a powerful ally; work with them, not in competition with them.
- Play to your strengths. Help each organization on your team identify its unique niche in strengthening the team's overall effort. This is a tough one (SCCMDC struggles with it!), but identifying critical roles for team members enhances the experience of serving on the team and significantly improves the team's effectiveness.

- When recruiting new team members, look for people with a track record as “doers.” Find champions within appropriate organizations who have energy and enthusiasm for safety issues, a collaborative mindset, and special skills or expertise your team could use.
- Finally, if you can help the public understand that traffic safety initiatives are about improving the quality of life for them and their families—and not about infringing upon their rights—you’ll form the basis for a culture change that results in safer driver behavior and therefore fewer injuries and deaths from traffic crashes. To create this paradigm shift, harness the media and nurture the support and involvement of community “movers and shakers.” Getting good publicity through community events like Walk Our Children to School Week can help make this happen.

Congratulations to the teams and others who participated in this event for taking time to work together to improve traffic safety for Iowa residents. Keep up the great work!

## **POSITIVE OUTCOMES**

Several attendees reported that the forum would have a direct, significant impact on their teams’ development:

- Black Hawk County/Arrive Alive plans to reorganize and renew its identity.
- Sioux City/Woodbury County plans to organize. After addressing a school-based pedestrian issue, there is more incentive for multidisciplinary traffic safety relationships to continue. Some specific needs have been identified.
- Story County plans to start organizing. It was great to meet, and they identified some issues to address.

## **WHAT’S NEXT?**

The majority of written evaluations of the forum indicated that attendees heard useful ideas for safety initiatives, met additional resource people from their own and neighboring communities, and collected information for collaborating with existing teams.

Many participants would likely participate in a similar event annually or every two or three years. A suggested alternative to holding annual events was to routinely publish information about team’s new initiatives or success stories in the Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) newsletter, *Technology News*. The sponsors will consider whether to conduct future peer exchanges and, if so, how often. In the meantime, articles about safety initiatives will appear at least annually in *Technology News*.

For information about Iowa’s experience planning and conducting this event, contact anyone on the planning committee, listed on the following page. They can provide advice as well as copies of brochures, registration materials, and invitation letters.

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