

## GOOD NEWS...

## BAD NEWS

Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood announced earlier this month that traffic-related fatalities in the U.S. have fallen to a 50-year low. Traffic deaths fell 9.7 percent in 2009 to 33,808, the lowest number since 1950. In 2008, an estimated 37,423 people died on the nation's roads and highways.



Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood

These numbers are even more impressive as we look back only five years, when the highway death toll exceeded 43,500. Deaths per 100 million miles traveled also dropped to a record low -- 1.13 deaths per 100 million miles in 2009, compared with 1.26 the year before.

The number of people injured in motor vehicle crashes fell for a 10th consecutive year. An estimated 2.2 million people were injured in 2009, a 5.5 percent decline from 2008. Alcohol-impaired driving deaths declined 7.4 percent in 2009 to 10,839. Thirty-three states and Puerto Rico saw declines in alcohol-related fatalities.

Traffic safety experts attribute the improvement to more people buckling up, incorporation of side air bags and anti-rollover technology in more vehicles, and a stronger focus on curbing drinking and driving.

This is great news. It's what we at The National Road Safety Foundation, along with police and healthcare officials, traffic safety and driver education experts, and advocacy groups have

been working toward for many years. The combination of education, technology, legislation and enforcement is working, and we applaud it.

### The Bad News

More than 33,800 people died on our roads and highways last year. About 5,000 were teens.

The vast majority of crashes are preventable. NRSF believes that so much of safe driving comes down to education. We need to be educated – and re-educated over the years – about handling our vehicle and sharing it safely with others on the road. We need to be made aware – and constantly reminded – of the dangers of bad judgments that make us think we can drive while impaired, fatigued or distracted.

So let's pat ourselves on the back for a great achievement, but let's not forget there's a lot more to do. Zero traffic deaths is our goal.

Secretary LaHood summed it up well. "While we've come a long way," he said, "we have a long distance yet to travel."

We agree. And we will keep working to get to our goal.

# DISTRACTED DRIVING

## Projects in the Works

Our newest program, currently in production, will focus on distracted driving.

Distracted Driving is the top priority of U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, who a year ago convened the first Distracted Driving Summit to call attention to the issue and galvanize the efforts of a broad array of agencies, companies and organizations, including NRSF. In the past year, distracted driving has grabbed media attention and has been outlawed in some form in 30 states.

NRSF is working on two films that will focus on distracted driving. One will have a broad focus, aimed at drivers of all ages. The other will be aimed directly at teens, and it is being developed with



input from teen panels with students from SADD, FCCLA and NSSP, the ADTSEA youth program.

Both projects are still in development. We'll keep you updated on progress.

## Focus of National Teen TV Show

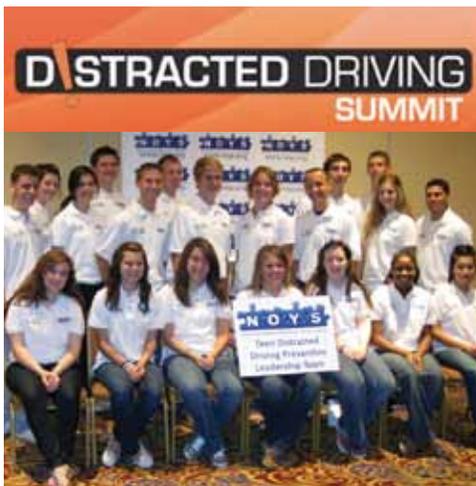
Teen Kids News, a weekly syndicated TV show that airs on more than 215 stations throughout the country, will put

the spotlight this season on distracted driving.

With support from the National Road Safety Foundation, Teen Kids News plans to air at least 11 segments throughout the 2010 – 2011 season that will examine distracted driving among young people. The program will also spotlight our Drive2Life PSA Contest and will air the winning spot next spring.



To see when and where Teen Kids News airs in your area, click on [www.teenkidsnews.net](http://www.teenkidsnews.net)



## NRSF Co-Sponsors 1st Distracted Driving Youth Summit

NRSF is proud to be a co-sponsor of the 1st Distracted Driving Youth Summit, held in Washington in September as an adjunct to the Distracted Driving Summit convened by Transportation Secretary LaHood. The Youth Summit was organized by NOYS.

We'll have a report on the summit in the next issue of Road Buzz.

## IT WAS GOOD TO SEE YOU

### NRSF at Major Safety Conferences

NRSF participated in several major conferences this past spring and summer, where we distributed several thousand sets of our free traffic safety programs. We began the busy conference season in Orlando, site of the SADD national conference. Some 1,500 students, teachers and advisors were in attendance.

We also were in Philadelphia for the Lifesavers Conference, Chicago for the FCCLA national meeting and St. Louis for ADTSEA.

At the NASRO national conference in Louisville in August, we presented a check to Officer Michael Clower of the Fargo ND Police Dept., who won the first NRSF/NASRO Excellence in the Classroom Award. More about that award is elsewhere in this issue.

We wrapped up the season with the GHSA and NAWHSL meetings in Kansas City later in September, and the New York State Highway Safety Conference in Grand Island, NY in October.

In the midst of our travels, two NRSF representatives have received honors. Director of Operations Michelle Anderson has been asked to serve as Assistant Liaison for the NOYS Traffic Safety working group, and PR Director David Reich was named to the Board of Directors of ADTSEA.

If we missed seeing you at these conferences, look for us on the road again next year. The next issue of Road Buzz will include our 2011 conference schedule.

# NASRO EXCELLENCE IN THE CLASSROOM



Recipient of Innovation in the Classroom Award Officer Michael Clower (center) with NRSF's Michelle Anderson and David Reich



Officer Michael Clower, a nine-year veteran of the Fargo (ND) Police Department, won the first NASRO/National Road Safety Foundation "Innovation in the Classroom Award." The award, presented by NRSF at the national meeting of NASRO in Louisville in August, recognizes innovative teaching of traffic safety in schools by a school resource officer (SRO), and it carries with it a \$2,000 honorarium shared by the SRO and the school where he teaches.

Ironically, much of Officer Clower's traffic safety education in the public and private schools where he works has not been in the classroom, but outside in school parking lots and elsewhere in the community. Last year, he teamed up with a high school math teacher to bring an innovative idea to life. In class, the students learned the formula commonly used by police when reconstructing a traffic crash. They then went out to the school parking lot where they found a staged 2-car crash. By measuring the skid marks and employing the formula they

had learned in class, the students were able to calculate the speed of the cars.

"Most people assume you see skid marks only when a car is moving at a high rate of speed," Officer Clower noted. "The students were surprised at the amount of damage a relatively low-speed crash can do, and what a difference 5 or 10 miles per hour can make in whether or not there's time to stop a vehicle to avoid a crash."

The lesson is now part of the math curriculum and the crash calculations are used as part of the students' grades.

"It was an easy lesson to put together, and it delivers an important message to young drivers about speed," said Officer Clower, who enjoys being a school resource officer. "I get to make a difference in the lives of young people every day."

We salute Officer Clower for his dedication. NASRO will soon announce details of the 2nd annual "Innovation in the Classroom Award."

## "The Conversation" to get national airing on public Television

Our most recent film project, "The Conversation," has been selected for nationwide syndication to public TV stations by the National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA.) NETA feeds programming via satellite to virtually all of the nation's 220 public and educational TV stations.

Distribution is planned for the fall, and local TV stations will determine the dates and times they will air "The Conversation." Watch your local listings to see when it will air in your area.

"The Conversation" is a 27-minute film that looks at the issues facing older drivers and if and when they need to consider giving up the car keys. Often other people – adult children, friends and neighbors, caregivers spot the problem before the older driver does, and it becomes necessary to have a difficult conversation.

Our film is designed to make it easier to begin that conversation by examining the issues with perspectives of older drivers, adult children and senior care experts.

Copies of "The Conversation" are available, free of charge, for group or individual showings, or it can be downloaded from our website at [www.nrsf.org](http://www.nrsf.org). To order a copy on DVD, along with accompanying brochures, email us at [info@nrsf.org](mailto:info@nrsf.org) or call toll-free 866-SAFEPATH (723-3728).

# NRSF Launches Second Drive2Life PSA Contest



NRSF and our partners at NOYS (National Organizations for Youth Safety) are launching the second annual Drive2Life PSA Contest. Drive2Life is a search for the best youth-generated ideas for a public service message that will be professionally produced and aired nationally during National Youth Traffic Safety Month next May.

Five finalists will win a mini-camcorder, which they can use to create a rough video of their PSA concept. The winner will receive a \$1,000 cash scholarship and an expenses-paid trip to New York City to work with a professional producer, to take the winning entry from concept to a completed PSA. Two runners-up in each age category (13 – 16 and 17 – 21) will

Young people ages 13 – 21 are invited to submit a 15- or 30-second PSA concept that addresses distracted driving. Ideas may be in the form of scripts, storyboards or treatments, although no video will be accepted, and group entries are not allowed.

receive \$500 cash scholarships.

The winning PSA will air on the nationally-syndicated Teen Kids News, and will also receive widespread airings on newscasts and online.

Our first Drive2Life PSA Contest generated a lot of interest, and 16-year old Bethany Brown of Arizona won a visit to New York to work with our film producer, as he made her idea into a polished TV PSA. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood introduced Bethany and her PSA last spring in Washington, DC at the start of National Youth Traffic Safety Month.

If you're between 13 and 21, we'd love to hear your ideas for a PSA on distracted driving. For entry information, visit [www.drive2life.org](http://www.drive2life.org)



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