

**Work Zone Awareness Week: Outreach Ideas and Strategies**  
**Webinar Transcript**  
**February 6, 2013**

**Anna Giragosian**

Good afternoon and welcome to today's webinar on Work Zone Awareness Week: Outreach Ideas and Strategies. My name is Anna Giragosian and I will moderate today's webinar.

Before I go any further, I do want to let those of you who are calling into the teleconference for the audio know that you need to mute your computer speakers or else you will be hearing your audio over the computer as well. For those of you calling into the phone line, please note that your phone lines are listen-only.

Today's webinar is scheduled to last 90 minutes. We will start with an introduction given by Tracy Scriba of the Federal Highway Administration Work Zone Mobility and Safety Program. She will then be followed by presentations from David Rush of the Virginia Department of Transportation; Kelli Reyna of the Texas Department of Transportation; and Julie Stotlemeyer of the Missouri Department of Transportation.

If during the presentations you think of a question, please type it into the chat area. Please make sure you send your question to "Everyone." Presenters will be unable to answer your questions during their presentations, but we'll take about 5 minutes following each presentation for questions. If we run out of time and there are unanswered questions, we will attempt to get written responses from the presenters that will be emailed to all attendees.

The PowerPoint presentations used during the webinar are available for download from the file download box in the lower right corner of your screen, along with an FHWA Public Roads article titled "A Decade of Safety Success" highlighting the growth of National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW) since its inception, and a poster for this year's NWZAW. These materials will also be available online within the next few weeks, along with a recording and a transcript of today's webinar. I will notify all attendees once these materials are posted online.

We're now going to go ahead and get started with our first presentation, given by Tracy Scriba of the Federal Highway Administration Work Zone Mobility and Safety Program.

As a reminder, if you have questions during the presentations please type them into the chat box and they will be addressed following each presentation. I'm now going to turn it over to Tracy Scriba to get started.

**Tracy Scriba**

Thank you for joining us today. Each year in April, Work Zone Awareness Week is held to provide an extra reminder to everyone of the importance of safe and effective work zone operations. While work zone awareness is certainly needed year round, this extra reminder is provided in April because that's when road construction increases significantly in many parts of the country after the winter. This extra reminder is for everyone: it is for road users – motorists, commercial vehicle operators, motorcyclists, bicyclists, pedestrians; it is for workers – flaggers,

construction engineers, laborers, designers, traffic control providers, utility workers; it is for law enforcement officers; it is for emergency services and first responders; it is for industry and industry associations. Safe and efficient work zones start with good planning and design, require good set-up and maintenance in the field; good behavior by all road users; and management and response when things don't go as well as we hope. We all have an important role in helping to make our work zones operate safely and efficiently.

That is reflected in this year's National theme for Awareness Week – “Work Zone Safety: We're All in This Together.” The theme was developed by a committee at the National level that involves many partners. Since 1999, FHWA has worked with the American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA), the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and Virginia DOT to coordinate and sponsor the National event. Over the years, other transportation partners have joined the effort to support NWZAW. In addition to the National event conducted each year, many States host their own Work Zone Awareness Week events. That is what we are here to talk about today – what States have done to honor and promote Work Zone Awareness Week in their States. We hope that this webinar will give States, localities, and others ideas you can implement for ~~their~~your own Work Zone Awareness Week events - this year even.

We will be hearing from three States about their efforts. We will start with Virginia Department of Transportation (DOT), who will provide an overview of the range of activities they conduct as well as an overview of some activities across the country. Then we will have two presentations that highlight in more detail some key efforts in both Texas DOT and Missouri DOT for Work Zone Awareness Week. Texas DOT will provide insights about its main media event and other outreach efforts. Missouri DOT won the contest to host the National event last year and will provide some insights on their experience.

With that, let's get started with the presentations.

### **Anna Giragosian**

Thank you, Tracy. Our next presentation will be given by David Rush of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).

### **David Rush**

Good morning or good afternoon. I am David Rush with VDOT. We are preparing for our 16<sup>th</sup> year of NWZAW. We started back in 1997 in the southwest corner of Virginia and carried it statewide the following year. I have been asked to cover some of the low-cost ideas that we have done over the years and how contractor participation is done in Virginia, and I also have a list of a few activities from other states.

For the first few years after we started our campaign, we had a safety grant from the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). It didn't take long to use that money, and from that point on, funds have been scarce. We've tried to develop some low-cost, easy-to-do strategies to reach out to motorists. We put work zone displays at welcome centers and rest areas throughout the state. One way to do that is to display work zone traffic control devices outside and inside the buildings and have staff engage with and answer questions from patrons. They hand out

information cards on how to drive safely through work zones and they let folks know about the national campaign and how motorists can help by driving safely. The staff at the welcome centers have been exceptional in this campaign, working with the Virginia Tourism Association. A lot of them dress in orange shirts. They also serve orange refreshments to stick with the theme. Originally, VDOT supplied a lot of the traffic control devices. We've work closely with contractors over the years, and now they provide many of the signs, message boards, cones, drums, and other devices we use at the welcome centers. We try to engage motorists as they come in. They always ask "what's this all about?" and it helps us get our foot in the door.

One of our goals for NWZAW is to include all VDOT employees, not just the field forces. During the week of the national campaign, we try to have a Work Zone Safety Day event at our central office complex in Richmond. Many of our employees do not get out in the field and have never been up close to see the traffic control devices we use. This event helps us share information with them about the devices that we use, their role in helping field forces do their job safely, how they and their families can safely travel through work zones, and what to do when they come across a work zone that is not safe. We have a lot of people come to us and say they saw something terrible at a work zone and didn't know what to do, so we give them instructions on how they can get that information to us.

We have various divisions in our central office that will have tabletop displays. Our Safety and Performance Management division focuses on the Virginia Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) items. We also have our Maintenance and Construction division and Traffic Engineering division, which is my division. The goal for the Safety Day event is to engage and educate our central office employees on improving our work zone safety program. We also include external customers since – as the theme says – we're all in this together. We've been very fortunate with ATSSA. Their headquarters is about an hour north of Richmond, so they've been full partners with us from the beginning. We've had Virginia ATSSA chapter members come and display their products, as well as the Virginia Road Builders and Virginia State Police.

Another thing that we try to do is focus on certain themes. For example, the year the theme focused on driving through night work zones, we had representatives from 3M Company come in and give 30-minute presentations on what makes traffic control devices retroreflective and how to improve their visibility to motorists. We've also kind of copied an idea from North Carolina where we set up a display of approved, acceptable devices and unacceptable devices and have VDOT go through and see if they can pick out the good from the bad and explain to them why. We've also focused on Work Zone Final Rule issues.

Along with educating our employees, we've had them participate in theme-related activities, such as "putting through a work zone," tossing bean bag drums into a corn hole truck, and guessing the number of miniature cones in the back of a dump truck. We've had vendors like Wal-Mart and Target donate door prizes and game prizes, which helps improve the competitiveness and participation of VDOT employees.

Another easy-to-do activity is have a "go orange" day where we encourage employees across the state to dress in orange for the day to show support for our field forces. These are just a few

examples of “go orange” day last year. We have pictures taken and submitted, and then we put them on our serve for VDOT family folks to see.

We also asked our employees to pledge drive safely in work zones. We’ll set up a traffic control device like a cone or a sign and have employees sign it to say that they’ll strive to drive slowly, obey signs and speed limits, and things like that. Last year, because the theme was “Don’t Barrel through Work Zones,” we were fortunate to have TrafFix Devices, Inc. donate twelve drums – one for each of our nine districts, one for the central office, one for the research council at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, and one at the Virginia Road Builders headquarters. We use these devices throughout the week and throughout the year; when we are finished with them, we put them on display in the lobbies of the districts and the central office so that people can see them throughout the year. We also use these devices in our annual recognition event held at the VDOT Workers Memorial, which is located between Charlottesville and Staunton on I-64, at a scenic overlook of the Blue Ridge Mountains. On the memorial are the names of 133 VDOT employees who have lost their lives in the line of their duty since 1928. Unfortunately, the 133<sup>rd</sup> name was added to the memorial just a few months ago. Since 2006, we’ve held a recognition event to honor those who have lost their lives building and maintaining roads in Virginia. The State police, the Contractors Association, and VDOT leadership participate. We always try to get a front-line worker who can share a personal story with the media. We’ve found this really helps get the message out. We will also invite family members of those who have names listed on the wall. Over the last several years we’ve held this vigil at night and we light up the traffic control devices, which gives it a special effect. With the theme this year being “We’re All in This Together,” we’re making plans to have a motorcycle run from all nine districts in the State and are inviting contractors to join us to try to get across the theme that it’s not just motorists – we have to be on the lookout for all road users.

Another low-cost idea that we feel is important is we have employees and contractors go to high school driver education classes across the state and give a presentation on what is a work zone, what are the different parts of a work zone, what you should expect, and how to safely drive through a work zone. We also take traffic devices to show the kids. This helps keep their attention throughout the class. Often we’ll pick a site that’s near a construction project. We feel like we get the biggest bang for the buck by doing that because a lot of those kids will leave school and drive through the work zone. We’ve also taken a video called “A Sudden Change of Plans” that shows what happens to a teenager who is not paying attention and inadvertently enters a work zone and strikes a worker. This seems to go well over with the students.

Other low cost ideas include the use of social media such as Twitter and Facebook. We send out daily messages and have our partners and other safety avenues send out messages so it grows. We’ve developed an electronic media kit, because the easier you make it for the media to use your materials, the more likely it is that they will do so. We’ve included videos and statistics and other information in there for them. We also display work zone safety messages on our changeable message signs (CMS) during non-rush hour traffic. In this case, the theme was not to be distracted by using a phone in a work zone.

Within VDOT, we send out daily messages to all our employees via email with safety reminders or bits of information about driving safely through work zones. We encourage letters to the

editor from our district administrators. We've prepared a form letter that they can use or it can be more specific for their district. A lot of those get placed in papers throughout the week each year. We've posted work zone awareness videos on YouTube. In some cases we've held press conferences in a work zone and invite the media. It's amazing how the media's eyes light up when they see how fast traffic really goes just a few feet from where they are, and it helps them realize the dangers we face when we're out there.

We encourage our field forces to review and ensure that all the traffic control devices are legible and up to standards. On a few occasions we've obtained a proclamation from the Governor recognizing Work Zone Awareness Week and the importance of driving safely through work zones. We've also joined with other organizations to help us spread the word because we've found we just can't do it by ourselves – it takes others to get the information out. A lot of the information I just covered is on our website.

We work closely with the contracting industry in Virginia and have partnered with them in producing public service announcements, holding joint press conferences, writing letters to the editor for newspapers, conducting training, and displaying work safety messages on CMS. Again, they are also now providing devices at our rest areas and welcome centers. They realize that this is a very important program and the better we work together in getting the message out, the more likely it is that the message will sink in. Some contractors have stepped up and placed billboards. Here's a billboard that was placed on I-81 near Harrisonburg by DBI. For the mega-project we have in Northern Virginia they've placed billboards with the theme or "orange cones, no phones" to encourage drivers not to be distracted.

I'll share some lessons learned. Like I said, we've been doing this now for 16 years. If possible, you need to plan early. We have a statewide committee made up of public affairs folks and traffic engineering folks and we try to plan out 5-6 months in advance. We have a spreadsheet listing different activities, due dates, who's going to do those activities, and things like that. It has helped us stay on track.

Another lesson learned is you need to focus both internally and externally. When we started this in 1997, our thought was to make sure our employees know before the beginning of construction season that they are doing things correctly – reviewing processes, procedures, and devices. We wanted to make sure that they had proper safety equipment and things like that so that they know this week is also for them; it's not just to get the message out externally.

Seek out partners to assist with the program. The more partners you have, the easier it is to get more information out. This past year, the Virginia DMV participated with us during the month of April, which is distracted driving month. They had radio spots talking about not driving distracted in work zones.

Try to make the message personal. Ever since the first national event, which was held in Springfield, Virginia, where the media came out to listen to speakers, the speakers they really focused on was the family that came and spoke about the loss of their child in a work zone crash. He'd only been with North Carolina DOT for a few months and he loved the job, but a vehicle came by one day and killed him. That's what makes the message take hold with the media that

it's not just numbers – it's actual people. It's faces and fathers and husbands and wives. This is one reason why when we go to the high school classes we make it so the kids can put a face and a name to the people working behind the cones and drums.

Be creative and use your imagination. If somebody else is using something that we think is a good idea we will go ahead and copy it. If you see anything that we are doing that you're interested in, we are willing to share anything. We're trying to change the driving patterns and behaviors of motorists, so we need to be creative in our messaging.

This is a year-long campaign, as Tracy said. It's not a one-week event before everybody goes back to driving crazy. We need to make sure that we stay on point with the message throughout the year.

We are all in this together, whether you're a designer developing a traffic control plan, a traffic engineer reviewing it, a contractor installing in, an inspector inspecting it, a maintenance employee putting up traffic control, or a public affairs/communications person. It takes all of us to make a successful work zone. We need to be working together to get this message out to our road users that they need to be doing their part.

Here are some outreach ideas from other states. Some states had work zone awareness YouTube videos in 2012, such as Iowa, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Vermont. New Jersey conducts a one-day safety conference every year, putting the focus on their workers. Georgia has a safety stand-down hour at construction sites to conduct safety training from 7:00 – 8:00 am. I like that idea, and we're thinking about copying it. A few other states have mascots. For example, Connecticut has Work Zone Wally and North Carolina has Buddy Barrel and Connie Cone. This is thinking outside of the box and trying to catch younger kids, I'm sure. One of the things we do for our work zone safety day event is we have a daycare here and we've developed a coloring book for them on work zone safety so they can go home and encourage their parents to drive safely through work zones. Alabama has created a work zone safety rack card placed in rest areas, welcome centers, and other areas. Colorado DOT has an annual remember day event. Connecticut has conducted a roadway safety children's poster contest. South Carolina has a "take the pledge, wear the pin" highways or die-ways campaign where they ask people to sign a pledge and wear a pin recognizing that they've taken the pledge to drive safely. Many states use the appeal of a "slow down: my mommy or daddy works here" sign to convey a personal message. Maryland State highway Administration and Wisconsin DOT have gotten governor proclamations for NWZAW. Road Island DOT partnered with AAA to light the State house dome orange, and Wisconsin DOT lit the dome of their capital as well.

A lot of what I've covered on other states is listed on the National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse website as well as ATSSA website. Virginia appreciates the efforts of FHWA, AASHTO, ATSSA, and others that help us try to get this message out to everybody. Here is my contact information. I'm also listing Marshall Barnhill, who is the co-chair of our communications division. Either one of us would be happy to answer any questions or provide information on the programs that we have done.

**Anna Giragosian**

Thank you, David. We do have a few questions for you. What percentage of VDOT employees visits the displays? Is it mandatory?

**David Rush**

It's not mandatory. We have fewer than 500 employees here at our central office complex and we probably get 300-400 attendees every year, so I'd say about three-quarters of our employees attend.

**Anna Giragosian**

Do you have any statistics that show whether motorists actually change their driving patterns based on Work Zone Awareness Week?

**David Rush**

I don't have any statistics. If you look nationally, when we first started the program back in the late 1990s we were having 1,100 fatalities in work zones per year. That's been cut in half; I think 570 fatalities was the last number I saw. We have years where we have a big decrease in crashes and we have years where we have an increase. A lot of factors play into that. I do believe that if we don't do this campaign then we won't see the numbers lowering on their own. It's a process of trying to change the driving behavior and habits of motorists when they drive through work zones.

**Tracy Scriba**

In the article from Public Roads from a few years ago that's in the download pod, we asked the question of what's been the impact of 10 years of NWZAW events. There hasn't been a study to directly tie the impacts to NWZAW, but there's a section in the article that provides some comments on that topic for those who might be interested.

**Anna Giragosian**

Thank you. Those are the only questions for David that I see typed in now. If you think of any additional questions for David, please continue to type them in and we'll go back to them at the end. Our next presenter is Kelli Reyna of the Texas DOT (TxDOT).

**Kelli Reyna**

Thank you all for logging on and joining today. I work at TxDOT. I do all of our communication and public outreach. I'm going to focus on some of the public outreach activities and engagement we have done and some ideas for you coming up on NWZAW. This is a brief overview of what we'll discuss. We are going to talk about partnerships for a successful event, outreach activities, strategies for promoting public awareness, additional outreach opportunities to use year-round, and the success and growth of the program.

We have valuable partnerships with transportation industry professionals, elected officials, and contractors here in Texas. I've listed a few of them on this slide. These individuals regularly help us with our outreach efforts to ensure we continuously reach a large audience. The main goal is to raise awareness about the importance work zone safety, so we really are honored to have these

individuals that we can call on at any given time to help us promote work zone safety and awareness.

Here at TxDOT, just like at any other DOT, we vow to do everything we can to protect our workers and motorists. Unfortunately, sometimes this message doesn't always get through to the public. We often get asked why outreach is needed. The answer is simple: our goal is to help folks understand the problem and let them know that they are part of the solution. This should by default help reduce the number of crashes and fatalities in work zones. By striving to make work zone safety personal, as you can see in these photos, we were able to start to create behavioral change in the motoring public.

Whenever we talk about outreach activities, we need to think about the location. Having your event in a public location is really key to reaching your target audience – the public. These include places like the State Capital, travel information centers, rest areas, departments of public safety, or basically anywhere that the public visits on a frequent basis. Also, changing it up from the traditional press conference helps to generate interest. For example, you could have a statewide tour with a memorial wall. We did that one year and it was a great success. You could host work zone simulations to show motorists what it's like in work zones or educational fairs to teach the public about work zone safety.

It is always good to have a well-known individual participate in your work zone outreach efforts. This helps ensure that you get coverage of your event and that the message will actually get out to the public. These well-known individuals can be State senators or representatives, local elected officials, group association members like ATSSA or AASHTO, law enforcement, local celebrities, or whomever in your state who will partner with you to help promote this important message. We've had several events where we had State lawmakers wear their orange vests out onto the legislative floor during session to help bring awareness to their colleagues.

As hard as it may be hear the tragic stories that work zone victims and survivors tell, this is a key component to an effective outreach campaign because it introduces the human factor. While everyone on this call may understand the importance of paying attention and driving safely through work zones, others may not. By these victims sharing stories about their "I never thought this could happen to me" moment, it helps them connect to people in a personal way. People take the message seriously and want to do whatever they can to make sure that their loved one or someone else's isn't in the same situation.

Lastly, you need to have good visuals and the support of your transportation partners. Again, this helps generate media interest. Anytime you can put the aforementioned combination of a public location, a well-known individual, and a victim together, paired with a good backdrop and B-roll opportunity for the media, you're sure to get coverage. It's important to get media coverage because they help bring the message to the public. Here are a few ideas that we have done in the past and I know that other states have used to help drive the message home.

Let's talk about strategies. As we heard from David, it is important to focus on both internal and external outreach. I'll start with external. If your objective is to reach the public, you have to have events and outreach opportunities that allow you to accomplish that goal. Some of the



different ways that we reach our external audiences is through the creation of work zone awareness handouts and posters, like the one you see here. We supply these to the media, schools, other transportation providers, contractors, and police departments to put up on their walls, and this helps to have that immediate effect where people can see the message. We also put out media advisories, news releases, work zone awareness messages on dynamic or portable message signs, and we encourage opinion editorials from TxDOT officials or transportation partners into local newspapers. The creation of multiple work zone safety videos and public service announcements – this is one we did two years ago asking employees what they want motorists to do when they're driving through work zones. It's a really short, 30-second cute video that helps drive the message home. We also look into feature stories and newsletters, presentations to organizations or industry partners, and social media updates and outreach via YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. Make sure you have a media B-roll opportunity, whether it's in an active work zone or somewhere else, so the media has something that entices them to come out and cover your event.

For internal outreach, whenever NWZAW comes we've re-done the banner of the TxDOT website to make sure that anyone who visits sees a work zone safety message first and foremost. We also have a feature page on our website that provides more information and statistics on work zone safety. For employees, we want to make sure we focus on video messages from the Executive Director, short video series, which we call the "on the dot" series, feature stories in the TxDOT transportation newsletter or some of our other division-wide newsletters. It's also really important to have work zone safety taglines on all employee emails so the message will be branded on any email that gets sent out. Poster displays within the department are also helpful. This is one we created a few years ago emphasizing that it doesn't matter if you're a motorist or worker – we're all in this together and need to make sure we're all thinking safety.

As for additional outreach opportunities, we've done a few things at TxDOT that I'm really proud of because we're continuing to promote work zone safety awareness year-round. The best way to bring about behavioral change is to continue to share the message on a regular basis. One example of this is with our "Safety Mission: Zero" initiative to enhance our safety program at TxDOT. It's to increase awareness and protect our employees. This program was launched in 2011, and the objective of the initiative is to have safety become a culture at TxDOT, not just another program that we implement. The mission is to achieve zero fatalities, injuries, lost time incidents, and preventable incidents. It's a huge goal to have and a huge task on our shoulders. Again, the message is to let people know that every life is important, everyone is sacred, and even one incident is one incident too many.

Another example of our continued outreach is with the I-35 driver education in work zones campaign. Here on the left you can see a picture of our Deputy Executive Director, John Barton, talking during this event. Right now, TxDOT is in the midst of one of the largest construction projects in the Department's history. We are expanding more than 100 miles of I-35 in central Texas. Unfortunately, we've also see a spike in the number of fatal accidents along this corridor. As you can imagine, with one hundred miles of a work zone non-stop, there are bound to be some incidents. In an effort to help reduce this raising number, we wanted to have an event to partner with DPS and AAA to enhance driver education and law enforcement. Our goal is to protect lives and make sure that people know what to do when they encounter a work zone, how

to drive safely through that work zone, and how to be mindful not only of the individuals working on the other side, but other motorists. We created banners for our TxDOT website. We had billboards on I-35 prior to the work zone and through the work zone so that people could remember to be safe, drive smart, and pay attention. This campaign rolled out in November, right before the busy holiday travel season.

It's hard to imagine work zone safety years ago. These pictures prove that we have come a long way from where we were. We've learned a few things along the way. At TxDOT, we've seen some really encouraging numbers as far as the decline in work zone fatalities, so we feel like we're making positive growth in the public arena. We know we still have some work to do, but we're encouraged by this progress. One of the questions asked earlier was whether we have any statistics – the best thing we have right now is working off of our actual numbers. At our highest point, we had a little over 20,000 crashes in one year and up to 175 fatalities. Recently, we've seen that as low as 12,000 crashes and 100 fatalities. We really are making a difference. Especially with the increased number of work zones we have out there, we think these campaigns are paying off.

A lesson learned is to think outside the box. Don't be afraid to try something new. Some new ideas can be scary, but some may not be. My advice is to stick with an outreach program because it works, not because it's easy or comfortable. Always look for ways to make it personal for the public, and do what works best for you and your state to accomplish your outreach goals. At the end of the day, implementing a multi-faceted outreach campaign to promote safety every day in work zones has allowed TxDOT to reach new heights in capturing the attention of those we serve. All of these outreach activities were done to protect our workers and to educate the motorists about the need to slow down, pay attention, and drive safely. Our number one goal is to make sure that everyone – pedestrian, motorist, or employee – makes it home safely each day.

### **Anna Giragosian**

Thank you, Kelli. We'll now take questions for you. Could you review the list of items you've had on display at events?

### **Kelli Reyna**

We've had memorial sleeves or hard hats. As you can see in the picture on the right, we actually have employees and contractors place black memorial sleeves over the cones, each one signifying a life that was lost that year in a work zone. We also display crashed vehicles or equipment. On the left you can see part of one of our recent campaigns, called "life on the other side of the cone," which shows people what happens when they don't pay attention. We show them the equipment after it gets damaged, saying "this is all we have that protects me from you." The hard hats shown here represent another idea to memorialize those individuals whose lives were lost.

### **Anna Giragosian**

Does anyone have info on what groups (ages, etc.) are most likely to be involved in work zone collisions?

**Kelli Reyna**

We do have some of those numbers. For Texas, about 67% of the crashes were male and middle-aged. I can find those exact numbers and share them with you if you're interested.

**Anna Giragosian**

Are most of your efforts done by the central/headquarters office? How do you engage the Districts in your efforts?

**Kelli Reyna**

That's a great question. We always have one statewide event and 25 local events. Here in Texas we have 25 local Districts. The events can be as small as a media opportunity or as large as a full-blown work zone fair or news conference. Last year, we had 25 new conferences hosted and 25 media b-roll opportunities where we took the message out to the Districts. A lot of employees can actually choose what they want to do. We provide a list of ideas for them and they do what they want. Some of our Districts have work zone safety campaigns. Each of the maintenance sections competes against each for who can come up with the most creative work zone idea. It's an internal competition, but it's a fun way to put out the theme for the year, such as "don't barrel through work zones." We promote all of these efforts, from statewide to local, through our social media channels. We share the videos from local events. We try to make sure that the local Districts are involved and they are helping us spread the message from the grassroots.

**Anna Giragosian**

Thank you. I don't see any other questions in the chat box. If you think of any other questions for Kelli, please type them in. Our next presenter is Julie Stotlemeyer of the Missouri Department of Transportation.

**Julie Stotlemeyer**

Hi, everyone. I am from the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT). Today we were asked to present to you some ideas what we included in our application when we were awarded the honor of hosting the National Work Zone Awareness event last year in Missouri. We're going to go through some of our ideas and lessons learned from the application process and hosting the event.

We held the National Work Zone Awareness kick-off in Chesterfield, Missouri, which is a suburb of St. Louis. What was different with this project selection and what we think was part of the reason we were selected to host the event was that it happened to be one of the largest ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) projects awarded that year. We tried to tie our project selection of where we would host the event into other national awareness events, so Route 141 proved to be a great location for that. Several others spoke about being able to display the national work zone memorial wall – we had that as well. We also had national speakers. We were awarded the event based on the application that we submitted. We continued the theme of "don't barrel through work zones" for 2012 in our education efforts last year. We kicked off with NWZAW, but continued the message through Labor Day, which covers our construction season.

Some of the reasons we think that we were selected are that we included measurable results to show our efforts in Missouri in the past compared to where we were to-date. We think we

selected a great project not only for the state but also for a national presence. We highlighted some of the education and outreach efforts we currently do, as well as innovations, not only in technology, but also in communication strategies. We tried to focus on creating partnerships that you heard about in the earlier presentations. We had previously done a lot of work internal to the DOT, but this year we tried to stretch those partnerships and get more people involved. We also track our crashes and fatalities in work zones. We included this in the application to show that while we did have a spike, we were continuing to do great things to reduce the number of work zone fatalities in Missouri and to show that we had a way to track our progress. We had performance measures to show our results and successes.

The project on Route 141 that we spoke about earlier was Missouri's largest ARRA-funded project. It was done to enhance traffic flow and reduce congestion, so we touted those benefits as well as the economic impacts. The project also had several innovations that we thought were great to highlight not only during the national event for work zone awareness, but also on a national stage. We had two-lift paving and a new innovation called "smog-eating concrete."

Someone asked earlier what age group is involved in work zone crashes, and in Missouri it's males from the ages of 25 to 54. To effectively get work zone safety messages out to them, we tried to use ads in strategic places that would target that audience. One of those was the back of trucks on the interstates. We also went to gas stations and had a small segment on NWZAW and work zone safety in the videos on the gas pump toppers. We targeted internet and radio stations popular to that age group to get the message to them specifically. We also have a mascot, Barrel Bob. We continued our Barrel Bob theme and targeted it towards that age group and to males.

Here's a picture of Barrel Bob. He is wildly popular across our state. He's the "face" of work zone safety in Missouri. He now has his own Facebook page, which is a way we reach out to anyone interested in work zone safety. His Facebook is active all year and he has about 5,300 followers. We do a lot of new things through the Facebook page. Barrel Bob has won a few national awards. In 2012, he won the Work Zone Safety Awareness Award competition in the outreach program/state category contest, sponsored by ARTBA. He also won second place in the National Association of Governments Communicators Facebook award. We also had a Baby Bob and Barrel Betty, but we've scaled back to say our one mascot is Barrel Bob. A lesson learned for us was that while people got excited over creating a new work zone mascot, we came to realize we needed to focus on one face and brand that effort.

On our website, in addition to our traveler information map that gives road conditions for the state, we now populate that map with work zone information. Seven days in advance of any planned work zone, we try to communicate that out through the traveler information map so motorists can keep up with work zone activity and plan for trips. If any lanes are closed in a work zone, we update the map with that information to let motorists know the progress. We have a MoDOT mobile site that can be used on any smartphone where you can view work zones and see their impacts to the system before you leave.

On the right side of the website, you'll see a diamond sign that says "rate our work zone." We previously had a survey we tried to use for motorists to give us their input, but we pushed that

out to our website to make it an easy place for them to go to provide us input. It's in a prominent place on our website.

Other outreach and education include some lower cost, easier things to do such as posters, flyers, banners and placemats. We go to the local fast food restaurants and ask them to put the placements on their trays. The Districts also host their own memorial events in addition to the statewide. We partner with labor unions; at our rest areas, they distribute our "rate our work zones" surveys or any posters or flyers about work zone safety. They may talk about work zones along the way that somebody may encounter on their trip. We also use changeable message boards and have "close call" videos on YouTube of MoDOT employees and contractors talking about their experiences, as well as family members who have lost loved ones.

Here are some messages we use on our dynamic message signs. We run safety messages about NWZAW when we're not displaying travel time, incident messages, or work zone information. These messages run and rotate throughout the State. We run them the entire week, and those are pretty much the only message you see unless there's another incident or event.

This is the "rate our work zone" survey that I spoke about earlier. For a few years prior, we had been trying to get the public to give us input on how they felt they traveled through a work zone. Did they get through in a timely manner? Did they feel safe? Did they think the signs were helpful? It's just about five quick questions. This year, we wanted to ramp up getting the surveys back, so we really promoted our survey during NWZAW. We got zip codes around certain projects and did mass mailings. We also partnered with an outside agency to provide gas cards so if someone submitted a survey during NWZAW, their name was entered into a contest to win a gas card. That week, we generated more surveys than we ever had in the past. For 2012, we had over 1,700 surveys submitted. We've had good results, with 87% of our work zones meeting customer expectations. That was one thing that we used the national event to promote and help kick off.

We continue to use other tools we have around the state to focus on work zone management efforts. In our planning, we try to take a proactive approach on congestion and use predictive modeling to try to estimate how the work zones going to react. We look at new technologies wherever we can to reduce travel times and queues, as well as portable cameras. We're focusing to improve our traffic management plans to promote better operation and safety in work zones, and we're carrying that out to contractors to have a more active part in the operation of work zones.

In Missouri, we have an expectation that we pass out to our contractors and maintenance workers that we don't want any delay occurring without adequate warning. At no time should someone encounter a backup without first passing by a notice that there's a work zone ahead. We've really pushed that we want to backups without advanced warning, whether they have to put up a message board or static sign. We find a lot of crashes happen when we have stopped traffic, so we're really focused on that.

We've also asked out TMCs so take a more active role in the monitoring of work zones using the cameras and travel times they have at their fingertips. When they see something, they will alert

the public through dynamic message signs. They'll also make a phone call to a project manager or resident engineer to let them know the impacts the work zone is having so they can start making adjustments to help reduce crashes.

This is one of the innovations we featured in our application – sequential lights. This is a set of lights that you set up in the merge along the taper of a work zone. You can see them going from the beginning of the merge to the end of the merge. We've found that it creates an earlier merge, especially at nighttime and with commercial motor vehicles. During NWZAW, we had selected 10-12 projects around the state where we featured this innovation and we got great reviews. People really liked this feature. Now we've recommended that this innovation be used on nighttime interstate projects.

We also use a lot of law enforcement in our work zones. Every year, we meet with our law enforcement partners and talk about how we have their contract set up. We let them know what kinds of work zones are coming up for the year and how many hours we expect them to be working. It's a precursor to the construction season. What's great about having highway patrol on projects is that they can manage speeds and queuing and can catch other violations.

Some of our lessons learned are similar to what you've heard. Start early. Think about what other partners you can include that can help you get the message out. The more people you have involved, the more you can spread the news and the more likely it is that it will be a successful campaign. What might be difficult for a DOT to do, like buy gas cards, might be easy for a private company to buy and supply.

We also think it is important to schedule regular meetings as a team and come together with milestones to keep everyone focused. People have a tendency to forget about this event when they go back to their everyday lives, so meeting regularly keeps progress moving forward. Identify the resources that different groups can provide. This goes with the thinking outside the box concept. What may be hard for you may be easy for someone else, so don't scratch anything off the table. Sometimes what starts off seeming difficult can become easy or fun when you engage with your partners. It may have a greater benefit than it would if you did it by yourself.

At some of our earlier events, we only had one speaker and one person in the crowd. Last year was one of our largest events, attended by the media, everyday public, and speakers. We hope to be able to continue that this year by having hosted the event last year. Our speakers last year included Victor Mendez, a lot of Congressional leaders, City and County partners, highway patrol, and family members of fallen MoDOT workers. It was one of the first times our contractors were interested and wanted to stand up and support the message, too. We were really excited that they wanted to be one of our speakers.

This is our fallen worker display, with the hard hats and vests. Here is my contact information and Dan's. We are happy to share any additional information. We appreciate being selected for the national event. While at first it seemed like an arduous task, by the time it was over and with the assistance of partners, it turned into a great event. I encourage anyone who's interested to apply. It's a great challenge, but a great opportunity, too.

### **Tracy Scriba**

A few years ago, California requested the opportunity to host the national event. We'd been hosting the event in the DC area every year, but this led to the realization that there are a lot of good ideas out there, as we've heard about today. We realized it made sense to have other states to host the national event. There was a decision by the executive committee that organizes the national event to have an application and have the event hosted outside the National Capitol area every other year. Missouri was the first to be selected through the application process, and a number of applicants applied for that. The application period is open now for hosting next year's event. I'll put a link in the chat box for anyone who would like to look at that. Applications are due February 15. The winner will be announced at this year's event.

### **Anna Giragosian**

Thank you, Julie and Tracy. We have a question for all of the speakers. Do you have a specific budget to help fund your efforts?

### **Julie Stotlemeyer**

We do. Our division specifically budgets about \$100,000 each year for the event, but our maintenance division and community relations division puts in some funds, so we pool them together to help provide printing, distribution, truck ads, or any of those kinds of things.

### **Kelli Reyna**

In Texas, we do not have a dedicated budget outside of my or others' payroll. There are certain things, like the billboards, that we find funds for, but all the creative, all the printing, all the PSA development are done in-house with our existing team. This is also where we rely heavily on our contractors and industry partners. If we need new cones or things like that, they let us use a lot of their equipment, but we don't have a budget for it.

### **David Rush**

In Virginia, we don't have a specific budget for it either. We do have recognition funds that Districts use a lot for their safety events and I have a small amount of funding for Work Zone Safety Day. A lot of it is volunteerism. We do most of our public awareness and videos in-house with staff.

### **Tracy Scriba**

All of our speakers mentioned working with other partners to help in various ways, whether through in-kind efforts, providing materials, as well as possibly funding certain things. That's one way a number of these activities are supported.

I also wanted to mention that the national poster shown on the slide is available for download. The posters are also printed each year, and AASHTO has sent out an email to the States so that they can request posters. That's the way a State DOT should submit an order for posters. For others, you'll be able to order posters through the National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse, as in the past. There will be a note on the Clearinghouse website to make printed posters available for those who would like them.

**Anna Giragosian**

At this time, I do not see any more questions. If you have any final questions, please continue to type them into the chat box. I want to thank all of our speakers and everyone in attendance. On your screen, you will see the dates and theme for this year's NWZAW. The theme is "We're All in this Together." You'll also see information on where you can to learn more. As a reminder, the "A Decade of Safety Success" article and the flyer you see on the screen are both available for download from the file download box in the lower right hand corner of your screen, along with all of the presentations. The recording and presentations from today's webinar will be posted online on the FHWA Work Zone Safety and Mobility website in the next few weeks, and we will send out an email to all of those who registered once those are available.

With that, we'll go ahead and close out. Thank you, and have a good day.