



**HIGH VISIBILITY EDUCATION AND
ENFORCEMENT (HVEE) PILOT PROJECT:
A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO TRAFFIC SAFETY**

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Seeking to impact the growing number of traffic deaths, a strategic planning group made up of representatives of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP); the Governor's Highway Safety Association (GHSA); the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), U.S. Department of Transportation joined forces to conceive and execute pilot programs to help reduce traffic deaths through targeted High Visibility Education and Enforcement (HVEE) initiatives. Four states—Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, and Wisconsin—participated in the IACP-led effort with programs addressing specific local safety concerns between October 2015 and February 2016. The HVEE concept offers an evidence-based, data-driven problem solving approach, combining proactive public education campaigns to raise awareness of the identified safety issue, followed by targeted enforcement involving multiple law enforcement agencies. One of the hallmarks of the program is the collaboration of stakeholders from multiple disciplines, including representatives of transportation, state highway safety association, as well as state, county, and municipal law enforcement.

The planning stage began with a review of NHTSA Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) data by IACP staff to identify specific locations and determine focus topics for each location. Once target locations were identified, IACP invited a cross section of representatives to participate in a strategy session. Each State delegation included representatives from the State Association of Chiefs of Police, local law enforcement leaders from the selected area, state law enforcement and a representative from the Governor's Highway Safety Office. "Having representatives from each of the groups was invaluable during the brainstorming process," said Christopher Domagalski, Chief of the Sheboygan (WI) Police Department.

Two unique aspects of the planning effort were the intense focus on education as part of the campaign and the ongoing emphasis on officer safety as a key component. To the extent possible, each state scheduled its HVEE campaign for dates when there could be high instances of unsafe behavior. Delaware, whose campaign focused on pedestrian safety along a state highway, launched their campaign in December, when increased vehicle and pedestrian traffic, combined with early darkness, created an increased danger. North Carolina targeted speed enforcement during the high travel Thanksgiving weekend. Maryland and Wisconsin scheduled their impaired driving campaigns to coincide with the Super Bowl and Green Bay Packers games, respectively.

IACP staff visited each of the campaigns, collecting promising practices and lessons learned, observing officer safety practices during the course of traffic enforcement,

noting the means employed to engage the community and other stakeholders. A summary of each state's HVEE program appears below. A companion to this report, the IACP Traffic Officer Safety Toolkit, is available through the link at the project web page: www.theiacp.org/HVEE.



Delaware State Police Colonel Nathaniel McQueen, Jr., at the press event to launch the HVEE campaign.

¹ NHTSA Press Release 47-15 Traffic Safety Facts Research Note, August, 2016 <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812318> DOT HS 812 318 Accessed 4/28/16

² Nydatabases.com. Based on 2010 Census. <http://rochester.nydatabases.com/database/population-us-cities> Accessed 4/28/16

DELAWARE

A report by the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) indicated that Delaware and Florida had the highest pedestrian fatality per capita in the United States³, accounting for approximately 25% of all crash-related fatalities in the state; more than three quarters of these fatalities occurred between the hours of 6:00 PM and 6:00 AM.⁴ On November 12, a media event was held at Christiana Hospital, featuring speakers from the Delaware Office of Highway Safety (DOHS), Delaware State Police (DSP), Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT), and Christiana Care Emergency Services division. Highlighting the approach of the holidays and the short daylight hours, the event served as the kickoff of the HVEE campaign with the theme, “It’s the most dangerous time of the year.”

During the two-week education portion of the campaign, Delaware State Police distributed posters, post cards, and reflective flashlights at schools, community centers, and other locations. Pedestrian safety messages were disseminated via social media, and posters were placed in libraries, schools, and other public locations. The safety initiative focused on a three-mile stretch of U.S. Route 13/40 south of Wilmington, where the highest concentration of fatalities occurred.

Following the education component, a week-long enforcement effort was launched by DSP utilizing shift resources and four-hour overtime shifts funded through the Delaware Office of Highway Safety. Officer safety considerations included two-trooper patrols (where possible), mandatory use of reflective safety vests, and instructions to make every effort to conduct pedestrian enforcement encounters off the roadways in parking lots or other safe areas.

There were no recorded fatal pedestrian crashes in the enforcement location during the months of December through February.

Pedestrian fatalities have been the focus of state authorities in this area for some time. Many contributing factors have been identified and DelDOT, DOHS, and DSP continue to collaborate to address the issue. Other jurisdictions in the region are also employing the HVEE concept to address safety issues. The South Bethany Police Department is working to reduce bicyclist injuries by encouraging use of established bicycle paths and wearing helmets and other safety gear. Dover police have also incorporated an education component into their pedestrian safety efforts, and have used an environmental design approach to encourage the use of controlled crosswalks by planting shrubbery in the median near the venues of NASCAR and other large public events. And the Dover Division of Alcohol Enforcement is working with DOHS to launch a pedestrian safety education program in bars and taverns.

³ Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State, GHSA http://www.ghsa.org/html/files/pubs/spotlights/spotlight_ped2014.pdf Accessed 5/2/2016

⁴ <http://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov> Accessed May 2, 2016

MARYLAND

Maryland's impaired driving HVEE initiative was branded "Operation 40 on 40," assigning 40 officers from multiple agencies to an enhanced enforcement detail along a 70-mile section of U.S. 40, from Baltimore north to just below the Delaware state line. The effort, executed on three consecutive weekend nights culminating on February 7, Super Bowl Sunday. Through a partnership with Washington College, Maryland State Police (MSP) used GIS mapping to identify locations with high instances of impaired driving arrests.⁵



Law enforcement officers representing 11 Maryland agencies gather at the kickoff of the "40 on 40" campaign.

All participating agencies attended a briefing on January 21, where strategies for uniform reporting and data collection were discussed, and each agency received statistic sheets for the officers to complete. There was a presentation on officer safety, with an emphasis on seat belt use and the donning of high-visibility reflective vests during enforcement activities. In total, about 100 officers representing 11 agencies would participate in the enforcement component.

A campaign theme tied to football was developed. The tagline, "What's Your Game Plan? Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" appeared on billboards and flyers, and a social media campaign was launched with the hashtag #40on40. Portable message boards were located in strategic locations along a 70-mile section of U.S. 40.

On Friday night, February 5, a kickoff event was held at the MSP Golden Ring barrack in Essex. Patrol vehicles of the eleven participating agencies formed the backdrop for the press conference. Local television stations ran stories on their late newscasts, and messages were disseminated through social media. There was a DUI checkpoint hosted by a different agency on each of the three nights of the campaign, along with increased patrols all along the U.S. 40 corridor.

Overall, during the Super Bowl weekend campaign participating officers issued 641 citations, 604 warnings, and 204 safety equipment repair orders. There were 64 impaired driving and 20 criminal arrests. It was estimated that 670,000 motorists were exposed to impaired driving message boards, and another 900,000 impressions from the four billboards. Maryland "Toward Zero Deaths" help disseminate messages via social media, reaching 12,000 followers and 45,000 views. MHSO officials reported that the local cab company reported a 50% increase over average business on the first Friday of the month.

⁵ Washington College GIS Program. (2016) US 40 Segment Analysis: Alcohol-Related Crashes 2011 - 2014. Additional information on Washington College GIS website: <http://www.washcoll.edu/centers/ces/gis/40-on-40-super-bowl-initiative/>

NORTH CAROLINA

Speeding is a major concern in North Carolina. Capitalizing on the existing structure of the Interstate Challenge initiative, the HVEE effort included 84 state, municipal, and sheriffs' agencies across 30 counties with an interstate or major highway situated within their jurisdictions. During the October meeting at IACP, the participants decided to focus their efforts on the heavily traveled Thanksgiving weekend. In addition to the HVEE initiative, a previously scheduled Click It or Ticket campaign would begin a day earlier, so both enforcement programs ran simultaneously.

The combined campaigns were launched at press events in Ashville and Hillsborough, and local newspapers, television, radio, and social media were all utilized to get the word out. The "Move Over" message was included in the media materials to reinforce driver awareness of officer safety. The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) supported the campaign through their weekly YouTube-cast and by providing portable message boards throughout the state.

Following the Thanksgiving weekend enforcement, the North Carolina State Highway patrol announced traffic deaths in the state were one-third lower than the previous year, dropping from 21 to 14, and there were zero fatalities on the covered roadways. In all, 3,851 speeding, 39 DWI, 32 seat belt, and 423 child seat violation citations were issued. Additional violations, including 35 wanted persons and 6 felony arrests, resulted in 5,170 total charges filed.



North Carolina State Highway Patrol trooper A.F. Ahlmark prepares a speeding citation.

WISCONSIN

The Wisconsin campaign focused on impaired driving in Manitowoc and Sheboygan counties, both part of the busy corridor between Milwaukee and Green Bay. Each year, thousands of football fans travel this route to see their favorite team play. Those that don't attend the games often enjoy the action in one of many local taverns. As part of the planning process, the group considered the decision drivers make to operate while under the influence despite the overwhelming public education campaign already in place and decided to take education to the next level by personalizing it. Prior to enforcement efforts, officers visited local establishments and made personal contact with owners, bartenders and patrons, discussing impaired driving and consequences. To add emphasis to the education effort, officers provided coasters printed with a "Drive Sober" message and a QR code to download the state's "Drive Sober" smartphone app. The Drive Sober app includes a blood alcohol calculator and location based functionality that will hail a cab or rideshare service based on the user's GPS coordinates.

A key component of the HVEE campaign included a strong emphasis on officer safety. With support from IACP's Center for Officer Safety and Wellness, each HVEE deployment included officer training and reinforcement of traffic stop tactics and safety, specific to both the stopped vehicle and the dangers of working in close proximity to passing traffic. Officers were encouraged to wear high visibility clothing during the HVEE campaign. When some officers were reluctant to wear high visibility clothing, the Sheboygan Police Department produced a training video showing the difference in visibility to passing traffic for officers wearing the safety gear and those who were not.

In examining the success of the deployments the group determined that the number of arrests or citations would not be the overarching metric relied upon. Instead, a high number deployment traffic stops, coupled with a low number of impaired driving arrests was determined to indicate a successful campaign. In addition, officers collected data on the number of tavern visits and educational encounters conducted. The Drive Sober App offered a unique perspective on the effectiveness of the education component of the campaign with a 20% increase in downloads corresponding to tavern visits by officers. Anecdotally, Sheboygan officers noted an approximate 50% decline in vehicles parked in their entertainment district during the enforcement effort, without a corresponding reduction in patrons, another indication that the education effort had a positive impact.



This specially designed vehicle was parked outside the Manitowoc Police headquarters during the Wisconsin HVEE campaign.



Officers in Wisconsin visited local taverns to talk to bartenders and patrons about the scheduled enforcement effort. They distributed materials promoting the Drive Sober app.

LESSONS LEARNED

In March, 2016 the representatives of the agencies who participated in the October meeting were invited back to IACP headquarters to discuss their experiences with the HVEE concept. There were several points that emerged from the meeting that the group felt were important steps to developing a successful campaign.

START WITH DATA.

Whether it is compiled by a crime analyst in your agency, an institution of higher education, your state office of highway safety, or resources available on NHTSA's website, data is the foundation of a successful HVEE campaign. NHTSA FARS data was used to identify the most prevalent traffic safety issue in each of the four pilot states. The states then utilized their own data to plot crashes and fatalities to identify a particular area of focus for their HVEE campaigns.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO START SMALL.

In Delaware, the area of focus was a single, three-mile stretch that was particularly troublesome. Focusing the HVEE initiative there allowed the partners to have an immediate impact in the community and demonstrate success that can be expanded upon.

IDENTIFY PARTNERS.

Traffic safety is not just the responsibility of law enforcement; it is a collaborative effort. In addition to combining state, county, and local law enforcement, identify partners and stakeholders (both traditional and non-traditional) that can help your HVEE campaign be successful. Engage community members and local businesses. Use community policing principles to build trust and legitimacy for your campaign, gain support, and potentially generate new ideas. Involving the local residents in your traffic safety efforts empowers them to do their part in contributing to the success of the campaign.

IDENTIFY "THOUGHT LEADERS."

Each partner should identify a champion who is passionate about traffic safety, will be the cheerleader within the agency, and will ensure the success of the campaign. This "thought leader" should be someone who is respected and has the support of agency leadership.

COMMUNICATE.

With multiple agencies involved, communication is important to keep everyone on the same page. Especially at the beginning, when relationships and working together may be new, communication between agencies can help identify mutual goals and objectives, aid in the planning and logistics throughout the campaign, and ensure that there is a unified message. As the campaign progresses, communication keeps everyone accountable to the group and the overarching goals and helps prevent breakdowns. Communicate within your agency, as well. Ensuring that those who are participating understand the goals and objectives of the campaign, understand the importance of education, and understand the importance of officer safety can go a long way towards the success of the campaign.

EDUCATION ENHANCES ENFORCEMENT.

Communicate with the public. By focusing on education and the importance of safe practices, you can help reduce the need for enforcement, building trust and understanding with the community.

KEEP THE MESSAGE FRESH.

Your message will have greater impact – both within your agency and in the community - if continuously update what you post, how the message is disseminated, and when it is posted. Many agencies have reported great success with “tweet-alongs,” with officer reports from the field, or updates of statistics throughout the event.

UTILIZE TRADITIONAL AS WELL AS SOCIAL MEDIA.

The local news media can help bring awareness to the safety issue, frame the attention in a positive manner, and build relationships that can be beneficial in other situations. Social media can also be used to educate the public about why you are doing your campaign, share safety tips, and explain your enforcement efforts to the public. Your agency’s social media channels can be used to highlight the positive impacts your HVEE campaign has in the community.

The **IACP Center for Social Media** has numerous resources about **using** social media and **examples** of agencies that **have** conducted **tweet-alongs** and shared **real-time traffic** enforcement campaigns and the **successes** they experienced.

ASSESS YOUR CAMPAIGN.

Success does not have to be quantified as a reduction in crashes/fatalities. While this is certainly a goal of an HVEE initiative, success can also be defined as increased trust and legitimacy in the community, the formation of new partnerships or strengthening of ongoing partnerships, and positive media attention. Continued assessment can help determine where and when to allocate resources.

For more information on the HVEE campaigns, visit: www.theIACP.org/trafficsafety



NHTSA

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION