

Pinellas Community Traffic Safety Team Meeting
July 6, 2006
Minutes

Chair David Fechter called the general meeting to order and welcomed members present. Introductions were made. The minutes from the previous meeting were approved as distributed.

Subcommittee Reports:

Enforcement –Ron McKenzie reported that the Sheriff's Office June activities included a Starkey Rd detail, on June 15 with 25 citations, 7 were DWLSR, 18 warnings, 12 FIRS, 2 poss marijuana and 3 arrests. On June 23 & 24 countywide wolfpacks were held with 11 DUI, 5 warrant arrests/felony poss cocaine, 1 reckless driving, 2 NVDL, 6 DWLSR, 86 citations, 12 warnings, and 18 arrests. Safety Harbor wolfpack was conducted on June 29 with 85 speeding, 6 warnings, 13 non moving, 8 moving, 4 seatbelt, 2 DWLSR, 1 child restraint, 113 citations, 1 poss marijuana and 3 arrests. The total for June was 224 citations and 24 arrests. Also reported was Pinellas Park had 5 DUI details, but stats are not in yet. The CMV scheduled checkpoint was cancelled, but hope that it will be rescheduled at a later date. City of St. Petersburg has been conducting pedestrian enforcement 2 times a week. The Largo PD is hosting a Train the Trainer for School Crossing Guards on August 3 & 4.

Engineering – Marc Hanger reported major MOT's were 2 overpasses on US 19HW currently under construction at Sunset Point Rd. and NE Coachman Rd are behind schedule. The December completion date has been rescheduled to August 2007. Due to safety concerns and the closeness to 137 St and Walsingham Rd. the median opening at Palm Dr. and Oak St. on Walsingham Rd which was thought it would remain closed after construction is completed will now be reopened according to FDOT. If problems do occur with it being open, then it will need to be closed. Pinellas traffic fatalities update for 2006 show 63 which is up from 49 for the same time period last year. NHTSA statistics show motorcycle deaths in Florida have increased 67% from year 2000 to 2004. Records also show motorcycle registrations increased 87% since the 2000 which is when the helmet law was repealed. The US 19 HW Task Force has had its first meeting to improve pedestrian safety. Currently, pedestrian inventories are being updated along the highway for the next meeting...DOT is doing a study along the 32 mile stretch and a draft is due to show problem areas. It will be presented to look for innovative solutions. The county BOCC recently adopted a roadside memorial ordinance. The "Orange Flag Program" which is about placing a barrel full of orange flags for pedestrians to use while crossing the road and placing the orange flag in a barrel when they have completed their crossing is being tried on Sand Key and Clearwater Beach. It is just getting started and an update as to its status will be given later.

Education –Bruce reported that Toyota Driving Event was a huge success. The feedback was very positive and it is hoped that the event will return next year. School is beginning so scheduling for the teen driver program is being worked out.

TIM – Terry Hensley was meeting with the Road Rangers at meeting time, so Jeanette reported that they are now discussing hurricane plans and extra training that might be needed in the event of a disaster for the rangers.

OLD BUSINESS - Dave reported that 6 CTST Team Members assisted with the Toyota event and the help was appreciated. The event was excellent.

NEW BUSINESS –Julia Stees presented the program called, “Looking Twice Save a Life”, which is a motorcycle safety program she, as a rider and other riders in the area, are working on. The group has developed a TIP card idea for FDOT geared towards the motorist encountering a bike on the road and are also discussing ads on Channel 44 before and after the channel’s regularly scheduled motorcycle program. Ms. Stees is a 22 year Pinellas resident and has ridden her bike for the last 3 years to work. The safety suggestions are based on her experience and the Motorcycle Safety Class taught by off duty Pinellas County Sheriff deputies sponsored by Allstate. Since accidents/fatalities involving motorcycles/vehicles are rising as well as bike sales, registrations, and gas prices, safety programs are important. The next TIP card suggestions will be refresher tips for motorcyclists. All agreed that this is a worthwhile activity and appreciated Ms. Stees work on this project. Bruce also offered the viewpoint that the responsibility lies with the rider. Many fatalities/accidents are due to alcohol and inexperienced riders. The state needs to do a better job in identifying the stats to help pinpoint the problems. Peter said that FDOT will print the TIP cards after a review by the CTST Enforcement Committee. He also noted that the state does not have a Best Practices In Motorcycle safety so they are interested in continued development of this project. There was good discussion among the members and suggestions such as requiring collection of class fees at the time of the bike sale as a way to ensure that the class would be taken.

Bruce discussed the “Road Side Memorial” proposal that included the sale of new personalized markers for the site of the crash. Slaes would cover the cost of the marker with any proceeds going to his foundation. Other states do have a variety of approaches regarding the memorials. FDOT would need for any changes to the current policy to go to Tallahassee for any modifications. County and city roads would have their own regulations and would need to be approached individually.

Jeanette showed the PSA on Pedestrian Safety Use Crosswalks which ran in May and June. Rene was unable to attend today’s meeting but sent information that said she is working on trying to get Eric (driver involved in the crash) out so that he can participate in “talks” to student groups. She feels this would be more beneficial to others than him spending that time incarcerated.

Elections for team officers was held and those elected will serve 1 year Elected by team vote were Chair—David Fechter, CoChair—Ron McKenzie, Secretary—Thea Johnson. Subcommittee Appointees were Education—Bruce Murakami, Chair and Kimberly Jowell, CoChair. Engineering—Marc Hanger. Enforcement—Ron McKenzie, Chair and Glen Luben, CoChair.

Open Forum -- Jeanette discussed the Nestor presentation and noted that the same presentation to Hillsborough and Pasco was very different with a different presenter. St. Petersburg's Public Safety Community Council is looking into home rule to proceed with camera enforcement. Many new technologies are coming.

Peter stated that FDOT wants information with the MPO as lead for its safety campaign as to what projects are needed to send to FHWA. Many problems are on county roads. Everyone agrees Tampa Rd and US 19 N and 54th Ave N/28th St, St. Pete are 2 main areas for safety campaigns tied to construction.

Announcements The State Coalition meeting is in Seminole on July 10, from 10 am – 2 pm.

Pat Siracuso is taking of Leave of Absence to run for a circuit judgeship as of July 21. His replacement at the State Attorney's office has had experience with traffic issues. Glen noted that Pat had worked very hard to get procedures in place for DUI checkpoints so that convictions were upheld. He had contributed greatly to their success.

The next meeting is scheduled for August 3rd. . Remember to encourage attendance.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Thea Johnson, CTST Secretary