

**Pinellas County Community Traffic Safety Team  
Meeting Minutes of June 5, 2003  
Committee Meetings 9:30 am; General Meeting 10:00 am  
Suncoast Safety Council  
1145 Court Street, Clearwater, FL 34616**

Chairman Pete Yauch and Co-Chair Ron McKenzie were not present. Dave Fechter called the meeting to order at 10:05 am in their absence. Introductions were made around the room. Minutes of the meeting from May 1, 2003 were accepted, noting that the Education Committee section heading was missing from the proper section.

Subcommittee Reports:

**Enforcement:** Jim Piper presented results of several enforcement waves. A 6-County marine enforcement and Click It or Ticket campaign statistics were presented to advise on the success of the operation conducted in the southeast part of the country from May 19-June 2.

<b>Click It or Ticket</b>	<b>Marine Enforcement</b>
5686 vehicles were stopped	2289 Speeding
551 Arrests made	480 boarded
6 Counties locally participated	460 officers
460 officers	120 marine citations
120 DUI	
167 "Other"	

Largo Police Department held a "Wolf Blitz" and a DUI checkpoint, but was unable to coordinate the effort countywide. The Wolf Blitz resulted in 21 tickets and 2 arrests. The DUI checkpoint resulted in 13 DUI's and 27 arrests.

A discussion was held to clarify how drivers are handled when stopped and found to have a suspended license. If the driver admits to knowledge that he/she was driving on a suspended license, officers can arrest the driver. If the driver denies knowledge of a suspension, a citation is written and warning given. Other officers commented that there are "many" drivers stopped with suspended licenses, most claim no knowledge.

On July 6, Lt. Waters will be coordinating a multi-agency enforcement action for Clearwater Beach. Traffic on both the water and land will be targeted.

A CTST coordinated; multi-jurisdictional DOT checkpoint resulted in 9-10 arrests. Officers commented, "It was a good month."

**Education Committee:** Kristy Patterson requested input from the Education Committee on what types of educational programs would be best to target. The Click It or Ticket advertising was considered so successfully promoted, that perhaps a similar method could be applied on other topics. Law enforcement has four annual enforcement waves. The advertising for Click It or Ticket was over a large portion of the southeast and not locally funded. Costs to run a similar campaign would likely be prohibitive.

"Walk a Child to School" was discussed as a possible repeat program, but considered as not high risk enough an issue to attract much attention. However, parents and schools like the program.

A mock DUI crash at a high school was discussed. An SRO not on the CTST had indicated the mock crash was "a lot of work". A lengthy discussion regarding the merits and the effectiveness of the program created a general consensus supporting crash programs at two local high schools. Municipal agencies work with the schools, select students and stage an entire crash scenario, complete with body bags, Bayflight, jaws of life, fake blood and other theatrical touches to make the entire situation appear real. It was suggested that students who "die" during the activity should not return to class so that the classmates feel the impact of the empty seat in every class. Suggested locations were Palm Harbor University High, St. Pete High and Gibbs High. It was suggested that the event be simulcast to other schools, videotaped or both for highest effectiveness. Channel 14 at Pinellas County Schools may be a source to assist.

Underage drinking problems were discussed, but not as an enforcement issue. Officers encouraged the use of police as a "safety net" for a ride home instead of riding home with friends who had been drinking. While teens refuse to turn in friends who drink and drive, kids who haven't been drinking but need a ride home should be encouraged to contact police without fear of retribution.

Funding for educational programs is not readily available. Diane suggested that insurance companies be solicited for donations to cover educational programs, billboards, etc. She will begin contacting insurance companies to see if funding could be acquired. Keith suggested that billboard space be donated as well.

A red light running campaign similar to the recent Click It or Ticket campaign was suggested. The scope of the campaign was large and not funded by local resources. Advertising was extensive, including much prime time coverage. BETA format videos could be provided to local media.

Kristy suggested the CTST draft a letter to those who ran the Click It or Ticket campaign and present it at an upcoming state meeting praising the success of the event.

Increasing the CTST media profile was discussed. Ideas were to have the local television station airing the "What's Right with Tampa Bay" segment do some coverage, along with more from the St. Pete Times or any other media avenue to get the message out.

**Engineering:** Marc Hanger reported that a "My Daddy Works Here" safety campaign for road worker safety is being organized. CTST was asked to contribute to the event, as in the past. No funding is available to donate to the organization coordinating the safety campaign.

Keith asked if the CTST members had seen the construction safety commercial shot recently at an I-4 interchange. The Team has not seen the clip. Hillsborough County is re-filming some aspects to their satisfaction.

TV Station WB 38 is adding 10:00 pm news to their programming in July.

"Hot spots":

Bay Pines--a residential area and mobile home park residents want unimpeded safe access to the Pinellas Trail and are willing to financially assist with options such as a bridge, tunnel or other feasible engineering option.

Tarpon Woods Blvd.--A homeowner's association has complained about speeding at a specific location. Current speed limit is 35mph. Police reported that they were there recently on 6/4/03 investigating, watching traffic flow, and clocking speed on vehicles. Counts indicate that 60% of cars are exceeding the 35mph limit by only a couple of miles per hour. CTST members asked if this 60% was considered excessive. Officers indicated at such a low speed, 60% is not considered excessive and is not really a ticketable offense. County public works has Woody looking into the situation to take "calming actions".

US19-- The MPO has brochures for Way Finding Signs ready for distribution. CTST members were asked for ideas on how best to get the information to the public: utility bills, public libraries, AAA locations were suggested. The MPO is waiting for a letter from Commissioner Karen Seel to accompany the brochures.

MOT's-Curlew Road-between CR1 and Belcher were totally closed for three full days to repave instead of partial lane closures for a longer period of time. Public feedback has largely been positive afterward, with the traffic flow routed well during the closure.

Crash Data was distributed last month on the top 50 crash locations in Pinellas County. A trend analysis was performed to identify patterns and possible corrective actions. Alison explained the methodology and immediate information from the analysis. Data was straight crash data, with no other factors such as construction, roadway configuration or distance to the intersection taken into account. US 19 North/South routes comprise nearly half of all the total accidents. US 19 had four of the top five worst intersections and one of the worst for red light runners causing accidents. Belcher Road had the top ranked worst road in total crashes and three of the five worst intersections for red light running crashes. The red light timing on Belcher was suggested as a possible source of the problem since the road is heavily used as an alternative for US 19, yet traffic is often held up at many of the consecutive lights. Lights tend to be long, causing traffic to become reluctant to wait through many consecutive red lights. One CTST member reported that on a recent drive from Park Blvd and Belcher to East Bay, in the short road section containing four lights, three of them were red while traveling at the speed limit. In east/west routes, Gulf To Bay had two of the top five crash intersections and one of the top five for red light running crashes. Traffic volume did not appear to be a direct indicator of which intersections had higher crash totals. Three intersections with relatively low daily traffic volume were among the top 50: 54<sup>th</sup> Ave. N and 28<sup>th</sup> Street N, 49<sup>th</sup> Street N and 78<sup>th</sup> Ave. N, and Cleveland and Ft. Harrison were among the top 50 crash intersections. Studies are currently underway at some of the locations to evaluate how changes can reduce problems. Further specific information specific to the causes of the crashes would be needed to identify causal factors. The group discussed coordination of red lights better across municipal boundaries along Belcher Road.

Use of the emergency "Opticom" signals at intersection was discussed. People are noted to be stopping well for emergency vehicles, even in the middle of the intersection, which actually blocks the passage of the emergency vehicles.

Keith mentioned that a pending DOT meeting regarding bus, pedestrian and traffic issues at intersections would be held to discuss modification of timing signals to give pedestrians more time. Trade offs would occur by reducing the amount of time traffic has to flow, likely creating a decrease in traffic capacity with longer lines building up. Results of the DOT meeting would be available at the next CTST meeting.

Steve mentioned that an analysis of several roads, Gulf to Bay at Belcher and Coachman at Gulf To Bay for red light and signal timing was underway.

Keith was asked to report on the added lanes on US 19. The first draft of the study by TEI arrived at DOT and was under review. A couple of recommendations were considered easy: build islands where people must turn right; increase the number of overhead signs (many were originally built into project plans and removed due to logistical placement issues). Speed studies indicated an increase of 3 mph over past studies, reflecting an increase in capacity with the new lane. Right lane accident reports are still coming in. Complaints appear to be declining. Crash numbers appear to be declining. However, it was noted that some of the right lane crashes can still happen any time, any place. More data and a final draft of the report are pending.

The Buckle Up Florida awards luncheon will be held June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2003 to recognize winners of the Florida Law Enforcement Challenge. Members from CTST were invited to attend and asked to reply immediately as it was basically the last opportunity to RSVP.

***New Business:***

Pinellas County Commissioner Chair Karen Seel will be holding a public forum on US 19 traffic issues June 30, 2003 at 5:30 pm. The specific location was not mentioned.

Solar Power speed signs have been installed along Harn Boulevard, showing a "significant" change in traffic pattern due to their presence. They are part of a speed watch and will be there for approximately a month. The signs lose their effectiveness after a while and are rotated to other locations. St. Petersburg has three units, Pinellas County has one, and several police departments have larger speed trailers for use. It was suggested that the devices be rotated to area schools having speeding problems. The group seemed to support the suggestion.

An accident in which a child in a car seat was killed was raised. Kristy wanted to verify what happened with the seat. Apparently the seat was installed improperly and the belt let loose. Car seat inspections are available by appointment. The Palm Harbor Fire & Rescue Service completes approximately 60 inspections per month, many on a last minute immediate-need basis to transport a new child home from the hospital.

School transportation/bus issues were discussed. PC school representative George Francey through another CTST member posed the question as to whether the CTST was suggesting changes to the established vehicle stopping patterns for a stopped school bus. The CTST had

briefly discussed the issue in a previous meeting, but was not opened for additional discussion/change. The number of school buses on the road will increase from 514 to 720 for the 03-04 school year due to the CHOICE program. 44,000 students were eligible for transportation services in 02-03. The new CHOICE program enlarges the former local boundary zones, increasing the number of children eligible for transportation (over 2 miles from school) to 70,000 in 03-04. The number of routes will increase, but is not yet finalized. Walk routes are also being reviewed and coordinated by the Real Property Department and another safety committee. MPO representative Sandy Johns is working with the committee to help establish proper routes.

Phil indicated that in north county, East Lake & Keystone, traffic was "horrendous" and requested consideration for an exit or entrance. Proper contact at the school board is Steve Fairchild or Jim Miller in Real Property. Sandy is working with this issue on their safety committee as well.

**Appointment of new officers:**

Dave related that Pete Yauch would not seek reelection as president after 3 years in office. No nominations were formally made for new officers. Dave Fechter volunteered to be President and Alison Weber offered to be Secretary for the new year. The group agreed in an open forum with no opposition to accept the two offers. Ron McKenzie, the present Co-Chair and Law Enforcement Subcommittee chair, was voted in absentia to retain his current positions. The group also supported retaining Kristy Patterson and Marc Hanger in their respective Subcommittee chair positions for the Education and Engineering groups as well.

The date for the next meeting was set by popular vote at July 10, 2003 and the meeting was dismissed.

Minutes from the meeting June 5, 2003 respectfully submitted by Alison Weber.

**Members Present:**

Dustin Anderson	State Attorney's Office	464-8730
David M. Chase	City of Pinellas Park	541-0773
Keith Crawford	FDOT Safety	813-975-6255
David Fechter	TEI Engineers	813-884-7339
Michael Frederick	City of St. Petersburg	893-7843
Harriet Burns	RID of Tampa Bay	
Thomas Goldberg	Kenneth City Police Dept	544-2564
Mike Gust	City of Dunedin	298-3223
Marc Hanger	Pinellas MPO	464-8200
Sandra Knoebel	Pinellas MPO	464-8200
Nancy Kelly	Tarpon Springs Police Dept	938-2849
Lynda Meyer	Pinellas Traffic Engineering	464-8907
Kristy Patterson	Palm Harbor Fire	787-5974
Deputy J. Piper	Pinellas Co Sheriff's Office	582-6434
Joseph Pratt	St. Pete Police Dept.	893-4883
Diane Roffey	Suncoast Safety Council	442-0233x328

Bruce Shaw	CSX RR Police Dept	813-664-6397
Bill Sparrowhawk	Citizen	360-9144
Scott Vaughan	St. Pete Beach Police Dept	363-9200
Bill Walker	East Lake Fire Rescue	784-8668
Sgt. Butch Ward	Largo Police Department	586-7473
Alison Weber	Pinellas Co Schools	588-6151
Steve Yeatman	Pinellas Signal Shop	464-8987