



Communications Office
Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles
Post Office Box 27412
Richmond, Virginia 23269



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: May 22, 2018

Contact: Brandy Brubaker

brandy.brubaker@dmv.virginia.gov

2019 Governor's Transportation Safety Awards Announced *Groups and Citizens Recognized for Commitment to Saving Lives*

ROANOKE – Virginia's top transportation safety advocates were honored today during a ceremony at Virginia's Highway Safety Summit in Roanoke. DMV Commissioner Richard D. Holcomb, the Governor's Highway Safety Representative, presented the 2019 Governor's Transportation Safety Awards.

The following individuals and organizations were honored for outstanding contributions to transportation safety:

Lifetime Achievement – Robert L. “Bob” Weakley, Retired, Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles

Robert L. “Bob” Weakley dedicated his life to reducing crashes, injuries and fatalities on Virginia roadways. Following years working in law enforcement, Bob spent the next 40 years with the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles' Highway Safety Office from which he retired in 2018. As Program Manager in the Fairfax area, he was responsible for the development, implementation, management, coordination and oversight of numerous highway safety projects. He credits his success to the countless relationships with his peers, law enforcement and other safety advocates in the highway safety arena.

Commercial/Fleet Transportation Safety – Virginia State Police Motor Carrier Safety Unit

The Virginia State Police Motor Carrier Safety Unit partnered with the Virginia Port Authority to ensure that those intermodal containers and chassis leaving the various ports in Virginia are safe for operation on Virginia's highways. In an effort to maximize the number of safety inspections, rescue victims of human trafficking, and detect and disrupt the conveyance of contraband or illegal cargo, intermodal inspection projects were held at various Port of Virginia facilities. Troopers conducted 1,479 roadside inspections and cited 142 driver deficiencies. Seventeen unsafe drivers were taken out of service and 4,391 safety violations were cited resulting in 589 intermodal carriers being removed from Virginia roads.

Communications and Messaging – Virginia Department of Transportation, Hampton Roads District

The Virginia Department of Transportation Hampton Roads (VaDOTHR) District targeted young drivers during its 2018 National Work Zone Awareness campaign. VaDOTHR and its partners worked with local schools to successfully start conversations about the importance of safe driving in work zones and the dangers of distracted driving. VaDOTHR set up a display at ODU that included a wrecked VDOT truck that was hit in a work zone, seriously injuring the driver. The VDOT worker gave his testimony, which was a very powerful component of the campaign. Plus, VDOT arranged school assemblies at several local high schools as part of a safe driving presentation with state police.

Community Impact – Heritage High School Students Against Destructive Decisions Club

In an effort to promote traffic safety, the Heritage High School Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) Club created a variety of projects and events that promote safe driving practices. Some of the projects aimed to increase seatbelt use among both students and faculty and educate the school community about the dangers of distracted and impaired driving.

-more-

Emergency Medical Services – Hanover County Fire and EMS

During its lowest point, Hanover Fire and EMS personnel showed its true colors. While responding to a vehicle crash during a tropical storm, Hanover Fire and EMS personnel were forced into action to rescue some of their own. Thanks to their extensive traffic incident management training, modern safety equipment and strong relationships with surrounding jurisdictions, their response was much smoother despite the tragic situation which resulted in the death of a firefighter and severe injuries to others.

Impaired Driving - James River Transportation

James River Transportation partnered with the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles and Automotive Coalition for Traffic Safety's (ACTS) for the new Driver Alcohol Detection System for Safety, or DADSS, Program. DADSS is in-car technology that will detect if a driver has an illegal blood alcohol concentration level and prevent the vehicle from moving. Technology integrators installed prototypes of the breath-based sensors into four vehicles in the James River Transportation commercial fleet. The data and feedback collected from the prototype sensors, as well as from the drivers themselves, will be invaluable in finalizing the technology as it is prepared for widespread commercialization.

Infrastructure Improvements – City of Virginia Beach Traffic Engineering Division

In an effort to enhance driver awareness in high pedestrian areas and looking for an alternative to the free-standing "Yield to Pedestrian" signs, the City of Virginia Beach worked with the manufacturer of pavement marking legends to develop a prototype "Pedestrian Crossing" legend. The road markings provide supplemental warnings to the traditional pedestrian warning signs. Since installing the legends, there have been zero pedestrian-involved crashes.

Innovation in Highway Safety – Virginia Tech Center for Geospatial Information Technology

Building on Virginia Tech's Center for Geospatial Information Technology (CGIT) cutting-edge technological platform to perform semi-automated location coding for all reportable crashes on all roadways in Virginia, the partnership between CGIT and the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles' Highway Safety Office has expanded to include timely semi-automated reporting to stakeholders. These new enhanced capabilities allow the team to respond quickly both internally and externally to highway safety emphasis areas and questions as they evolve.

Law Enforcement – Westmoreland County Sheriff's Office

During the past seven years, the Westmoreland County Sheriff's Office has increased enforcement of impaired-driving, speeding and seatbelt use. In 2018, impaired driving arrests were at the lowest level they have ever been. In addition, by focusing enforcement in high-crash areas, crashes involving speed, impaired driving and unrestrained drivers/passengers have fallen dramatically. While the department is small, it is using unconventional methods to spread highway safety messages.

Motorcycle Safety – Roger Hamner, Lead Rider Coach, Virginia Western Community College

Roger Hamner has been teaching at Virginia Western Community College (VWCC) since 2004 and became lead rider coach in 2014. He ensures the safety and condition of the motorcycles, range and students while following a regimented course and curriculum. He coordinates yearly meetings with the VWCC's rider coaches and its Motorcycle Advisory Committee to review Virginia Rider Training Program and college procedures and policies. He regularly reviews VWCC quality assurance reports and initiates changes to course delivery as needed. In addition, he provides objective, concise evaluations of beginner rider courses for the Motorcycle Safety League of Virginia.

Occupant Protection – Cecil Starkey, Jr., Child Passenger Safety Instructor

After 48 years of service as a Fairfax County firefighter and police officer, Cecil Starkey, Jr. continues to spread safety messages in his retirement. Throughout his career, he spent countless hours checking thousands of child safety seats, trained more than 1,000 certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians and communicated traffic safety messages to citizens through numerous presentations in and around Fairfax. Currently, as a Police Volunteer at the Culpeper Police Department, he continues to attend child passenger safety events in Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia, holds child safety seat checks and teaches certification classes.

-more-

Pedestrian/Bicycle – Arlington County Pedestrian Bicycle Crash Reduction Campaign

The Arlington County Pedestrian Bicycle Crash Reduction Campaign aims to reduce bicycle and pedestrian-involved traffic crashes through the coordination of education, engineering and enforcement. Multiple county agencies, civilian organizations and advisory groups came together to create a multi-faceted plan to reduce pedestrian and bicycle crashes in 2018. Geographical crash “heat maps” identified where the bicycle and pedestrian crashes were occurring. These maps were shared with the involved organizations which educated their respective communities. The maps were also shared and reviewed with the Arlington County Department of Transportation to focus engineering improvement instructions. Police focused enforcement at high-frequency crash locations. Arlington County saw a seven percent decrease in pedestrian crashes and a 29 percent reduction in bicycle-related crashes in 2018.

Youth Traffic Safety – Vanessa Wigand, Coordinator for Health Education, Physical Education and Driver Education, Virginia Department of Education

Virginia is recognized as a national leader in driver education because of Vanessa Wigand’s tireless efforts. She has always stressed the importance of engaging parents, teachers and students in the driver education process. In addition to keeping the driver education curriculum current, she collaborates with outside agencies to ensure student safety. She believes that the driver education curriculum is a “living document” and constantly creates new curriculum, resources, projects and other learning activities to engage both parents and students.

Commissioner’s Special Achievement – Dr. Adrian K. Lund, Former President, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety

Dr. Adrian K. Lund is the former president of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS). He started with IIHS in 1981 as a behavioral scientist and works his way up to Senior Vice President of Research, Chief Operating Officer and then President. Dr. Lund retired after a distinguished career of substantial and long-lasting contributions to the highway safety field. Dr. Lund initiated new crash test programs to inform consumers about the vehicles that provide the best overall protection. He launched the first consumer evaluations of crash prevention technologies and led the \$30 million expansion of the Vehicle Research Center to enable testing of current and future automated vehicles. His work also includes research on the effects of crash avoidance technologies, how crash risk has changed in states that legalized recreational use of marijuana, the benefits of all-offender alcohol interlock laws and how photo enforcement is reducing red-light running and speed-related crashes.

###