



National  
Center  
for  
Rural  
Road  
Safety



## Effectively Communicating Safety with Elected and Tribal Officials

National Transportation in Indian Country Conference  
September 17, 2019



# Participants

- » Name
- » Agency/Organization
- » Job Responsibilities
- » Training Goal





# Workshop Goal and Purpose

## Goal

Ensure road safety practitioners maximize opportunities to communicate technical transportation safety information to a non-technical audience

## Purpose

Provide practitioners practical methods and tips to effectively communicate technical information to their tribal officials and leaders and the public



# Workshop Overview

## **Part 1**

Communication Basics

## **Part 2**

The Importance of Communicating  
Transportation Safety  
with Tribal Officials and Others

## **Part 3**

Ways to Discuss Transportation Safety and  
Effectively Communicate Your Message

## **Part 4**

Techniques to Engage Local Elected Officials



# Rural Road Safety

## Part 1: Communication Basics



# What is Communication?





# How to be Persuasive

**Credibility**

**Emotion**

**Logic**



# Communication Problems

## » Barriers

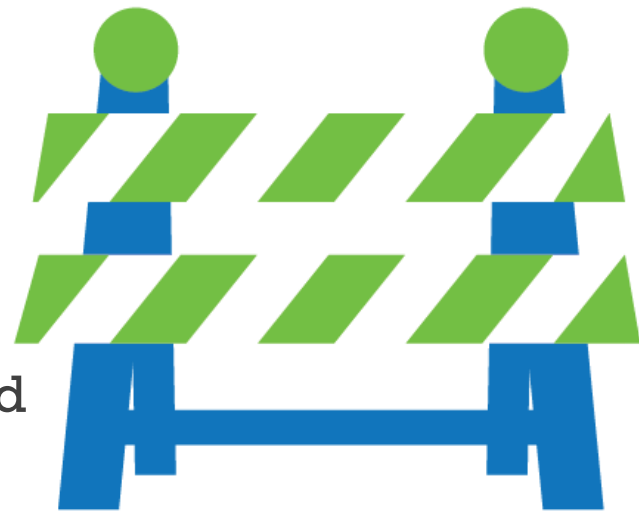
- Environmental
- Language
- Psychological

## » Miscommunication

- Information is incorrectly delivered
- Information is misinterpreted

## » Personal Values & Beliefs

- Myths and misconceptions about safety







## Rural Road Safety



### Part 2: The Importance of Communicating Safety with Elected Officials and Tribal Leaders



# The Importance of Transportation Safety to Elected Officials and Tribal Leaders

- » Knowledge of issues
- » Budget and funding
- » Responsibility for the quality of life and public health
- » Partner access
- » Ability to make a difference



# Supporting Transportation Safety

- » Bring up safety at meetings and other public forums
- » Discuss safety issues in newsletters, web sites, blogs and ensure elected officials receive the information
- » Request testimony from safety experts when legislating on road improvements
- » Assist in the planning process and determining funding
- » Know the types, locations, and causes of crashes in their area
- » Understand the role of the 4 Es of safety





# Challenges in Communicating Safety

- » Varying levels of expertise in the subject area
- » Limited time available
- » Multiple issues and concerns that all need attention
- » Limited budgets and resources



# Meeting With Elected Officials

## **Tips for a Successful Meeting**

- Be flexible with scheduling
- Address the individual formally
- Be a good listener
- Stick to the issue
- Follow up with additional information as appropriate
- Be prepared



## Rural Road Safety

Part 3: Ways to Discuss Transportation Safety and  
Effectively Communicate Your Message



# Communicating Safety to a Non-Technical Audience

- » Learn the facts
- » Keep it simple
- » Emphasize results using creative presentations
- » Network
- » Share successes



# Learn the Facts

- » Problem locations, crash data, causes, and citizen concerns
- » Potential safety strategies and countermeasures to address issues
- » State and Federal funding options and relevant safety policies







# Relevant Transportation Safety Policies

## » Policies

- Policies on setting speed limits
- Cell phones and texting
- Distribution of HSIP and HSP funds
- Last call for alcohol at bars
- Red-light cameras
- Bicycle/pedestrian policies
- Motorcycle helmet use



# Sources for Strategies and Proven Countermeasures

## Safety Strategy

- Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP)
- Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
- Freight Plan
- Bike Plan
- Pedestrian Plan
- Local Road Safety Plans

## Proven Countermeasure

- FHWA Proven Countermeasures
- NCHRP 500 series
- NHTSA Countermeasures that Work
- Crash Modification Clearinghouse
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Manual



# FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures



Roundabouts



Corridor Access  
Management



Backplates with  
Retroreflective Borders



Longitudinal Rumble  
Strips and Stripes on  
Two-Lane Roads



Enhanced Delineation  
and Friction for  
Horizontal Curves



Safety Edge<sub>SM</sub>



Medians and Pedestrian  
Crossing Islands in Urban  
and Suburban Areas



Pedestrian  
Hybrid Beacon



Road Diet

<https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/>



# Keep it Simple

- » Clear and concise language
- » Non-technical jargon
- » Avoid acronyms
- » Make this statement simple
  - *Fred from Ops asked us to send him the SHSP to see whether or not it was coordinated with the HSP, HSIP, the STIP and LRTP. He noted we are having trouble with our data because it is not MMUCC compliant. We'll also need to get with the HSO to resolve the SHSP EA data and FARS.*



# Emphasize Results Using Creative Presentations

- » Tell the same story as your data
- » Limit the information to your audience's need
- » Be easily understandable and engaging





# Sample Visuals



**Before Safety Improvement**

**Proposed Low-Cost  
Improvement**





# Most Common Graphics



In 2016, **unbelted fatalities** accounted for **31.8%** of all fatalities



1	264	273	315	548	525
3	658	692	664	496	388
3	722	672	715	783	
7	931	871	1038	949	
8	1121	1197	1310		
5	722	746			

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 Performance  
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 Last-Mile  
 Connectivity  
 et Management  
 Environmental Assessment  
 TDP  
 Plans  
 Ferry Study  
 Climate Adaptation and  
 ITS for Transit  
 BRT  
 Heavy Rail  
 Transit  
 Long-Ra  
 Softwar  
 FTA



# Network and Enlist Help from Partners

- » Law enforcement
- » Emergency medical services
- » Highway Safety Office staff







# Share Successes

- » From similar communities
- » Effective countermeasures
- » “Saved by the Belt”



# Make it Personal

- » Interests
- » Background
- » Transportation experience
- » Constituent concerns



# Potential Opposition

- » Know the arguments
  - Anticipate opposing views
- » Prepare responses
- » Provide visual aids to address them





# Case Study Road Diets – Grand Junction, CO

- » What are the facts?
- » How would you keep it simple?
- » What type of a presentation would you do?
- » What outreach is needed to other partners?
- » What successes would you present?



# Common Mistakes for Presenters

- » Not knowing key information
- » Reading from the slides, not presenting
- » Providing too much information
- » Poorly designing the presentation
- » Including too many slides or too much information on one slide
- » Providing too many distractions with animations
- » Not checking all the equipment BEFORE the presentation



## Rural Road Safety

### Part 4: Ways to Engage Local Elected Officials



# In Person Meetings



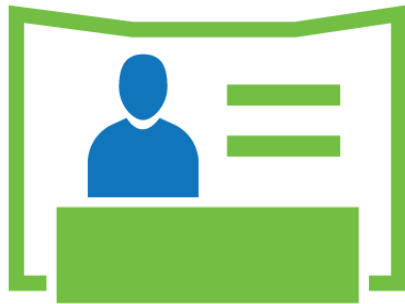
Town Hall Meetings



One-on-One  
Meetings



Council Meetings



Road Safety Events



Open House



# Other Means for Engagement

- » Phone
- » Email
- » Social media
- » News releases
- » Informational handouts
- » Public acknowledgement







# What to think about before calling, emailing or meeting with an elected official?



Key  
Message

Strategy

Identify  
Their Role



# Plans for Action

- » Future engagement with elected officials/tribal leaders
  - Long and short term
- » Determine success
  - Hosting a meeting
  - Request accepted
  - Relationship established



# Available Resources

## **Local/Rural Road Safety**

[https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/local\\_rural/](https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/local_rural/)

## **Videos**

[http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/local\\_rural/training/](http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/local_rural/training/)

**Or contact the National Center for Rural Road Safety Help Desk at:**  
(844) 330-2200 or [info@ruralsafetycenter.org](mailto:info@ruralsafetycenter.org)

## **To learn more about the Safety Center:**

<http://ruralsafetycenter.org/about-our-center/history-of-the-safety-center/>



# Available Resources

## » Local/Rural Road Safety

- [https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/local\\_rural](https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/local_rural)

## » Training, tools, guidance, countermeasures, videos

- [https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/local\\_rural/training/](https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/local_rural/training/)

## » Technical Assistance/Noteworthy Practices

- <https://rspcb.safety.fhwa.dot.gov/Default.aspx>

## » National Center on Rural Road Safety

- <http://ruralsafetycenter.org>

## » Tribal Technical Assistance Program

- <https://ttap-center.org/>



# Role Play Exercise

## » Two volunteers

- Tribal leader
- Tribal planner or engineer

## » Safety issue

- Install rumble strips at a location that has a high number of crashes

## » Arguments

- Number of crashes, deaths, serious injuries along the road segment
- Benefits of rumble strips
- Cost



# Presenter



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