

**Remarks Prepared for
David Strickland, Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Pedestrian Safety Enforcement Event
Durham, North Carolina
November 14, 2012**

NCDOT: Introduces and summarizes the campaign.

MAYOR BELL: Describes local interest and engagement.

CHIEF LOPEZ: Describes Durham enforcement activities.

NCDOT: Introduces Administrator Strickland.

DAVID STRICKLAND:

**Good morning and thank you for that generous
introduction. I'd like to acknowledge Mayor Bell and**

Chief Lopez, and thank all of our colleagues from North Carolina DOT, University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center, Governor's Highway Safety Program and all of the other pedestrian safety stakeholders and partners present.

I am so honored to be here. As many of you know, NHTSA's mission is to ensure the safety of the American public—drivers and pedestrians alike. It is a mission that I take very seriously. We are so grateful for all of your efforts on behalf of pedestrian safety in North Carolina.

The University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center has worked for many years to improve the safety, security, access for pedestrians through research, evaluation and information delivery.

North Carolina DOT has a long tradition of supporting pedestrian safety—through program development, research, the creation of outstanding public information materials, and your emphasis on education.

The partnership between these two groups to spearhead such a comprehensive project is a collaboration that has extremely promising potential for the pedestrian safety program in North Carolina.

It's exciting to see the awareness of this issue in the Triangle now. I am delighted to acknowledge and celebrate the engineering, enforcement, education, and media efforts related to the "Watch for Me NC" campaign—including high-visibility enforcement, bus ads, and radio spots.

You have sustained a robust contribution to improving the quality of life here in Durham and throughout the state. Never forget that your efforts to raise awareness of pedestrian safety are truly making a difference. You are improving the quality of life in North Carolina—by literally saving lives.

It is so important that we broaden our efforts to ensure pedestrian safety and continue to take action at the local level. Today’s event underscores your dedication and determination to make sure that drivers and pedestrians throughout North Carolina are aware of “Watch for Me NC.” We need everyone to hear about this important safety issue.

Let’s keep pushing for greater awareness among *drivers* about the importance of yielding to pedestrians at

crosswalks. And let's continue to remind all *pedestrians* to look both ways when they cross the street, cross with the walk signal, and stay in crosswalks.

Pedestrian safety is a high priority for the U.S. DOT, NHTSA, and our state and local partners. In 2010, 4,280 pedestrians were killed in traffic crashes in the United States—an increase of four percent from 2009—and an estimated 70,000 pedestrians were injured. On average, that's one pedestrian killed every two hours.

Almost one-fifth of the children between the ages of five and nine killed in traffic crashes were pedestrians. We also know that older pedestrians (age 65 and older) accounted for 19 percent of all pedestrian fatalities and an estimated 11 percent of all pedestrians injured in 2010. That's unacceptable to NHTSA and to our safety partners in North Carolina and throughout the nation.

In the Triangle area, we know that:

- **The majority of pedestrian crashes happen during afternoon commute hours on weekdays, from 3pm to 9pm.**
- **One in four vehicle-pedestrian crashes in the Triangle occurs when a car is turning at an intersection or driveway. This knowledge has fueled the messaging emphasis that drivers should yield to pedestrians when turning.**
- **There is a strong correlation with crashes occurring near transit stops or on roads with high bus activity. That insight has led to posting safety messages in and around the five major transit systems.**
- **Compared to the general population, there is an over-representation of African Americans and**

Hispanics in pedestrian crashes. Forty-six percent of crashes in the Triangle area involved a black pedestrian. Through PSAs and educational materials, the “Watch for Me NC” campaign directs messages to these high-risk populations to increase safe pedestrian behaviors.

This major demonstration project has been designed to increase pedestrian safety through education and enforcement safety countermeasures that complement existing and planned engineering treatments. Safety initiatives at the regional and local levels such as this can be extremely effective in reducing pedestrian deaths and injuries.

NHTSA is proud to support North Carolina’s pedestrian safety efforts, including the “Watch for Me NC”

education campaign launched last August in Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill, and Carrboro.

It takes a significant level of effort and commitment for a state to establish and sustain effective pedestrian safety initiatives. Your strong regional partnership, dedicated law enforcement agencies, and strategic project activities have made North Carolina a model for other states to follow.

I'd like to take a minute to recognize the hard work of the many law enforcement agencies represented today. The fact that so many of you are here underscores the cross-jurisdictional support for saving lives in your communities and for this program.

Mayor Bell, Chief Lopez, and everyone involved in this project, I want to commend you all for constantly striving to do more for the safety of citizens in the Triangle area. With this demonstration project, you are not only choosing to make a difference, you will be setting the model for others to emulate across the country.

Thank you for the opportunity to be with you today. I wish you continued success with this very important safety initiative. Thank you.