

**Remarks Delivered By**  
**David Strickland, Administrator**  
**National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**  
**at the**  
**International Association of Chiefs of Police**  
**Law Enforcement Challenge Awards Ceremony**  
**San Diego, California**  
**October 2, 2012**

**Good morning. Thank you, Colonel Edmonson, for that generous introduction. I am truly honored to be here with all of you today. On behalf of Secretary LaHood and the entire staff of NHTSA, I'd like to commend all of you for the important and often dangerous work that you perform to make our highways safer.**

**Your courage and professionalism, day and night, is critically important to the safety of your neighbors, our communities, and the nation. I thank you, especially, for your partnership with NHTSA. I am not exaggerating when I say that we could not carry out our work effectively without you.**

**I also want to thank and acknowledge:**

- Commissioner Joe Farrow, Chair of the IACP Highway Safety Committee**
- Sheriff John Whetsel, Chair of the National Sherriff's Association Traffic Safety Committee**

**The National Law Enforcement Challenge represents an important collaboration of traffic safety advocates, law enforcement professionals, government leaders, and**

**private industry. We've all learned many lessons over the years—about how to coordinate our efforts, make the most of our resources, and share winning strategies. The key ingredient to our alliance is the strong and consistent performance of law enforcement that has made all the difference in highway safety in the past 20 years.**

**The National Law Enforcement Challenge began in 1992 and it's been growing stronger ever since. Your leadership, dedication, and clear vision for this program exemplifies how we can accomplish so much more together than we can on our own.**

**We all belong to a dynamic and thriving partnership. It involves initiatives that range from safer vehicle designs**

**and encouraging good public policy and strong laws, to public service announcements and strong enforcement of laws that promote the safest driving behaviors.**

**At DOT headquarters in Washington, Secretary LaHood and I host a lot of media events to underscore the importance of safe driving. Whether it's "Click It or Ticket" or "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" or "Phone in One Hand, Ticket in the Other" I need you to know that we always want our law enforcement partners out there on the plaza with us, backing us up with lights flashing. Trust me, it sends the right message.**

**The work of our partnership is really paying off. I'm pleased to report that US traffic fatalities have been steadily declining over the last five years since reaching**

**a near-term peak in 2005. In 2010, the fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles of travel fell to an historic low of 1.11. Fatalities in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes decreased by 4.9 percent in 2010 compared to the previous year. The National Occupant Protection Use Survey reported an 85 percent seat belt use rate for 2010. We're really making progress.**

**However, the fact remains that 32,885 people were killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2010 and 2,239,000 people were injured. Those numbers are unacceptable. We're all working diligently to reduce them and I have no doubt that our efforts will continue to save even more lives in the years ahead.**

**We are here today to celebrate the dedication, professionalism, and effective work of your law enforcement colleagues and to acknowledge the innovative enforcement programs that have made such a difference in highway safety.**

**Since 1992, hundreds of law enforcement agencies have been recognized for implementing truly innovative and effective traffic law enforcement programs.**

**By accepting the challenge, these agencies choose to share their strategies and enforcement activities with others in an effort to reduce the number of deaths and injuries that result from traffic crashes each year.**

**Agencies learn from one another and establish goals in traffic safety enforcement and education.**

**The challenge program is an opportunity for you to make a significant difference in the communities you serve. NHTSA is very proud of our 20 year partnership with the National Law Enforcement Challenge.**

**Before leaving the stage, I wish to acknowledge three distinguished individuals being recognized here today for their traffic safety achievements.**

- **Lieutenant Colonel M. Anthony Padilla (ret.),  
Colorado State Patrol**
  
- **Chief Howard B. Hall, Chief of Police, Roanoke  
County, Virginia and former Commander of the**

**Operations Support Section of Baltimore County,  
Maryland.**

- **Traffic Sergeant Mark D. Wright, Ontario Provincial Police, Orillia, Ontario, and leader of the OPP Technical Collision Investigation and Reconstruction Program.**

**Thank you so much for your service.**

**At NHTSA, we are grateful for and proud of our continued association with organizations such as the IACP, National Sheriffs Association, and Governors Highway Safety Association. I thank you for all that you have done to make our roads safer and I look forward to continuing our partnership in the future.**