

Remarks Prepared for
David Strickland, Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
For
Joint LEL/TSP/JOL Workshop
New Orleans, Louisiana
November 16, 2010

Good afternoon. This meeting is over 200 strong and I want to thank each and every one of you for accepting our invitation to attend. I'd like to acknowledge our colleagues from criminal justice agencies, Vern Betkey and the Governors Highway Safety representatives, and our national organization partners. I'd like to extend a special welcome to all the highway safety practitioners and advocates – we've got people from virtually every State as well as NHTSA's regional administrators.

There is no doubt in my mind that this is THE group that will make things happen as we move toward a more collaborative and innovative model

for engaging the criminal justice system in key highway safety issues.

I have no doubt because individually and collectively, you helped make 2009 a year in which we experienced the lowest fatality and injury rates ever recorded. Yes, the economy certainly had something to do with it. But the numbers also reflect the tangible benefits of record high seat belt use and strong anti-drunk driving enforcement campaigns. Early indications are that 2010 will see even more promising results.

These numbers are good news...and they are also a call to action. We are still losing more than 30,000 lives a year on our highways, and about a third of these involve drunk driving, and most are unbelted.

We're here now to figure out how we answer that call to action, address emerging safety issues, and ramp up our efforts to drive those numbers down.

In the last 20 years we've tried many approaches to changing behaviors that can cause highway crashes, and we've compiled a solid combination of knowledge, tools, and techniques based on a few core principles.

We need for these tools to reach into every police department and every courtroom. With the growing complexity of our program, that means we have to elevate and refine our outreach. It's going to take more than a package in the mail or a quick visit to deliver the customized technical assistance that complex highway safety programs demand.

Our evaluations have shown how high visibility enforcement works, and we also have learned how to extend its benefits to teens, rural residents and other

hard-to-reach audiences like pick-up truck drivers.

We have guidelines for traffic enforcement tactics

like nighttime enforcement, as well as for the full

range of traffic issues from child passenger

protection to elder driver safety. With our

partners, we have developed and tested the

DDACTS model of policing that is showing agencies

how to get double-benefit – crash improvement and

reductions in crime – from traffic operations.

Our knowledge extends to the courtroom with

guidance on offender assessment and sentencing

alternatives. We have evidence on the value of

ignition interlocks and DWI Courts.

Quite frankly, it is going to take an army of people to reach out and educate, advocate, and support the many groups we want to work with. I'd like us to start building that network of outreach liaisons today – law enforcement, prosecutors and judges. We must start today so that one day soon we can have that army of people like you, doing what you are already doing – but doing it even further, wider, and more intensely than ever before.

You have shown us that outreach liaisons can be effective; some of you have worked with us on a new LEL curriculum that refines what we do and will be discussed further this afternoon. What makes our vision possible is that proven record of success with you: the LELs, TSRPs and JOLs.

You have shown the willingness to do it. I'm looking at 200 hard-working professionals representing the spectrum of criminal justice who traveled here because you believe in what you are doing. You believe that with the right information, your colleagues on the streets and in the courtrooms

across the country could be even more effective in their roles.

The States have shown that they are willing. Vern Betkey is going to talk more about his ideas and enhanced partnership shortly but I can tell you that he is behind this notion. And of course there is willingness at NHTSA. I recognize the value and potential of our outreach network and I will do everything I can to move it to the next level.

So that's why I think we have the wherewithal to create a national network of criminal justice

outreach professionals. We have the tools, the techniques and the will. We just need to get started.

Over the next couple of days, we are going to take the first steps. We are going to talk about what it will take. We will identify barriers and talk about resources and opportunities for progress. We will look at ways to foster collaboration – among our law enforcement, prosecution, and court liaisons and across the boundaries of the criminal justice system.

I look forward to spending time with you today and

I thank you for all that you do to make the roadways

of your communities and our Nation's highways a safer place for all of us.

Under President Obama and Secretary LaHood's leadership, the men and women of NHTSA will not relent on any of our safety efforts. I believe that working together, we can put the right framework in place to strengthen our Nation and protect our communities.

At this time I would ask Superintendent Serpas to please join me.

Superintendent, it is a pleasure and honor for me to recognize you as one of our most respected law enforcement leaders. Your efforts as the Chief of the Washington State Patrol helped Washington State to reach and maintain some of the highest seat belt compliance rates in the Nation. Then, as Chief of Police in Nashville, you embraced the DDACTS strategy of policing which resulted in significant declines in crime and crashes and an overall reduction in social harms in your community.

As the newly appointed leader of the New Orleans Police Department, you have already made significant strides in restoring community trust and rebuilding the department. For a lifetime of dedicated public service it my pleasure to present you with NHTSA's Public Service Award.

(PRESENT AWARD)

Thank you and good luck with the rest of this meeting.