SAFETY COMMISSION LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The Michigan State Safety Commission, at their February meeting, approved legislative priorities for the coming year. The number of priorities was restricted to four items of broad significance to the state and included proposals to:  
1. Enact legislation requiring mandatory seat belt use.  
2. Enact legislation reflecting a number of changes in drunk driving and alcohol-related statutes.  
3. Support provisions in a highway-section reclassification of the vehicle code, particularly the "rules of the road" section.  
4. Support legislation initiatives to assure continued education and training for, and availability of, driver education programs in public schools. In addition, the Safety Commission will continue support for current legislation involving the motorcycle helmet law and the impending child restraint law.  

It is apparent that there will be considerable legislative action involving the first two of the Safety Commission priorities. In order for such legislation to become law, support and hard work will be required of organizations such as our Michigan Section that are concerned with improved safety for the motorist. Let's insure that we have a voice in these issues.

By Bob Lariviere

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

All of you are aware of the many challenges facing the entire transportation engineering discipline. Decreasing revenues in the face of increasing costs is probably the most urgent problem faced today by everybody. The transportation area feels it especially hard because there are so few to solve the problem for so many. The obvious answer is to increase tax revenues, so we can continue to improve and preserve the existing transportation system. 

There have been several bills introduced into the legislature to do this. In the meantime, we should take this opportunity to improve projects, determine which ones have been the most cost efficient, and refine them even more. Thus, those that have been less productive should be "shelved." Many of the more cost-efficient projects are often those that are least expensive; the safety patrols at the school crossing instead of a traffic signal, the education of residents instead of the installation of stop signs to control speed, etc.

Sometimes I wonder why we engineers and technologists have such a difficult job selling the least expensive of several alternatives. Perhaps we are not selling well but rather dictating. Perhaps we know what we are doing. After all, everything we rely on indicates we are correct. We've studied the computer model, graphs, Manual, Code, phasing, etc. We've studied the economic volumes and mix and even the making habits of the nearby wild life and still Mr. & Mrs. Taxpayer agree with Mr. & Mrs. Motorist that it was all done to help them.

We have to make a concerted effort, individually and as an institute, to meet with the P.T.A. members and the neighbors and listen to their problems and help them understand that traffic engineering is a specialized field that is sensitive to their problems and can help them in our most difficult job.

We all know that when budgets are reviewed and reductions are imminent, "traffic" is one of the luxuries that is the first to go. If we are to survive we must sell ourselves as the experts we are and convince the public that they cannot do without us and our expertise.

LANSING--April Fool's Day will have a serious side this year. That will be the day when a new Michigan traffic law goes into effect, and traffic safety experts are excited about the prospects. Known as the Child Passenger Safety Law, Public Act 117 of 1980 states that each driver transporting a child in a motor vehicle shall properly secure each child in a safe child car seat if the child is under age four. A child under one year of age will be required to be properly buckled into a federally approved safety seat regardless of where they ride as passengers. Children one year of age and less than four will need to be in a safe car seat if they ride in the front of a motor vehicle. However, at back seat passengers, this age group is permitted to use the vehicle's regular seat belt alone.

While the law is a first in the Great Lakes State, talented engineers have already adopted or recently instituted similar laws protecting young passenger from their life threats. Despite massive attempts to eradicate all childhood health problems through immunization program, parents continue to ignore the biggest hazards--children face each day. The automobile kills and injures more children each year than does any disease or other type of accident. 

The proper use of safe child car seats has demonstrated their ability to reduce the threat of injury by about 80 and reduce the chance of death by about 90. These durable, laboratory-tested devices absorb the punishment that would otherwise be taken by a child's body in a car crash.

And it doesn't take much to hurt an unsuspecting toddler or infant. A sudden stop, a traffic lane, a mere tapping of the brakes when something darts in front of your car, a green light that turns to amber can send a small child tumbling into the dashboard filled with radio knobs, air conditioning switches and gear shift levers. 

So Michigan legislators have passed (and Governor Miller has signed into law) Public Act 117. It all begins April 1, 1982.

Eduating the motorizing public of Michigan is a mon- strous project, spearheaded by the Michigan Office of Highway Safety and Training (OMHST) in Lansing. Billboards, radio and TV public service announcements, restaurant placemats, automobile glove box stickers, postcards, posters and. more are all part of a statewide campaign to inform the public about the law and its potentialities for saving lives and preventing unnecessary pain.

Some of the most interesting pieces of legislation come in the form of a child care seat fact book and a question/answer guide to the law. The fact book is a complete review of child passenger safety. Everything from car seat assembly to booster seats are discussed. There is a picture review of currently marketed safety seats in Michigan, with names and phone numbers.

Keep an eye on page 13.
DRIERS EDUCATION:...to be or not to be...

EDUCATION: Following is a condemnation of an article which appeared in the Nov. 8, 1983, "Journal of American Insurance," in which Mr. J.S. nota an indictment of driver education as an weapon on the issue and tone of the elements. The MEDICALS invites your comments on driver education in Michigan.

Insecurity, ineptness, restlessness, alcohol, and other drugs have long been identified as accompaniments of the casualness of teenagers involved in auto accidents each year. Now some authorities argue that still another factor should be considered - early driver education.

More than two million high school students across 37 states enrolled in driver education courses during the 1978-79 school year. In a majority of states, students who complete driver education can drive sooner than those who do not. Is driver education inadvertently creating more teen-age accident victims, by putting more teenagers behind the wheel at an earlier age?

At least one traffic safety researcher would answer "yes". Leon S. Robertson, Ph.D., of Yale University's Center for Health Studies, considered the license and accident rates of teenagers in Connecticut communities without drivers education with those living in communities who retained the program after state funding was eliminated. Robertson's 1980 study, that found more driver education is related to more licensed teenage drivers, the net result is a higher rate of crashes involvement for 16-17-year-olds.

Two years following elimination of state funding for driver ed 5,052 fewer Connecticut teenagers in this age group (or about two percent) were licensed to drive, compared to Robertson. Dropping state funding for the program prompted nine districts to totally drop driver ed and forced others to charge students for driver training. Over the same period, Robertson noted a decrease in the crash rate for 16-17-year-olds. Decrease driver ed, Robertson concludes, and you decrease teenage accident rates, resulting in a lowering crash rate.

Even though he states that driver ed leads to greater accident exposure for 16-17-year-olds as a group, Robertson does indicate that the person who attends a high school driver ed are often found to have fewer reported crashes than those who learn to drive by other means. But is it driver training itself that made the difference? Not necessarily. Statistical controls for all two, high school grades, social status and personality characteristics virtually eliminate the differences in crash involvement between those who do and those who do not take the course.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is currently conducting a study of over 17,000 teenagers in 24 high schools in Washington, D.C., Georgia, and Michigan. To evaluate the benefits of driver training. Though not yet completed, an interim report does note that those who take the special course are far getting 16 percent fewer traffic tickets than those without driver ed. However, the study may support Robertson's contention that, whatever the reason, the driver ed and the individual driver, there is negative effect on society at large because of the great potential exposure for teens as a group.

A solution to this problem has focused on "either/or" possibilities. Discontinue teens from driving by dropping the ed, or prevent from driving by raising the age. or both. Why not discourage them from driving too soon by by simply postponing driver education until the young driver is older and possibly more mature? This is the only solution that would be greater flexibility in driver training scheduling. Currently, some offer driver ed to students of a certain age (15-16/1-12/1).
MICHIGAN'S IMPROVED TRAFFIC SAFETY RECORD ATTRIBUTED TO TRAFFIC ENGINEERING . . . FINALLY

A significant goal of the Michigan Department of Transportation as well as the traffic safety community at large is to reduce traffic fatalities, injuries, and accidents on Michigan highways and streets. Much accomplished this past year in all these areas has been the result of significant improvements in traffic safety. While there were 202 fewer fatalities than in 1980 which is an 11.4 percent reduction. This constitutes a trend which has seen a 24 percent reduction in fatalities since 1971. There are now engineering activities conducted by the department that are related to the improved safety record.

One of the most important of these activities involves implementing traffic engineering solutions to freeway safety problems in the state. The 1980 death rate on Michigan's freeways (1.12) was 69 percent lower than on the non-freeway system (3.87). The freeway fatality rate is equivalent to about one fatality for every 100,000 trips between Detroit and Orlando, Florida. The freeway system is about three times safer than other state and local roads in Michigan.

Our department also has an aggressive program designed to eliminate, modify, or protect motorists from roadside obstacles along freeways. This program was implemented in 1977 and has resulted in an annual average reduction of almost 40 percent in freeway fatalities. Improvements have been made on the freeway system and include items such as concrete median barriers, breakdown supports for tight curves and major roadways, signage, and modification of guardrail and guard structures. The department is involved in many other efforts designed to improve safety on our roads. For example, the soil stability improvement program provides surveillance of the entire state trunkline system, identifies accident patterns, and recommends corrective treatments. A recent evaluation of projects on state trunklines and local streets revealed a 25 percent decrease in fatalities during a three-year period for all those treated in traffic safety improvements.

In an effort to participate in a railroad safety program where 530 million has been obligated for improving rail crossing safety, the impact of this continuing program and others focusing on railroad safety, such as the construction of highway crossing public information program has been impressive. The average number of new fatalities per year since 1973 has been reduced by nearly 90 percent when compared with the previous level.

Other contributions to highway safety include improved traffic signal systems which provide safer urban roadway systems, with less danger of right-of-way, traffic signals, and pollution. In addition, improved pedestrian crossing techniques and improved vehicle designs contribute to better driving and adverse weather conditions.

Even though engineering improvements have made large contributions to improve safety on Michigan's road system, there have been additional innovations and other great achievements. Information about the 28 Michigan cities, distribution of educational materials and public service safety announcements, and safety designs from the automotive industry for instance, have all played a role in improved highway safety. Future improvements in safety for Michigan motorists is dependent on the continued interest and development of our highway safety, engineering, enforcement, and education programs. We do not believe that greatly improved safety for our motorists, particularly Michigan motorists, is coincidental. We maintain that greater responsibility of our engineers, education, engineering, and enforcement efforts are the reasons for the saving of lives on our highways. In addition, some credit must go to Michigan motorists for the safe driving of their vehicles in a safer manner which greatly increases the effectiveness of our efforts. We will continue to maintain and refine existing programs within the framework of our existing programs to provide increased safety and convenience for the motorists, which we believe will continue the trend toward reduced fatalities and injuries on our road system.

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Since the start of the 1983 legislative session, a few new bills of any real consequence to traffic and safety have been introduced and there has been little action on bills introduced over from 1981. State officials are hoping for the implementation of the state's new mandatory child restraint law (M 177) on as soon as possible, hoping that motorists will understand the need to protect children. The new law will go into effect on January 1, 1984. The law requires that all children under the age of 12 years be restrained in vehicle seating apparatus. A child safety seat will be required for all children under the age of 12 years in the front seats of the vehicle. The law also requires that a child under the age of 12 years be restrained in the rear seat of the vehicle.

Traffic and transportation engineering services

FEBRUARY 4TH MEETING A SUCCESS

As President DeCorte commented at the February 4th section meeting at Oakland Community College, the Board of Directors thought that the evening was "remarkable."

For more information call
Goodell-Grivas, Inc. 17230 West Eight Mile Road Southfield, Michigan 48035 Telephone 313-569-0300
Traffic and Transportation Engineering Services

CHILD PROTECTION MANDATORY APRIL 1ST

The state of Michigan has mandated that all manufacturers of car seats be required to make their products available to children under the age of 12 years. This mandate will take effect on April 1, 1984. Manufacturers are required to provide car seats for children under the age of 12 years, and all car seats must be available to children under the age of 12 years. The mandate is designed to ensure that all children are provided with appropriate safety equipment. The mandate is effective for all car seats sold in Michigan.
Students who wish to take the course later must request special permission to do so. Clearly, students who are either unemployed or need to drive, should be allowed to schedule the class whenever they are ready, as they can work with other courses.

Another alternative would be to simply offer driver education later, at age 16 or 17, and let any students with special needs schedule it sooner. This would remove much of the peer pressure and lay the blame for early teenage driving not with the driver education course itself but with its timing.

Few parents, and safety experts, want driver education dropped from the schools, even though some communities have already eliminated the program due to funding restrictions. Increasing the minimum driving age to 18 reduces another problem. 18-year-olds, if the accident and fatality rates for 16- and 17-year-olds are poor, the rates for 18-year-olds are even worse. More deaths per licensed driver are associated with 18-year-olds than with any other age group, according to 1978 fatality data. Does it make sense to put even more untrained, inexperienced kids on the road at age 18, when they are more likely to be on their own at 20 or in college, out from under the restraining influence of parents, school and church, with a greater access to alcohol and other drugs?

If there is justification for raising the legal driving age to 18, there is just as much justification for raising it to 21. Only at age 25 do accident and fatality rates for young drivers approach a more reasonable level. Obviously, it would be impossible to put off driving until 25.

That is why the best solution at this time may be to simply postpone driver ed, instead of prematurely and perhaps unfairly condemning the course itself, or penalistically restricting teenage drivers. Without the convenience of early driver ed, young teens may not get their licenses and fewer will die on our highways as a result.

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NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

LIFESAVING CONFERENCE

On March 31 - April 2, 1980, the National Safety Council is sponsoring a National Conference on pedestrian protection and alcohol countermeasures. The two and one-half day conference will be held at Detroit's classic Book-Cadillac Hotel and will focus on two areas most critical to the success of the nation's traffic safety program. Each subject will be discussed during the general sessions with the opportunity to share ideas and direction with others on each subject provided during the number of workshop sessions. The alcohol countermeasures workshop will focus on enforcement, strategies, judicial process, legislation, and citizen involvement. Information and registration forms are available by contacting the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning at (313) 722-1462.

SAFETY CONFERENCE TO MEET IN LANSING

"Safety for You '82" is the theme of the 32nd Annual Michigan Safety Conference to be held on April 27-28 at the Lansing Civic Center. Persons attending can choose among sessions dealing with industrial safety, fire safety, traffic safety or a variety of other subject areas.

The Traffic Division program is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 27, and will run until approximately 2:45 p.m. A topic will include "Michigan's Improved Fatality Rate," "The Drinking Driver Problem," and "The New Child Restraint Law." Registration information and pre-registration forms are available from the Detroit (313) 960-3002 or Lansing (517) 487-8851 office of the Safety Conference Association.

By Thomas O. Reel
**MOBILE SPEED BUMPS MARKETED IN ENGELWOOD**

A new type of movable solid rubber speed bump, which has just come on the market in the U.K., is claiming the attention of planners and architects. The speed bump, manufactured by ATSA, Ltd., the spread bump is designed for residential and commercial areas, is highly visible and can be easily moved by placing it in parking lots, hospitals and college campuses.

The ATSA speed bump, which is 24 inches wide, has an estimated life of up to 20 years with little or no maintenance. The bump is made of rubber which is expensive and time-consuming to install and which permanently damage the road surface. The rubber bump is also strong in load-bearing ability to 60 feet are simply aligned and quickly affixed to make speed bump installation simpler and more convenient.

The ATSA speed bump can be removed for the small holes made by the bolts.

The ATSA speed bump is molded into the rubber face of the bump improve tire grip and a two inch wide yellow reflecting strip, which shows up clearly at night, indicates the presence and length of the speed control device. The reflective strips can be placed in minutes and the rubber compound, of which the bump is fashioned, is unaffected by weather conditions. The speed bump needs periodic maintenance and requires little treatment of any kind. In the U.K. the movable rubber speed range cost approximately $27 per running foot and they are provided with fitting plates and rivets.

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**URBAN TRAFFIC CONTROL SYSTEM**

Federal Highway Administration has recently made available the first in a series of documents which will provide a complete Traffic Control System (UTCS) Enhanced Second-Generation Software. The package describes the functional elements of the enhanced software and the minimum hardware and operating requirements necessary to implement the software.

The second part of this software has been released since 1979 to coincide with the successful operation of the software in Broward County, Florida. These recommendations are ready for distribution in approximately one year.

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DO THE MOTORISTS PAY ATTENTION TO CONSTRUCTION SIGNS?

The Federal Highway Administration recently released a report of tests conducted in Main on how well various construction signing works. Two experiments were conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of different sign sequences for warning motorists on rural roads of construction and/or maintenance activities ahead that remain closed for a short period of time. Different sign sequences were evaluated; the standard MUTCD sequences were augmented with flashing beacons; the symbol signs. The experiments were conducted on three rural roads.

The results were as follows:
1. The most effective sign sequence in virtually all instances was the flasher augmented standard sequence.
2. The symbol signs were generally at least as effective as the "standard" sign sequence in slowing vehicles. 
3. In no instance did any of the signs appear to cause any abrupt motorist reactions which might have been hazardous to those following.

The report recommends that "based on these results, it appears that if the general idea is desired, augmented with flashing beacons should be considered as an effective advance warning.

The complete report may be obtained from the FHWA. Ask for Report No. FHWY/RD/012 "Alternative Sign Sequence for Work Zone on Rural Roads." Reprint from ARIA SIGNAL.

DISTRICT III NEWS

Jim Musick is our new District III Director. He replaced Bill Pelbichal who was our Director from 1979 through 1981. Bill is well known for his leadership and wish him well in the future.

Jim, who will represent our District, Ohio, Indiana and Michigan, originates from Electro-Graphics, Inc., a traffic engineering firm from the City of Columbus, Ohio. Jim presided over his first District Board Meeting in Bowling Green on February 2, 1982 and appointed District Officers and Committee Chairman. Yours truly was appointed as Vice-Chairman. Some of the other major issues on the agenda was the approval of the final draft of the District Policies. These have been rewritten for clarification and equity of Section reimbursement.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions regarding any fact of ITE, please let me know and I will see it through the proper channels.

By Robert V. DeCosta

SOPHISTICATED TRAFFIC SIGNALS HELP REDUCE ACCIDENTS, INJURIES

Fewer police officers in vehicle collisions at the intersection of Southfield and 13 Mile Roads now. Collisions are fewer, and those that do occur are less severe.

Since the Oakland County Road Commission installed a sophisticated signal system, the number of accidents have come down. In recent years personal injuries have been down 66 percent.

Similar results were obtained previously at the intersection of Southfield and 10 Mile Roads with the same signal system.

Some injury and accident improvement may not be as near as much, has resulted from the installation at 10 Mile and Greenfield Roads.

The signal system is a computer assisted traffic actuated for stop-go of all movements through the intersections. When a phase, such as left turn "go," is not enough, the computer skips it and allows more time for other movements.

The injury and accident savings annually are many times the $65,000 cost of each installation, said John L. Gruhba, Road Commission Managing Director.

Studies show that the relatively less serious rear-end collisions and accidents associated with nearby driveways tend to be more frequent. Gruhba said the Road Commission is working with the City of Southfield to address these problems.

FIFTH ANNUAL PRODUCT TECHNICAL SESSION MAY 20, 1982 CITY OF SOUTHFIELD, D.P.S. GARAGE

Circle May 20 on your calendar and plan to attend this years Product Technical Session which should be bigger and better than ever.

Last year 20 vendors displayed their products at our best session to date. This year more vendors are expected and a larger crowd should be there because city and county officials and purchasing agents are being invited, in addition to the membership of I.T.E. & I.M.S.A.

Plan on joining us and see the latest developments, equipment and materials in the following areas:

- Signal Controls
- Time Base Coordinators
- Signal Heads
- Signal Pre-emption Equipment
- Sign Holders
- Reflective Sheeting
- Sign Posts
- Sign Fasteners
- Hydraulic Equipment

- Maintaining Traffic Devices
- Impact Attenuators
- Parking Lot Control
- Parking Meters
- Traffic Counters
- Pavement Markings
- Thermo Plastic Markings
- Plastic Pavement Markings
- Pavement Markings

PRODUCT TECHNICAL SESSION AGENDA MAY 20, 1982

2:00 - Product Session
5:30 - Hospitality Hour at "The Red Cedars"
6:30 - Dinner at "The Red Cedars" followed by a sports program