

Kathryn Swanson

Career History

1998– Present Minnesota Department of Public Safety St. Paul, MN
Director, Office of Traffic Safety

- Administer the State and Community Highway Safety Grant Program in Minnesota.

1996–1998 Minnesota Department of Public Safety St. Paul, MN
Deputy Director, Office of Traffic Safety

- Responsible for program direction and staffing.

1983–1996 Minnesota Department of Public Safety St. Paul, MN
Safety Program Coordinator

- Managed a variety of program areas including Traffic Records Systems, Police Traffic Services, and Alcohol.

1978–1983 Minnesota Department of Public Safety St. Paul, MN
Research Analyst

- Responsible for *Minnesota Motor Vehicle Crash Facts*.

Education

1986–1992 University of St. Thomas St. Paul, MN

- M.B.C., Master of Business Communications degree.
- Final Project: *Minnesota State Government Grants: Patterns in Communication Methods*.

1978–1986 University of Minnesota Minneapolis, MN

- Coursework in management information systems, photography, psychology, public affairs, and statistics.

1973–1977 St. Olaf College Northfield, MN

- B.A., Bachelor's degrees in psychology and religion.
- Graduated *magna cum laude*.
- Member of Phi Beta Kappa and Psi Chi.

**NATIONAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION POLICY AND
REVENUE COMMISSION FIELD HEARINGS**

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

**MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA
APRIL 18 – 19, 2007**

**TOPIC 4
MULTIDISCIPLINARY SOLUTIONS TO TRAFFIC SAFETY**

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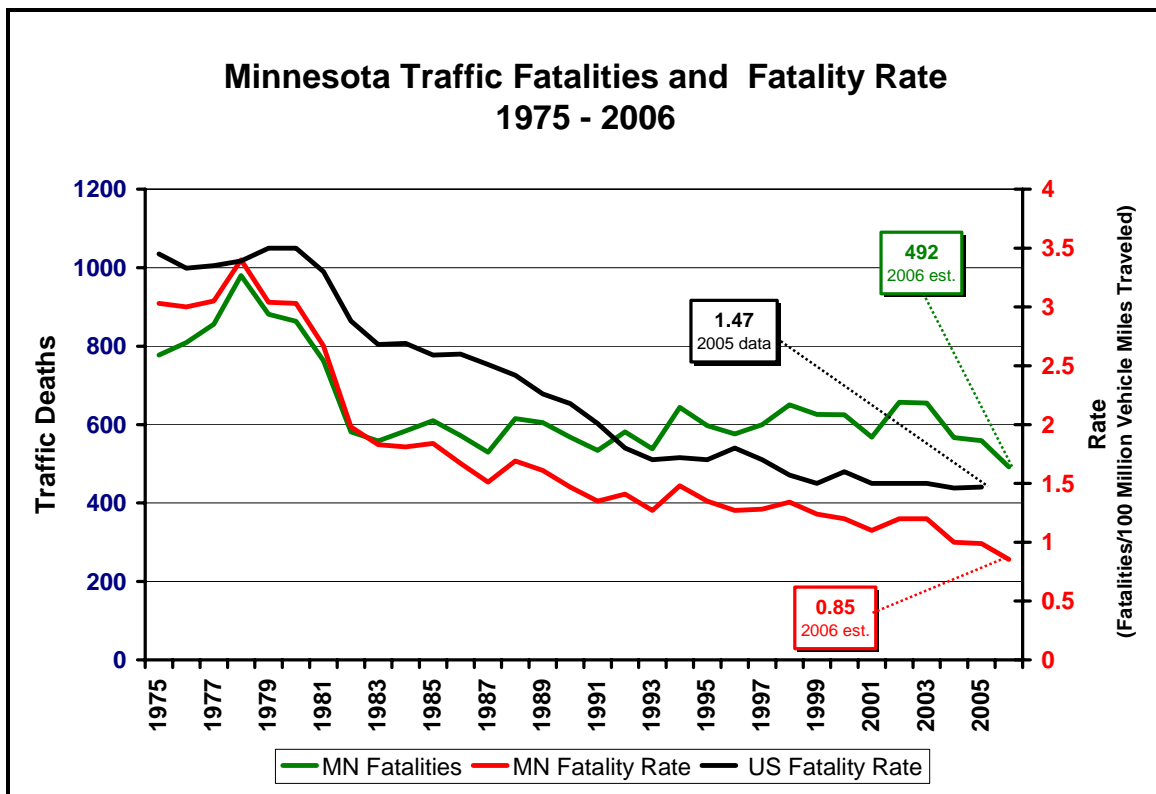
TOWARD ZERO DEATHS

Toward Zero Deaths is a multi-agency partnership that includes representatives from the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Minnesota State Patrol, Federal Highway Administration, Minnesota Department of Health, Center for Transportation Studies at the University of Minnesota, and other local safety partners, including counties and cities.

The goal is to raise awareness of traffic safety issues and to develop tools that can be used to reduce the number of deaths and injuries resulting from traffic crashes in Minnesota.

COMPREHENSIVE HIGHWAY SAFETY PLAN (CHSP)

In the 1990's it became apparent that the previous approach to addressing traffic safety issues was not working. The fatality rate had flattened and the actual number of fatalities began to increase (see diagram below). Therefore, in 2004, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) and the Department of Public Safety (DPS) partnered together to address the State's traffic safety issues in a coordinated, integrated, and systematic way by preparing the Minnesota Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan (CHSP).



The CHSP is designed to be the framework within which road safety programs can be evaluated and selected based on their ability to reduce the number of fatal and serious injury crashes in Minnesota. The CHSP focused on “all roads” not just state highways and included the four “E’s” - Engineering, Education, Enforcement and Emergency Services. In 2007, the CHSP will be updated to align with SAFETEA-LU requirements and will become the State’s Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP).

The following two tables highlight some of the important facts about Minnesota traffic fatalities and their characteristics.

Minnesota Safety Facts

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006* estimated
Annual Fatalities	568	567	655	567	559	492
Fatality Rate	1.07	1.21	1.18	1	0.99	0.85
Percentage of Seat Belt Usage	74%	80%	79%	82%	84%	-

Minnesota Fatal Characteristics

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Percentage of Unbuckled Fatalities	54.8%	55.0%	48.9%	51.8%	51.2%
Percentage of Alcohol Related Fatalities	37%	36%	39%	31%	35%
Percentage of Speed Related Fatalities	17.9%	18.3%	20.8%	17.2%	18.5%

CHSP GOAL:

The CHSP goal established in 2003 was to reduce traffic fatalities to **500 or less** by 2008 from an average of 626 annual deaths. In 2006 Minnesota’s fatalities dropped to 492, the lowest number since 1945. Mn/DOT and its Toward Zero Deaths partners are looking at a new goal of fewer than **400 by 2010**.

HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (HSIP)

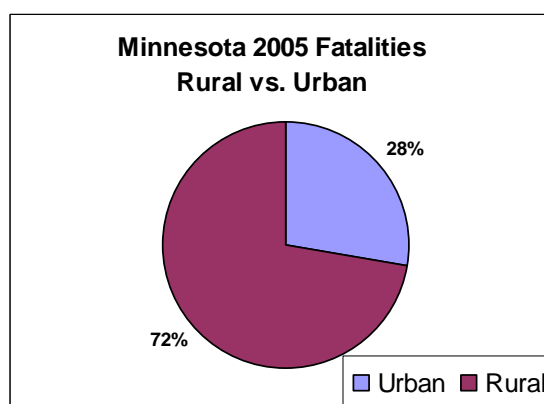
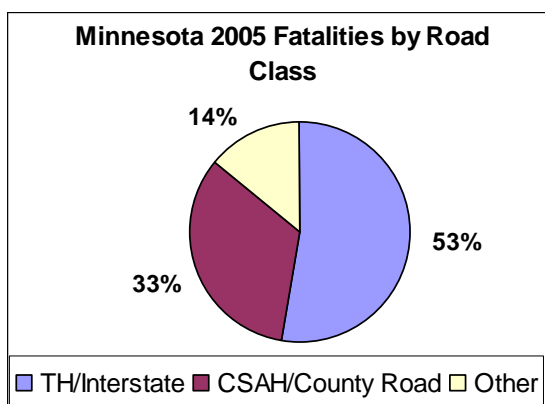
With the passage of SAFETEA-LU the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) was established as a core program. The amount of funds allocated toward safety projects was approximately doubled from previous years. Each Area Transportation Partner (ATP) is responsible for developing a safety program and selecting safety projects to meet the CHSP goals.

Minnesota's Estimated HSIP Funding

Fiscal Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
Core HSIP	\$ 19.8	\$ 20.3	\$ 20.6	\$ 21.0	\$ 81.7 M
High Risk Rural Roads	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.0	\$ 7.7 M

CENTRAL SAFETY FUND

In addition to the HSIP funds, Mn/DOT, in partnership with DPS, established a Central Safety Fund to further fund projects aimed at reducing fatal crashes. These funds were used for three significant projects in 2006 and 2007: 1) County CHSP Solicitation, 2) Speed Management Project, and 3) Cable Median Barrier.



County CHSP Solicitation

Historically, 70% of fatal crashes occur on rural roadways and approximately 50% of fatal crashes occur on local (county, township, and city roadways). Mn/DOT recognized the need to focus safety projects on the county road system in addition to the trunk highway system. In 2005, Mn/DOT established a program to grant \$2 million dollars to assist counties in deploying low cost, systematic, proactive safety improvements. Twenty-seven (27) Counties participated each receiving a maximum of \$75,000. In 2007 an additional \$4.15 million was awarded to 37 counties each receiving a maximum of \$150,000. Types of projects funded include:

- Wider shoulders/Enhanced Pavement Markings/Edge line rumblestrips
- Intersection Lighting
- Enhanced Signing
- Guardrail Upgrades
- Geometric Improvements
- Road safety audit

Speed Management Project

On September 26, 2005 Mn/DOT raised the speed limit on roughly 823 miles of two-lane two-way roadways and 27 miles of Metro freeway to 60 MPH and launched a \$2.5 million dollar speed limit enforcement project.

The goals of the project were to:

- Improve safety on interstates and expressways that saw a significant increase in fatalities and serious injuries crashes subsequent to the 1997 posted speed limit increases
- Reduce high travel speeds on Minnesota roadways
- Prevent excessive speeding on the roads raised to 60 MPH
- Increase public awareness of speed enforcement

The University of Minnesota conducted the project evaluation. They found 12 percent fewer drivers in the Metro area and 30 percent fewer drivers in Greater Minnesota going 10 or more miles per hour over the posted limit! The second year of the Speed Management Project will begin in the spring of 2007 in an effort to continue to educate the public that the posted speed is the speed limit.

Cable Median Barrier

As traffic volumes continue to grow, Minnesota has experienced an increase in cross median crashes. Installing cable median barrier in strategic locations has proven to be effective in preventing these crashes that so often have tragic outcomes. The table below outlines the number of miles to date of cable barrier that have been installed and the number of miles that are planned. These projects have been funded through the Central Safety Fund and the ATP’s HSIP Funds. Projects selection was based on crash data, traffic volume and existing median width following AASHTO guidance. A formal study is being conducted on the installation of these barriers. Preliminary data indicates that no fatal crashes have occurred at these locations due to cross median crashes to date. Prior to installation, one section of I-94 between Maple Grove and Rogers had 5 fatal cross median crashes from 2001 – 2003.



Cable Median Barrier

	Miles Currently Installed	Miles Funded 2007/08	Miles * Planned unfunded	Total planned
Metro Area	22.1	19.0	88.4	129.5
Greater MN	16.8	33.6	66.2	116.6
Total	38.9	52.6	154.6	246.2

* These sections are potential candidates for barrier installation on Interstates only. Further investigation on Trunk Highways is also planned.

HIGHWAY SAFETY LEGISLATION

- .08 Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) became effective for Minnesota on September 1, 2005.
- Statewide Trauma System established by legislature in July, 2005 which is expected to decrease motor vehicle fatalities by 9% once fully implemented over the next 5 years

- Primary Seatbelt Legislation will be reintroduced in 2007 and has a good chance at passing during this session.
- Booster seat law and graduated drivers license (GDL) are still needed to strengthen laws that will reduce fatal and life changing crashes.

COUNTY SAFETY ACTIVITIES

The Minnesota County Engineers Association (MCEA) has a very active County Highway Safety Committee which has operated since 2003. They have been instrumental in providing information on safety issues, developing potential solutions, acquiring funding, directing safety research, and publishing a bi-monthly newsletter. As partners they are dedicated to reducing fatalities and serious injuries on their roadway system.

The County Engineers have been successful in getting additional safety funding through the legislature. The Local Roadway Improvement Program (LRIP) dedicated \$5.0 Million in 2005 and \$7.7 Million in 2006 toward Rural Road Safety projects. These dollars were in addition to the Comprehensive Highway Safety Program and Federal SAFETEA-LU mentioned previously.

Minnesota County Engineers in conjunction with Mn/DOT and LLRB have also developed a GIS application called the Crash Mapping Analysis Tool (CMAT). This program has GIS mapping, querying capabilities, and reporting tools for ten years of Minnesota crash data which allows counties to visually assess vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian crashes.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Under SAFETEA-LU Minnesota will be receiving approximately \$8 million over the next five years to develop and implement the new Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS). The program is designed to provide communities with the opportunity to improve the conditions for children biking and walking to and from school, with education, enforcement and infrastructure improvements.

Mn/DOT developed a centrally-managed, grant-style program that awards monies to communities through a competitive application process. The first SRTS solicitation ran from May 1, 2006 through July 5, 2006 and received 76 applications requesting \$8 million in projects. The program was able to award seventeen grants totaling \$1.7 million. The second solicitation is now in progress. Applications are due January 31, 2007 and grant recipients will be notified in March of 2007. Under the second solicitation \$1.55 million is available. Additionally, there have been 14 SRTS application workshops held around the state since May 2006. Over 300 people representing cities, counties, schools, school districts, peace officers and planning organizations have participated.