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NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: September 9, 1982

Forwarded to:

Governors of the 50 States  
and the Mayor of the District  
of Columbia, excluding Colorado, Maryland,  
Nebraska, Utah, and Washington

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

H

82-35

Drinking and driving continues to be our nation's most serious safety and public health problem. More than half of the 50,000 annual highway fatalities result from accidents that involve alcohol. This is a disgraceful and frightening statistic, but a reality that will not change until individual attitudes change. There are many steps which might be taken to change this situation; some involve long-term legislative changes, educational programs, and rehabilitation programs; others include short-term, immediate public awareness programs. An example of the former involves the monitoring of the sentences imposed by the courts on convicted drunk drivers. An example of the latter is encouraging reporting by citizens of drunk drivers to law enforcement officials. This recommendation letter addresses such an immediate, short-term, and inexpensive public awareness program.

Washington State has a program to encourage citizens to report drunk drivers which it calls the "poster girl" drunk driver program; Colorado, Nebraska and Utah, call their similar efforts REDDI (Report Every Drunk Driver Immediately). Maryland calls its program Citizen Report Drunk Driver Program. Through these programs, these five States successfully and relatively inexpensively <sup>1/</sup> increase public awareness of the drunk driver problem and encourage citizen involvement to help solve it. For example, in Nebraska from June 1981 to May 1982, 2,836 suspected drunk drivers were reported to police, and as a result, police intercepted 1,827 potentially drunk drivers and actually arrested 1,428 drivers for driving while intoxicated (DWI). Similar statistics for Colorado, Maryland, Utah, and Washington are shown in Table 1.

Studies have shown that drunk drivers generally do not believe they will be caught, and in fact usually they are not. The chance of their being stopped by enforcement authorities is only one in a thousand, yet DWI arrests nationwide have increased from 561,000 in 1969 to more than 1,300,000 in 1981. <sup>2/</sup> Of the 13,000 DWI arrests made in the State of Washington from March 1980 to July 1982, 1,000 arrests resulted from citizens' reports of potentially drunk drivers.

<sup>1/</sup> The budget for the Colorado program was \$25,550, of which \$17,500 covered production of posters and related materials, radio spot announcements, and television materials. The budget for the State of Washington program was \$18,000, all of which was printing expenditures.

<sup>2/</sup> John Volpe, Chairman, President's Commission on Drunk Driving, Statement Before the Subcommittee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, August 5, 1982.

Table 1.—REDDI Program Statistics.

State and Program Name	Program Evaluation Time Period	Number of Months	Total Number of Calls and CB Reports	Total Number of Contacts	Total Number of Arrests for DWI
Colorado "REDDI"	December 1980 to July 1982	20 months	13,274	2,701 20% of Calls	1,661 62% of Contacts
Maryland "Citizen Report Drunk Driver Program"	July 1 to August 29, 1982	2 months	1,623	500 31% of Calls	230 46% of Contacts
Nebraska "REDDI"	June 1981 to May 1982	12 months	2,836	1,827 64% of Calls	1,428 78% of Contacts
Utah "REDDI"	May 1, 1982 to June 30, 1982	2 months	262	102 38% of Calls	76 74% of Contacts
Washington "POSTER GIRL"	March 1980 to July 1982	27 months	8,000	1,400 18% of Calls	1,000 71% of Contacts

Nebraska reports that during the first 12 months of its program, the State experienced 26 percent fewer fatalities than the previous year. Also, from June 1980 to May 1981, 41 percent of the fatal accidents were listed as involving alcohol yet from June 1981 to May 1982, the alcohol involvement was reported at 37 percent, constituting a 10-percent reduction in fatal accidents involving alcohol. While the Safety Board cannot specifically correlate these results to the Nebraska REDDI Program, and undoubtedly other factors contributed to some degree, it is not aware of any other significant changes in State enforcement policy or procedures which would have brought about these reductions.

The five programs discussed above have been implemented by either the States' highway safety or highway law enforcement agencies, or both. The individuals involved in the programs reviewed by the Safety Board were enthusiastic about their respective State programs, and indicated that media support and local enforcement agency involvement were key elements in the success of the programs. Most programs were "kicked off" by large press conferences hosted by the Governors of the respective States.

The programs typically make use of posters depicting real-life surviving victims of drunk drivers, and telephone numbers where citizens can call to report drunk drivers. Utah utilizes billboards and bumper stickers with the message "Drunk Drivers Hurt People Be REDDI". Brochures are used to give citizens information on how to spot drunk drivers, how to report drunk drivers to the police by citizens band (CB) radio and by telephone, what information should be given to the police when reporting drunk drivers, and what not to do when a drunk driver is encountered. Publicizing reports from the enforcement agency on a weekly or monthly basis is necessary to inform citizens of the effectiveness of their reporting efforts and to encourage them to continue reporting.

Based on the positive results of State programs to encourage citizens to report drunk drivers, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Mayor of the District of Columbia and the Governors of the States listed:

Implement a citizen awareness and citizen drunk driver reporting program such as the REDDI-type programs now used by Colorado, Maryland, Nebraska, Utah, and Washington. (Class II, Priority Action)  
(H-82-35)

The Safety Board is concurrently recommending to the International Association of Chiefs of Police and The National Safety Council that they collaborate and act as focal points for gathering and disseminating information on REDDI-type programs, and provide pertinent information and assistance to interested States and local communities.

BURNETT, Chairman, GOLDMAN, Vice Chairman, and McADAMS, BURSLEY, and ENGEN, Members, concurred in this recommendation.



By: Jim Burnett  
Chairman