

**Illinois Traffic Records Coordinating Committee**  
**April 24, 2006**

**Attendees**

**Division of Traffic Safety:** Mehdi Nassirpour, Mike Stout, Sandy Klein, Karen Magee, Mary Ann Paulis, Joyce Schroeder, Lori Midden, Kris Boyer, Susan Fitzgerald, John Werthwein  
**IDOT:** Mark Kinkade, Rob Robinson, Priscilla Tobias, Roseanne Nance, Matt Mueller, John Webber  
**ISP:** Sherri Akers, Alan Burgard, Jeff Darko  
**SOS:** Kris Minor  
**IL Tollway:** John Benda  
**IDPH:** Suzanne Gray  
**EMSC:** Ruth Kafeenstok, Dan Leonard  
**U of I-Springfield:** James Hall  
**NHTSA:** Don McNamara  
**FHWA:** Norm Stoner, Mike Staggs, Greg Piland  
**Grundy County Highway:** Craig Cassen  
**Chzm Hill:** Athreya-Sreenivasan

Mike Stout welcomed everyone to the meeting and announced that Secretary Martin would arrive about 10:00 am. He then had everyone introduce themselves.

Mike asked for corrections/additions to the minutes. Priscilla Tobias noted the correction to the Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan and with that correction, the minutes were approved.

The meeting was turned over to Norm Stoner, FHWA, who presented a thorough update on SAFETEA-LU. His PowerPoint presentation is attached. He explained that part of his job is to make sure that Illinois is in compliance. This legislation mandates a Traffic Records Coordinating Committee. Norm suggested that we need a fresh perspective on collection performance legacy of roadways which will answer many questions. We have struggled for 40 years to discover why crashes happen. We need to know more about why crashes happen and what we can do to lower crashes. He stated he is certain that within the integrated data lie the answers to these questions. We must integrate data immediately to save lives.

Don McNamara stated that Congress is getting more specific on reports and that the national expectations will implement effective and efficient record systems. He gave a history on data collection dating back to 1924 and stated that House Report 1700, that passed the Highway Safety Act, stated records are a priority and that since we could put a rocket on the moon, we should be able to fix the records system by 1967! Congress allocates millions of dollars in 408 funds to many states and we are still not moving forward at any level. Don re-iterated the reason we are here is to save lives. Numbers are up nationally but not in Illinois. There are many sources and data must come together. He cited the example of 26,000 commercial motor vehicle crashes are not coded as crashes. The data base is not correct so carrier cannot be investigated. 79% of missing data is in Chicago—this is a training issue which must be addressed. Congress is mandating a Traffic Records Coordinating Committee which must be all knowledgeable of activities of state. This committee must provide approval of linkage between agencies to avoid duplication of programs.

To be in compliance with the 408, states must have a good Traffic Records Coordinating Committee. The executive level must give direction and have a vision of where Illinois needs to go. The 408 also requires a strategic plan which includes a plan of action and performance goals and reviews. Baseline information is difficult to gather. Communication and leadership will move the numbers forward and will spend money wisely to move the data. Don gave a moving example of the importance of linking this data quickly. On 9-11, most of the terrorists had been

stopped for some violations. If the data bases had been connected, think what could have been stopped.

Congress is expecting us to following guidelines. Agencies must bring safety issues to TRCC. We need to identify everything about crashes and integrate not only in Illinois but with other states. Secretary Mineta knows that motor vehicle crashes are preventable. He expects us to do better. CODES is the best bet to move numbers forward. Illinois has a CODES grant and this data has a great potential of moving policy in Illinois as well as nationally. Must identify which issues are most important, categorize and move forward.

Greg Piland from FHWA followed Don McNamara with a PowerPoint presentation which is attached. He stated that after leaving IDOT, he was denied access to our FARS data. He also was denied access to federal agency data. He was perplexed by the inability to share data. Greg stated that part of the problem with IDOT's data is there are 500,000 crashes a year and it is a very difficult task to enter all the crashes manually. There also is a concern of a liability issue with the release of data which should be negated if the data given is being used to solve a problem.

Greg asked the committee the question "why are we here today?" Suzanne Gray answered because she was asked to present. Craig Cassen, Grundy County Highway Engineer, is looking for data to improve safety as well as for funding sources.

Greg explained that the CHSP is the umbrella for highway safety—ITRCC is the information processing part of the CHSP. The Highway Safety Plan falls under the umbrella of the CHSP. This taps into areas for funding of MENSIS, MMUCC. Suzanne Gray expressed concern over the 12 month deadline for the grant which inhibits projects. Her projects are often for multiple years's funding. Mehdi explained that the 408 funding allows for multiple years but requires yearly results and updates.

Secretary Martin asked how do we get this done and continue to improve. We must learn to share information to save lives. He suggested we "get out of our silos" and share information. We must be better, faster and quicker. Sharing data has not been shared in the past and that is wrong. We must put our funding where it does the most good. Secretary Martin gave the example of one stop truck permits. We are in the process of linking IL Commerce Commission, IDOT, SOS and the Department of Revenue to be able to share data in the near future. This is so important for the safety on roadways to make sure permits, regulations, etc are current and that vehicles are properly licensed.

The Secretary explained if there are concerns about sharing data with another agency, notify the TRCC and the issues will be addressed. The goal of the next few months is how we share information. Secretary Martin is willing to call agency heads to expedite the process. Please let him know if you have any roadblocks at your agencies.

Suzanne Gray explained she is responsible for the four data bases listed on her handout (attached). She reviewed each data base's strengths and weaknesses. Some of the biggest issues she has are: lack of staff, huge backlog of data which must be manually entered, non-trauma centers not capturing data and incompatible data systems. Don McNamara stated that hospitals are required to report, do they? Suzanne replied that she doesn't know.

Mehdi Nassirpour gave an update on the CODES grant. He stated that Suzanne Gray had sent a letter of support but with the re-organization of Public Health it dictated committee approval and a legal approval to release their data. Mehdi explained it has taken over 1 ½ years to get approval for the release of data from Public Health. Susan Fitzpatrick was hired to be the CODES support person. Her first step has been to link to hospital records which are not compatible are and are not complete. She has had many data linkage problems; however she has been able to link data bases. Working to complete linkage before June meeting of 25 states.

John Webber explained that he is only the moderator of this committee. He has an extensive background for implementing and meeting guidelines and criteria. He outlined the attached plan and will ask the four sub-committees to give a brief overview of their committee. The first three pages of his handout give the background of the ITRCC. John emphasized the need to follow the vision statement “in-depth relational analysis”. He then reviewed objectives of each sub-committee.

Priscilla Tobias, Engineering Safety Subcommittee, discussed the CHSP and the 10 areas to reduce fatalities using the four Es. IDOT needs HSP funding for the study. Engineering needs work zone data to drive decisions. Trying to get projects that address issues, identify trends contributing factors that drive policy changes, priorities trying to look at the big picture. She gave the example that Districts have safe communities that identify problem areas. Chicago had a problem with a rollover with semis. She found out about it before the district.

Also, crash report form need to be compliant with MMUCC. Committee needs to review and streamline. Big issue is user perspective—needs to be user friendly. She gave examples of how to accomplish, to integrate data and identify areas. Need better decisions on reallocating funds.

Mark Kinkade, Information System/Technology Subcommittee, discussed the importance of being proactive and getting our systems in line with 2006. He explained that our data is so secure that we need to unlock it before our users have access. Mark suggested it is our plan to develop a data warehouse to allow users to retrieve data without calling a programmer. The goal is to develop a system that is rich in user features, simple to use and provide immediate access to data. Further, as we begin investigating requirements to develop this program, we need to be able to add fields to present collection. We essentially have three ways we receive crash data: MCR, Hard Copy and File Transfers. MCR and File Transfers are the fastest and best ways to receive the crash data. MCR must be available to all law enforcement statewide. This should be the number 1 priority. Mark will be meeting next week with the Technology team to begin developing a framework from which to provide solutions to the problems we face today with data. Mark suggested the importance of Safety Engineering (Priscilla’s group) being present as well as anyone else who would like to attend is invited. GIS is a tool that each system must have available. Re-evaluate ways we build road to save lives. Mark discussed that USDOT has funding for Vehicle Information Infrastructure which is a very new concept using technology and communication infrastructure to mitigate congestion and crashes. This technology is used in various ways but, GPS devices and GIS are technologies at the center. This initiative if successful provides information on crashes, delays and lets the driver know to change routes. Information System sub-committee will work to make data availability better and Mark asked for volunteers.

Mary Ann Paulis agreed that John’s synopsis was accurate. Areas represented on sub-committee: Trauma Injury Registry (IDPH); Emergency Medical Services Database (IDPH); Data Capture (ISP); Crash Information System (IDOT); Vital Records (IDPH); Vehicle/Drivers Records (SOS); Data Analysis/Reporting (IDOT). Sub-Committee Goal: Ensure that complete, accurate and timely traffic safety data are collected, analyzed and made available for decision-making to reduce crashes, deaths and injuries on Illinois’ highways. The short - term action plan includes: 1) Improve MMUCC Compliance: Overall data element compliance is high (102 of 111 elements captured). Of the three data types, Collected, Derived and Linked, an emphasis on Linked could be our focus with 7 of the 9 missing elements in this category. Roadway configuration data is especially important and the sub-committee will work with Highways and OP&P. This effort 2) Reduce the number of “not stated” or “unknown” values on the SR1050, crash reporting form. 3) Stress certain element capture during MCR/ law enforcement training

Sandy Klein, Human Factors Sub-Committee, is working on gathering BAC levels, cell phone usage as a crash contributor, the consequences of not wearing a motorcycle helmet, drowsy driving, a DUI tracking system and crash information on young drivers. The BAC is listed on all fatal crash reports but not on crash reports involving just injuries. Linking to IDPH will provide most of this information on BAC levels. Gathering cell phone data is difficult. Law enforcement agencies can mark the box on the crash report to indicate cell phone usage, but often it is often difficult for the officer to determine if a cell phone was being used at the time of the crash. Another tracking mechanism would be to collect this data through observational surveys. Governor Blagojevich has signed the legislation into law that prohibits drivers 18 and under from using a cell phone. Motorcycle casualties are an important issue in Illinois since we do not have a helmet law. Data linkage with Public Health will show us the medical consequences of helmeted versus non-helmeted operators and passengers who are involved in motor vehicle crashes. Drowsy and fatigued drivers are two items considered major contributing factors to motor vehicle-related injuries and fatalities. We will try collecting data through observational surveys as well as rest areas. The DUI tracking system is a long-term goal of this sub-committee (1-2 years). Another long term goal is working with SOS on crash data of young drivers with previous crash and citation records. This will take a link to the driver history file at SOS.

John opened the discussion to the committee. Matt Mueller feels that staffing and funding are a big issue. Can this group leverage funding for staff? All agencies have same problem. Mark says this is a risk that has to be identified as well as sharing data. Leadership is ready to break down walls. John suggested adding funding sources as a 5<sup>th</sup> goal. Norm Stoner says power of the committee will give funding power but you must show success/progress and sources will become available. Matt announced that the CHSP Safety Summit will be July 19<sup>th</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the kickoff with 10 emphasis areas. This will be a great time to show leadership/progress of the TRCC. Strategy, risks, hurdles can be presented at this meeting.

TRCC needs to meet again before the July summit. John suggested smaller group meetings. Mehdi suggested that issues be presented to subcommittees as goals. One issue is how much money can be spent on data from agencies.

John then asked "What is missing?" John Benda from IL Tollway asked if we have a baseline—where we are and where are we going?

Mike Stout responded that Traffic Safety is addressing problems. Data Nexus just completed an audit of Safety Data and Data Services which Traffic Safety will be reviewing this afternoon. Traffic Records Assessment will be held April 30-May 5, 2006.

Suzanne inquired about the CPHS and what was incorporated for EMS? She had received nothing and explained that it is difficult to sell data linkage when EMS is not addressed. John agrees that EMS must be included and that the CHPS needs to be updated.

James Hall inquired about the cost of these activities. He suggested some feasibility analysis/measure of benefit study be done. John agreed that we need to measure progress of goals and value.

Craig Cassen discussed the GIS presentation by IDOT that he attended several years ago concerning direct access. He was quite happy with the possibility. Mark agrees that delivering GIS directly to locals is a "quick win".

Matt agreed that we need a "quick win" by end of summer. John said the plan must be implemented at 70% not waiting until it is 100%--a working document always changing.

John announced the next step. Heads of sub-committees will contact their member to schedule a meeting. He asked if anyone is willing to be a member of an ad hoc committee which would gather information.

Mike talked about the minutes from July 2005. We need to be proactive and he suggested that sub-committees meet next month and the whole committee meet June 26<sup>th</sup>. He explained that the Safety Data and Data Services section is working night and day to catch up crash reporting.

John agreed that every other month will work for the meetings and we will set the next meeting for June 26<sup>th</sup> at 9 am, same location.

Don McNamara stressed that if an agency has a plan that covers data, please share this with the TRCC. Norm reminded group that what is needed is ownership and commitment.

John explained again that Secretary Martin is willing to meeting with each agency head. IDOT is ready to help get each agency commitment.

Mehdi discussed that in terms of sharing data with one another, the TRCC should be responsible for developing agreement. John recommended a simple memo of understanding to each agency head.