



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **2,100 TRAFFIC SAFETY PROFESSIONALS CONVENE IN CHARLOTTE MARCH 26-28, AS U.S. ROADWAY FATALITIES CONTINUE TO CLIMB**

Charlotte, NC – More than 2,100 national, state and local traffic safety professionals will convene in Charlotte this Sunday for the 35<sup>th</sup> annual Lifesavers National Conference on Highway Safety Priorities. With traffic-related deaths climbing 7.2% in 2015, the largest one year increase in fatalities in a half century, and early estimates indicating another 8% increase through the first nine months of 2016, the conference will focus on strategies for reversing the number to achieve a zero goal.

This ambitious goal gained significant momentum in the past decade thanks to a coordinated effort between federal, state and local public and private sector organizations. Working collaboratively, these “zero” initiatives are leveraging education, engineering, enforcement, emergency medical services, and advocacy to ensure the safety of all roadway users. To capitalize on this work at Lifesavers, Dr. David Harkey, Director of the Highway Safety Research Center at the University of North Carolina, will examine the uptick in fatalities during the opening plenary session on Sunday, March 26 (8:30 a.m.). He’ll then ask a multi-disciplinary panel of experts to share their insights on proven strategies for addressing roadway deaths that includes:

- Brian Latouf, General Motor’s Executive Director of Global Safety Field Investigations, Regulations and Certification at its Michigan-based Vehicle Engineering Center ;
- Richard Retting, Chair of the Institute of Transportation Engineers’ Vision Zero Steering Committee and National Practice Leader for Safety & Research at Sam Schwartz Transportation Consultants;
- Jana Simpler, Chair of the Governors Highway Safety Association and Director of the Delaware Office of Traffic Safety;
- Colonel Tracy Trott, General Chair of the International Association of Chiefs of Police and head of the Tennessee Highway Patrol; and
- Angela Brown, Program Manager for the Tennessee Child Passenger Safety Center at Meharry Medical College in Nashville.

Joining the panelists on the dais Sunday morning will be Rich Leotta, a victim advocate who, together with his family, successfully advocated for enactment of one of the nation’s toughest ignition interlock device laws. The measure is named in honored of Leotta’s son, Noah, a Montgomery County, Maryland police officer struck and killed by an alcohol and drug impaired motorist while working a holiday anti-drunk driving detail in 2015. Passage and enforcement of strong laws is a proven countermeasure for preventing not only drunk driving, but other factors associated with traffic deaths including speeding and lack of seat belt use.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Acting Deputy Administrator Jack Danielson, will continue the discussion on Monday, March 27 at 12:30 p.m. during the Public Service Awards Luncheon. He'll focus on the agency's strategies for driving down crash-related injuries and fatalities, with an eye toward leveraging proven education and enforcement countermeasures and in-vehicle technology.

The North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program is hosting this year's Conference at the Charlotte Convention Center. In addition to the plenary session speakers, leading experts in the fields of distracted and impaired driving and walking; child passenger, pedestrian, bicycle, motorcycle, teen, and older driver safety; adult occupant protection; vehicle technology; law enforcement; and commercial vehicles will discuss the latest research, evidence-based strategies, proven countermeasures and promising new approaches in more than 80 workshops. Hot topics include:

- Driver Assistance Technologies: What Are They & How Will They Help Me Be a Safer Driver? (March 26, 10:30 a.m.)
- Staying Ahead of Changing Drug Trends (March 26, 10:30 a.m.)
- Using New Research to Understand and Address Motorcyclists' Attitudes, Behaviors and Crashes (March 26, 10:30 a.m.)
- Toward Zero Deaths: Beyond Campaign Slogans to Action on the Ground (March 26, 1:30 p.m.)
- New Tactics for Compelling Hardliners to Buckle Up (March 26, 1:30 p.m.)
- Why Aren't There Seat Belts on Schools Buses? (March 26, 3:45 p.m.)
- Overcoming Misconceptions & Preconceptions About Law Enforcement (March 27, 9 a.m.)
- The New Driver Impairment: Conditions That Affect Aging Drivers (March 27, 9 a.m.)
- What Happens When the Driver is a Robot? Autonomous Vehicles, Human Behavior & Safety (March 27, 10:45 a.m.)
- Teens & Situational Awareness: Training Drivers to Recognize the Dangers of Distraction (March 27, 10:45 a.m.)
- Overcoming Wrong Way Crashes (March 27, 2:15 p.m.)
- Leveraging the Latest Research to Combat Drugged Driving (March 27, 2:15 p.m.)
- Unattended is Unacceptable, New Tech Advancements to Keep Kids Safe (March 28, 9 a.m.)
- Impact of Body-worn Cameras in Traffic Safety (March 28, 9 a.m.)
- Technologies for Safer Walking & Biking (March 28, 10:45 a.m.)

The latest traffic safety technology, devices and programs will be on display in the exhibit hall Sunday and Monday. Conference attendees will have the opportunity to explore how Tennessee Tech's iCube is using virtual reality and state-of-the-art computer simulations to help novice drivers understand the dangerous effects of impaired, distracted and drowsy driving. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services BAT (Blood Alcohol Testing) Mobile, which is deployed to DWI checkpoints throughout the year, will also be on-site along with a lap and shoulder-belt equipped school bus. North Carolina kicked-off a 13-county pilot program last year to assess student compliance with mandatory seat belt use.

Interviews with plenary and workshop speakers are available upon request and press admission to the Conference is available. For more information, visit <http://www.lifesaversconference.org>. Follow the discussion on Twitter at #lifesavers2017.

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