

Autumn  
2012

MONTANA'S DUI TASK FORCES

preventing impaired driving and crashes ... at the County level

Task Force Exchange

## MDT launches new media campaign during holiday season

Priscilla Sinclair, State Highway Traffic Safety Officer

As we enter the festive season of Christmas and New Year's, the Montana Department of Transportation aims to promote highway safety with a new campaign sporting the tagline: ***Be the jaws of life!***

The same tagline is intended for use in separate messages that focus on major traffic safety related areas that include deterring impaired driving and promoting safety belt use. The campaign features television spots, radio spots, posters, and outdoor billboards. "Mythcrasher" videos are shared virally on social networking sites and on Internet sites such as Pandora. These videos are available on MDT's website, [www.plan2live.mt.gov](http://www.plan2live.mt.gov).

The television spots feature people of all ages helping those around them make smart decisions when it comes to traffic safety. These people display responsible behavior by preventing impaired driving, by taking the keys of those who should not drive, calling a taxi, and volunteering to be the designated driver. They do this in a very personal way, looking directly at the camera when speaking.

By speaking up instead of remaining silent, they are the "jaws of life." Their friends and loved ones don't end up in a situation where the real jaws of life have to extricate them from their vehicle if involved in a serious traffic crash.

In addition, MDT will issue news releases to media statewide and invite expert guests to discuss Montana's drinking and driving issues by providing interviews on local radio shows and roundtable-type television shows.

Local law enforcement entities under contract with MDT provide enhanced traffic patrols as part of the Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) and engage in media outreach to inform the public that patrols will be out in force during the holiday season. The goal is to deter and detect impaired drivers and those not buckled up.

MDT is committed to the plan2live umbrella message, which encourages people to proactively plan for safe passage to their destinations. Work will begin in the new year with MDT webmasters to enhance the Plan2Live website by consolidating safety information from other pages on MDT's website to [www.plan2live.mt.gov](http://www.plan2live.mt.gov), and providing a user-friendly interface for those seeking traffic safety information.



DUI Task Forces are encouraged to adapt any of the artwork, radio, or television spots to feature their local name and/or logo. Please contact Priscilla Sinclair with the Montana State Highway Safety Office to make arrangements for sharing the files: [psinclair@mt.gov](mailto:psinclair@mt.gov) or (406) 444-7417.

Other seasonal messages are available at [www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov](http://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov).

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# News coverage of alcohol's harm may sway support for liquor-control laws

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Researchers had participants read actual news reports, randomly selected from newspapers across the United States, about violent crimes and various accidental injuries – half of which were edited to mention the role of alcohol and half of which were edited not to make such mention.

Those who read the articles mentioning alcohol's role later showed more support for enforcing laws regarding serving intoxicated people, sales to underage youth and open containers, compared to those who had read the other articles.

The results are important because prior work from this research group has indicated that fewer than one-fourth of newspaper reports and one-tenth of TV news reports on alcohol-related crimes and non-car-related fatal injuries actually mention that alcohol was involved.

"The underreporting of alcohol's role in crime and accidents may be having a real impact on public health," said Michael Slater, co-author of the study and professor of communication at Ohio State University.

"If people were more aware of how prevalent alcohol use was in crimes and all forms of accidents, there may be more of a public demand for tougher law enforcement."

Slater conducted the study with Andrew Hayes, associate professor, and David Edwoldsen, professor, both in the School of Communication at Ohio State; and Catherine Goodall of Kent State University.

Their study appears in the March 2012 issue of the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*.

The study involved a random sample of 789 adults who were recruited for the study from across the country.

Participants read online one of 60 representative articles taken from U.S. local newspapers. They were evenly split between articles about violent crimes, car crashes, and other injuries.

Half the articles mentioned that alcohol played a causative role in the crime or accident, and half did not.

Participants were told that the purpose of the study was to evaluate the news articles, such as how clear they were, and they were asked several questions about their thoughts on what they read.

They were also asked several questions asking them to indicate their level of support for current liquor laws, such as those regulating sales to underage youth, on a scale of 1 to 10. Participants were told these questions would help researchers understand their evaluation of the article.

Those who read articles mentioning alcohol use rated their support for alcohol enforcement higher than did those who read articles that had no such mention. Findings were similar whether they read articles about crimes or injuries.

Participants were also asked whether they would support new alcohol control laws, including restricting the number of bars and liquor stores in an area, restricting advertising, and making servers legally liable

“ *If people were more aware of how prevalent alcohol use was in crimes and all forms of accidents, there may be more of a public demand for tougher law enforcement.* ”

—Dr. Michael D. Slater

Social and Behavioral Science Professor  
School of Communication, Ohio State University

(Continued from page 2)

if they give alcohol to intoxicated customers.

The findings showed that participants who read the stories mentioning alcohol were no more likely to support these proposed new laws than those who read the other articles.

"In retrospect, it is not too surprising that there wasn't more support for these new laws, given the current political environment against more government control over economic activities," Slater said.

But the results do show that **people may support tougher enforcement of current laws — at least if the news media accurately reported the scope of the problem**, he said.

Public health estimates indicate that more than 30 percent of fatalities due to violent crimes, car crashes and other accidental injuries are in part attributable to alcohol use.

But a 2006 study by Slater and his colleagues showed that the media reporting of alcohol's role in crime and accidents is much lower. Newspapers mention alcohol's role in only 7.3 percent of their articles about violent crimes and 4.8 percent of accidental injuries. Television news was even less likely to mention the role of alcohol.

Slater noted that, in this study, support for alcohol law enforcement increased after reading only one article.

"The effect of reading one article may not last long, but people will be constantly reminded if alcohol's role is mentioned regularly in accident and crime stories," he said. "These stories are ubiquitous in local news."

**“ Local governments have a role to play in increasing media coverage of alcohol's role in crime and accidents ”**  
—Dr. Michael D. Slater

Local governments have a role to play in increasing media coverage of alcohol's role in crime and accidents, he said.

"It would help if policies mandated that local law enforcement include information on alcohol use, when appropriate, in their reports on crimes and accidents," Slater said.

"If reporters see alcohol information in police reports, they will be more likely to include that information in their stories."

Source: <http://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-02-news-coverage-alcohol-sway-liquor-control.html>.

More information: Slater, M. D., Hayes, A. F., Goodall, C. E., & Ewoldsen, D. R. (March 2012).

Increasing support for alcohol-control enforcement through news coverage of alcohol's role in injuries and crime.

Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs, 73(2), 311. [www.jsad.com/jsad/link/73/311](http://www.jsad.com/jsad/link/73/311).

The complete report is available on request by email to Lisa Scates at [liscates@mt.gov](mailto:liscates@mt.gov) or by calling (406) 444-4307.

# Don't forget the victims

Montana Crime Prevention Conference—held October 22–25, 2012 in Billings, MT



One of the themes of this year's *Crime Prevention Conference* was the importance of remembering and considering victims of crime — which includes victims of DUI-related traffic crashes, injuries, and deaths.

Frequently, the focus is on the offender and ensuring justice is served through prosecution and sentencing. Victims find themselves thrust into the criminal justice system through no fault of their own, are often ill-equipped to respond, and may find themselves being re-victimized.

All disciplines plays a critical role in ensuring victims receive assistance throughout the process — from initial response to prosecution, incarceration, and advocacy — in order to reduce the severity of consequences they experience and restore the victims' faith in the criminal justice system.



Missoula County Sheriff Carl Ibsen shares about the loss of his wife, Judy Wang, after she was hit and killed September 25, 2009 by a drunk driver on Interstate 90 near Anaconda.

## Resources

### VIDEO: *Montana Crime Victims' Rights: A United Effort*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwM-loOLLRA>

This documentary highlights the needs and rights of victims in the state of Montana. Produced in conjunction with Ryan United, the Montana Board of Crime Control and Team Lazer Productions LLC.



Leo McCarthy speaks about the loss of his daughter, Mariah Daye McCarthy, killed October 28, 2007 in Butte by an underage driver who had been drinking.

In the video, he has a special plea for prosecutors:

**“ County Attorney, do not, do not — please — push away a first DUI and slap them on the wrist....make sure that person understands what he did....don't push him off so you see him in the revolving door of the process again.**

—Leo McCarthy  
Founder, Mariah's Challenge

**“ Where I used to believe we did a really good job, until I got to be on the victim end....it's a life altering experience.**

—Carl Ibsen  
Sheriff, Missoula County

Featured in the video documentary:

**Derek VanLuchene**—Victim, Founder of *Ryan United*

**Carl Ibsen**—Victim, Missoula County Sheriff  
**Leo McCarthy**—Victim, Founder of Mariah's Challenge

**Tanya Campbell**—Victim, Victim's Advocate, Missoula County Office of Planning & Grants

**Suzy Boylan**—Deputy County Attorney, Missoula County

**Kelsen Young**—Victim's Advocate, Executive Director of Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

**Peter Brown**—Victim

**Nicole Griffith**—Victim's Advocate, Executive Director of Victim Witness Assistance Services, Great Falls

**Steve Bullock**—Attorney General of Montana

**John Lamb**—Sheriff's Detective, Missoula County Sheriff's Office

## Victim Impact Panels

Victim Impact Panels began sweeping the country more than a decade ago. The panels brought together victims of drunk driving crashes and first-time impaired driving offenders. Today, panels are a common sentencing option in many courts, and an educational track in many driving programs and schools. Additionally, the panel concept has been expanded in some jurisdictions to include victims and offenders of other crimes besides impaired driving.

A typical *Victim Impact Panel* is a group of three or four victims who speak briefly about an impaired driving crash in which they were injured, or in which a loved one was killed or injured, and how it impacted their lives. They do not blame or judge those who listen. They simply tell their stories, describing how their lives and the lives of their families and friends were affected by the crash.

The purpose of the panels is to individualize and humanize the consequences of impaired driving, to change attitudes and behaviors, and to deter impaired driving recidivism. Panels also give victims a healing opportunity to share their stories in a meaningful way.

Research has shown that *Victim Impact Panels* significantly aid victim recovery and healing after catastrophic physical injury or killing of a loved one. By giving them a voice before an audience of DUI offenders, victims often discover something positive in their tragedy. They find that telling their stories makes a difference.

In addition to benefiting victims, VIPs can educate offenders, justice professionals, and community stakeholders about the consequences of impaired driving, build partnerships in the community to raise awareness and concern, and ultimately help to prevent future impaired driving crashes.

A variation of the *Victim Impact Panel* could include an offender or a professional affected by impaired driving. This would typically be called a *Drunk Driving Impact Panel* or *Impaired Driving Impact Panel*.

Panels may be conducted with or without assessing a participation fee.

### Getting started

MADD and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) partnered to provide a "[how-to](#)" document with basic information on how to design and organize a Victim Impact Panel, customizable for your community.

A hard copy is available on request from [LDemont@mt.gov](mailto:LDemont@mt.gov) or (406) 444-7411.

[Guiding Principles for VIPs](#) are contained in *Strategies for Addressing the DWI Offender: 10 Promising Sentencing Practices*.

### Death notification training

When someone dies violently and unexpectedly, such as in a DUI-related traffic crash, law enforcement officers will most likely be required to notify the next-of-kin.

The delivery of a notification will likely remain etched in the family's memory forever. Family members who feel they were treated fairly and sensitively by law enforcement during such notifications are more likely to be cooperative in any subsequent investigation or criminal proceedings.

When done poorly, notifications may leave families with the perception that officers are callous, thoughtless, and insensitive.

Performing death notifications is physically and emotionally exhausting—and having to deliver bad news repeatedly can leave death notifiers with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other physical and emotional problems. Officers are expected to express the right words, anticipate and understand family emotions, and respond with empathy.

This training will offer officers best practices to use as tools during these most sensitive moments in their career. Death notification protocols also give notifiers the skills and self-awareness to guard their own mental health.

This training will be provided at a variety of locations statewide in spring/summer 2013, in conjunction with legal and legislative updates.

For more information regarding death notification training, contact Rebecca Sturdevant, MADD volunteer, at [beckymadd@gmail.com](mailto:beckymadd@gmail.com).

To host a training, contact Montana's Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor program at (406) 498-6941, or email [barb@inmantraining.com](mailto:barb@inmantraining.com).

The training schedule will be posted online at [www.mdt.mt.gov/tsrp/training.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/tsrp/training.shtml).

The dual purpose of *Victim Impact Panels* is to **impact first-time DUI offenders** and to **provide clinically healthy, restorative benefits to victims**.



Eric Krug, a DUI victim, and his mother speak regularly in a "Deadly Decisions" program in Georgia. They know first hand that drinking and driving have terrible and life-lasting repercussions.

Source:

[www.maddsoa.com/vip-information-and-guidelines.html](http://www.maddsoa.com/vip-information-and-guidelines.html)

# NEW!

## DUI Task Force resource sharing website

MDT has prepared a website to facilitate the sharing of resources among community coalitions. Please upload posters, public service announcements, news releases, brochures, billboards, and other work products – and help other DUI Task Forces in Montana!

In providing this site, we hope to inspire creativity and activity and help DUI Task Forces conserve their resources – both monetary and in terms of volunteer time.

For more information, contact Lorelle at [LDemont@mt.gov](mailto:LDemont@mt.gov) or (406) 444-7411.

### 2011 county-level crash data

Available online at  
[www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/datastats/crashdata.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/datastats/crashdata.shtml)

#### We Want Your Comments

*Thank you for your dedication and hard work!*

### A CALL TO ACTION

Please enhance the effectiveness of statewide efforts to reduce impaired driving crashes, injuries and fatalities in Montana by sharing your expertise, concerns, opinions, projects, challenges, successes, and other resources with other traffic safety advocates in the state.

Please submit articles for inclusion in future issues of this newsletter to:

Lorelle Demont  
State Highway Traffic Safety Office  
Montana Department of Transportation  
PO Box 201001, Helena MT 59620-1001  
Office (406) 444-7411  
[ldemont@mt.gov](mailto:ldemont@mt.gov)

### MONTANA'S DUI TASK FORCES

preventing impaired driving and crashes

...AT THE COUNTY LEVEL

[www.mdt.mt.gov/safety/dui\\_taskforces.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/safety/dui_taskforces.shtml)

No designated driver when out partying?



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