NACo Rural Road Safety Peer Exchange Network
Conference Call Notes
April 24, 2012, 2:00PM EDT

1. **Introductions – All**
   - David Brand, Madison County, WI
   - Eugene Calvert, Collier County, FL
   - Rich Chamberlin, Trinity County, TX
   - Joseph Cheung, FHWA
   - Jim Davis, La Plata County, CO
   - Frank Douma, Center for Excellence in Rural Safety, University of Minnesota
   - Larry Hummel, Van Buren County, MI
   - Brian Keierleber, Buchanan County, IA
   - Ejaz Khan, Clark County, WA
   - Joseph Kovach, Huron County, OH
   - Mark Nahra, Woodbury County, IA
   - John Swift, Santa Rosa County, CA
   - Lisa Weik, Washington County, MN

   Erin Kenley, FHWA
   Karen Scurry, DOT
   Brian Roberts, NACE

   Cindy Wasser, NACo

2. **Review of the Summary of the January 17, 2012 Conference Call—Cindy Wasser, NACo**
   - Participants reviewed past and upcoming NACo Rural Road Safety programs.
   - Participants discussed latest developments on federal transportation funding and new resources available through DOT FHWA.
   - Participants reviewed updates from the Federal Highways Administration.
   - Updates from Peer Exchange participants.
   - Discussion about system-wide approaches to safety planning.
   - Full meeting notes available on NACo Rural Road Safety Resource Center.

3. **Recent and/or Upcoming Activities of the NACo Rural Road Safety Project and the Peer Exchange Project —Cindy Wasser, NACo**
   - **3.1 NACo Best Practices Guide**
     NACo’s Best Practices Guide will be published and distributed electronically and hard-copy in July. NACo staff is looking forward to sharing the insight, best practices, and experiences of our Peer Exchange participants!
   - **3.2 Toward Zero Deaths Workshop at Annual Conference**
NACo’s Annual Conference will include a joint workshop with NACE on the county elected official’s role in promoting the Toward Zero Deaths initiative.

3.3 Safety Forum at State Association Meeting
NACo is still looking to host a 1.5 day safety forum in conjunction with a state association meeting. Discussions are underway with FL (FACERS/FAC). More information to come.

3.4 Potential Webinar Topics
Ideas for future webinar topics:

- Mark Nahra, Trinity County, TX: Signage to reduce accidents may be a relevant topic.
- Brian Keierleber, Buchanan County, IA: A good topic may be friction courses at curves. There are good resources from FHWA’s Frank Julian that we can highlight. There is a 3M product on the market that is marketed to reduce friction by holding chlorides and reducing icing. This example of private innovation may be something to note.
- Sight-distance
  - During NACo’s Champion Roundtable, many people referenced that sight-distance was of particular concern.
  - Brian Keierleber, Buchanan County, IA: Sight-distance means different things in different areas, particularly during different seasons. In Iowa, drivers contend with “corner corners” and “dust trails,” which limit visibility at intersections.
  - Focus on design best practices.

4. Updates from NACE—Brian Roberts, NACE
- The National Association of County Engineers (NACE) hosted their Annual Conference in Lexington, KY April 1-5. One-third of the program was dedicated to safety topics.
- ATSSA has just released a joint ATSSA/NACE publication entitled, “Cost Effective Local Road Safety Planning and Implementation.” It is an update of an earlier publication, “Low Cost Local Road Safety Solutions.” An electronic copy will be available soon on the NACE website. There will also be a limited number of hard copies available.

5. Updates from FHWA—Erin Kenley, FHWA
- **Updates to FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures**
  - FHWA’s guidance on roadway safety countermeasures was updated January 2012. The updates incorporate the latest safety research that became available since the list was first created in 2008.
  - The Countermeasures list represents research-proven strategies that are known to be effective, but are not yet widely applied nation-wide.
- **Safety of Cyclists RSA Publication**
FHWA is producing a Bicycle Road Safety Audit Guidelines and Prompts Lists document to provide transportation agencies and RSA teams with a better understanding of the safety of cyclists in the transportation system when conducting an RSA. This resource should be available on the FHWA Safety website by the end of May and available in hard copy this summer.

- **Noteworthy Practices Database**
  - The FHWA website now features a query-tool to locate brief best practice examples. Each case study includes a project summary, results, key accomplishments, and contact information. Presently, 20 states are represented.
  - NACo will share county best practices with FHWA to expand this resource.

- **Champions Guide**
  FHWA will be releasing an updated Champions Guide that highlights leadership and stakeholder roles in championing rural road safety issues. This resource is targeted for non-state DOT people.

- **FHWA Peer-to-Peer Program**
  FHWA’s Peer-to-Peer Program can host by-request face to face or virtual meetings on topics of interest to the participants. If there is a topic of concern to you, reach out to FHWA staff.

- **Web-Based HSIP Courses**
  Five new web-based courses related to the HSIP are available from the National Highway Institute.
  The FHWA just completed two web based courses that are available to you free of cost: the HSIP Overview course and the SHSP Development course. These courses are available through the NHI website.

6. **Comments and Suggestions for NACo’s Best Practices Guide—All**

   Download from [http://www.naco.org/programs/csd/Pages/RuralRoadSafety.aspx](http://www.naco.org/programs/csd/Pages/RuralRoadSafety.aspx)

   - Is any information incorrect?
   - Is any information missing?
   - How can we make this resource better for county staff? Elected officials?

   Participants will email feedback to Cindy (cwasser@naco.org).

7. **Discussion: Roadway Safety at Railroad Crossings—All**

   - Is the safety around railroad crossings a significant concern in your community?
   - How are new or existing commercial activities changing the condition of roadways in your community?

   **Brian Keierleber, Buchanan County, IA:** There have been a few fatalities at railroad crossings.
The rail companies had requested stop signs at the crossings to reduce accidents, and Brian informed them that a full safety audit would be required. The county and railroad company compromised by installing Yield signs at the crossings.

A best practice has been putting reflective tape on the back-side of the Yield and RR crossing signs to increase visibility. The tape provides a “flashing sensation” for the drivers.

Buchanan hasn’t experienced an expansion of tracks, but instead more and longer trains.

Mark Nahra, Trinity County, TX: The county has installed Yield signs around crossings, although Stop signs have been requested by the rail companies.

Railroads are not inclined to work with local governments. Mark’s experience has been that the rail companies will not return calls about removing old polls in the railway right-of-way. It would be helpful if a third-party was able to organize regional staff listings of the rail company staff and distribute to the county engineers.

Lisa Weik, Washington County, MN: At NACo’s Rural Road Safety Roundtable at the Legislative Conference, there was discussion about connected vehicle technology. Right now, connected vehicles enable car computers to receive information from other vehicles and the roadway, but there may be potential for the smart vehicles to receive information from other oncoming trains and vice versa?

Washington County (St. Paul) is home to Hoffman Yards, which hosts 8% of all national rail traffic.

A problem in Washington County has been pedestrian walking on the railroad tracks with headphones, making themselves unable to hear the sounds of ongoing trains.

Larry Hummel, Van Buren County, MI: The rail company, CXS has been very helpful. Another company, Pioneer, has been less helpful.

Cindy Wasser, NACo: At the upcoming NACo Annual Conference, there will be a workshop specifically about opportunities for county leaders and the rail industry to work together better. Representatives of the rail industries will be in attendance.

8. Updates from Peer Exchange Participants –
   7.1 Short Term Safety Goals
   7.2 Challenges
   7.3 Successes
   7.4 Next Steps

Larry Hummel, Van Buren County, MI: Some in-house work is being done—hiring new staff, training new engineers. The county is conducting several Road Soft inventory
projects and received funding for 2 HRRR projects. The county also received noticed about 20 railroad crossings in need of repairs.

**Brian Keierleber, Buchanan County, IA:** The county is beginning work on what will be the first roundabout within the county’s rural road system. The roundabout will ease commuters traveling north-south. Other projects include: flattening of curves, shoulder paving, and installation of centerline rumblestrips.

**Lisa Weik, Washington County, MN:** The county experienced early success with roundabout in several smaller towns, and now 16 roundabouts have been installed throughout the county.

An educational campaign “Roundabout-U” teaches drivers how to navigate roundabouts. County staff talks to residents at fairs and retail stores.

A unique Hybrid Roundabout will be installed in downtown. This features 2-lanes of travel in the North-South direction and a single lane East-West. The extra-wide crosswalks are set-back from the circle circumference for added safety.

The county’s business community has embraced the installation of the roundabouts, saying that the continuous stream of travel throughout the downtown has brought new visitors to shops and restaurants.

**Mark Nahra, Trinity County, TX:** County recently finished its 3rd signage upgrade (with funding from 2 sources). The county is installing diamond-grade 30-36” signs and fluorescent yellow signs. (Diamond-Grade signage is a prismatic retroreflective sign sheeting material offered by 3M.)

9. **Set Date for Next Conference Call – All**

   June 11th, 2012 at 2PM EDT