NACo Rural Road Safety Peer Exchange Network
Meeting Summary
September 11, 2012, 2:00PM EDT

1. **Introductions – All**
   - Jon Oshel, Association of Oregon Counties
   - Joe Kovach, Huron County, OH
   - Albert Letzkus, Pima County, AZ
   - Rich Chamberlin, Trinity, TX
   - Donna Daughtery, Charles County, MD
   - Erin Kenley, FHWA
   - Brian Roberts, NACE
   - Bob Fogel, NACo
   - James Davenport, NACo
   - Cindy Wasser, NACo

2. **Review of the Summary of the April 24, 2012 Conference Call**
   - Participants reviewed upcoming NACo Rural Road Safety programs.
   - Participants learned about new FHWA resource for safety. (See below.)
   - Participants discussed safety challenges related to railroad crossings:
     - It is common for rail companies to advocate for the installation of stop signs at the crossing, rather than a Yield sign.
     - Installing reflective tape on the back of the Rail Crossing and Yield signs can dramatically raise visibility.
     - Participants reported challenges in contacting regional rail companies about needed improvements within the railroad right-of-way. A helpful resource would be an updated staff directory for all rail companies in a given region.
   - Updates from Peer Exchange participants.

3. **Recent and/or Upcoming Activities of the NACo Rural Road Safety Project and the Peer Exchange Project**

   NACo hosted a workshop about the national Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) program during the July Annual Conference. Over 40 people were in attendance.

   NACo will soon release “Improving the Safety of Rural Roadways: Noteworthy Practices from America's Counties,” a collection of best practices gathered from conversations with the Peer Exchange group.
NACo’s project with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is ending at on September 30th. However, NACo hopes to continue the quarterly conference calls of the Peer Exchange program.

4. MAP-21 Federal Transportation Legislation
   Erin Kenley, FHWA

MAP-21, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, was signed into law by President Obama on July 6, 2012. MAP-21, the first long-term highway authorization enacted since 2005, will fund surface transportation program at over $105 billion for 2013 and 2014.

Official information about MAP-21’s impact on federal safety programs will be released shortly by FHWA.

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding is up $1 billion over past funding. In some states, funding has doubled. The HSIP program will maintain its current structure. MAP-21 introduces new performance measurements. New performance measurements will be coordinated across DOT programs.

Whereas previous surface transportation legislation designated a set-aside for high-risk rural roadways, MAP-21 requires only that States obligate funds for this purpose if the fatality rate on such roads increases. If the fatality rate on high-risk rural roadways increases over a 2-year period, the State must obligate at least 200 percent of the designated FY2009 HRRR set-aside for improvement projects along that road corridor.

Bob Fogel, NACo
MAP-21 recommends county officials participate in in the development and implementation of state Highway Safety Plans. County Transportation Officials have been added to a core list of practitioners.

NACo will be providing feedback to DOT and FHWA on rule-making in the following areas: Planning, Safety, Bridge Improvements, and Environmental Stream-lining. We will ask members of this group to provide thoughts and expertise. Please stay tuned for more information.

5. Discussion: Is your county coordinating a Toward Zero Deaths Campaign?

*Toward Zero Deaths: A National Strategy on Highway Safety (TZD)* is a data-driven effort focusing on identifying and creating opportunities for changing American culture as it relates to highway safety. The effort focuses on developing strong leadership and champions in the organizations that can directly impact highway safety through engineering, enforcement, education, emergency medical service (EMS), policy, public health, communications, and other efforts. The intent is to develop a mechanism for bringing together a wider range of highway safety stakeholders to work toward institutional and cultural changes.
The American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA) has developed a Pledge that organizations can counties can adopt. Some states, including Minnesota and Idaho, are coordinating state-wide TZD initiatives.

Audience participation at NACo’s Annual Conference indicated that counties are interested in the TZD program, but haven’t yet begun signing onto the program.

Jon Oshel: In Oregon, counties are willing to jump on, but there hasn’t been a coordinated effort.

Donna Daugherty: Charles County Sheriff’s Office may be participating.

Rich Chamberlin: The menu of safety strategies offered through TZD may seem overwhelming to some.

Brian Roberts: It would be great if a resolution could be introduced at NACo’s Legislative Conference in support of TZD.

NACo will include a summary of TZD requirements in the next Rural Road Safety E-Bulletin.

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

Jon Oshel: I attended a FHWA sponsored event in Boise about changing crash data in program. It was a dynamite session! The session went beyond data collection and provided guidance on interpreting data and planning improvement projects. I saw good examples of ways to turn data in systematic improvements.

Look for a write-up of the event here: http://rspecb.safety.fhwa.dot.gov/

The Oregon Department of Transportation has provided guidance to counties on implementing MAP-21 and laid the ground-work for a peer exchange program. (Oregon experienced an 8-fold increase in HSIP money going to cities and counties.)

7. Set Date for Next Conference Call – All
   November 20th at 2PM EST