Florida Department of Transportation Research

LTAP Safety Circuit Rider
BD545-52

Annually, over 60 percent of the 40,000 roadway fatalities in America occur on low volume, local roads. A successful approach to this problem, the Road System Traffic Safety Review, focusing on signing and marking improvements, was developed in Mendocino County, California. A 2004 presentation by the Florida Project Demonstration Showcase Program highlighted the program's methods and how subsequent safety improvements reduced crashes by over 40 percent. As a result, the Federal Highway Administration funded a pilot program based on this concept, Safety Circuit Rider (SCR), administered through the national Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP). Florida was one of four states selected for the pilot.

University of Florida researchers served as program leaders to develop and implement SCR in Florida counties. During the contract period, 15 counties participated. For each county in the program, the program leaders met with local officials. A key strategy for program leaders was building a broad set of relationships with public service stakeholders, including government, private industry, and citizen special interest groups. Through these relationships, SCR teams were formed in each locality to review crash statistics and identify problem areas.

Program leaders developed and delivered training to SCR teams, based on federal state program safety objectives to guide them in understanding safety issues, practices, and solutions. A fundamental principle of both the original and pilot programs was to provide local authorities with simple, cost-effective safety solutions that had been demonstrated to reduce crashes and fatalities.

The teams identified a total of 110 sites which merited review. The majority of problem areas in all counties were intersections. After field investigations of the sites, SCR teams wrote reports documenting problems areas, including photographs. Improvements for each site were proposed based on program guidelines. These reports were delivered to local officials and to SCR program leaders.

Whether on rural two-lane roads or urban multilane and signaled, crash statistics show that intersections are the deadliest roadway feature and most in need of clear and effective marking and signage.

Among other accomplishments, SCR teams developed a list of general sign maintenance guidelines and provided the list to the counties. One county revised the job description for mowing staff to include sign washing, per an SCR recommendation. Another county, recognizing the value of crash statistics, requested that Florida Highway Patrol provide this data on a regular basis. SCR personnel produced and distributed a Highway Safety Resource CD.

Local officials generally received SCR reports very positively. In many cases, officials were unaware of the results of the crash statistics and the problem areas they highlighted. Overall, 94 of the 483 proposals for improvement were acted upon, and others were scheduled for future work plans. Collecting the necessary data to confirm the effect of the improvements and the effectiveness of the program in reducing crashes and fatalities was beyond the scope of the contract and was recommended for future work.

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