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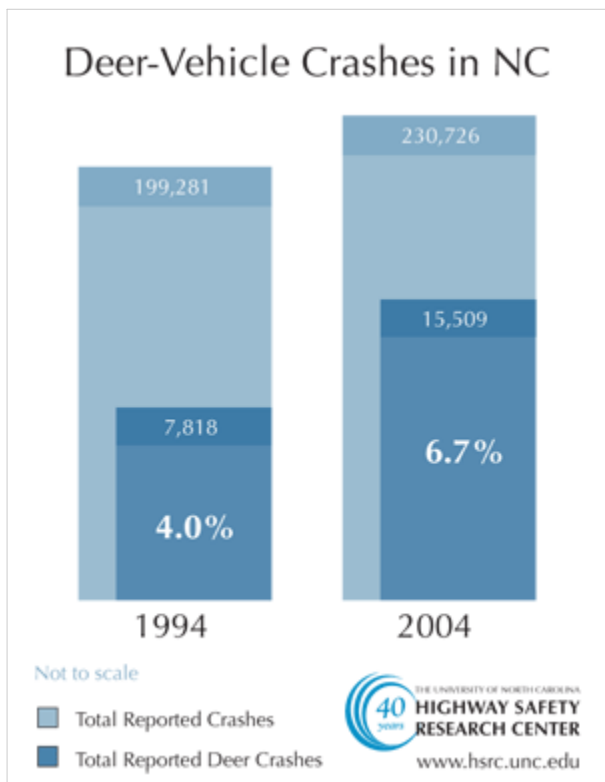
Managing Editor: [Katy Jones](#)
Contributing Writer: Kerri Neil Sumner
Graphic Designer: Zoe Gillenwater

The University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center
730 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Suite 300 | Campus Box 3430 | Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3430
Phone: 919.962.2203 | Fax: 919.962.8710
<http://www.hsrc.unc.edu>

Deer-motor vehicle crashes in NC reach record high

Motor vehicle crashes involving deer remain a serious, growing problem across the country. The UNC Highway Safety Research Center recently completed a data analysis of 2004 motor vehicle crashes involving deer on North Carolina roadways. These types of crashes set a record level last year totalling 15,509 crashes and resulted in 9 fatalities to motorists and an estimated \$36 million in property damage.

Of the 9 fatal crashes involving deer, drivers often got in trouble not actually hitting deer but by trying to avoid them and ending up in a collision with a fixed object such as a tree or vehicle. In fact, for fatal deer crashes, 77 percent of drivers were thought to have swerved to avoid the animals. In half of the collisions in which drivers were injured, drivers had veered to avoid the animals.



Deer-vehicle crashes tend to occur most frequently in the months of October, November, and December. These types of crashes are also more likely to occur between the hours of 5 am and 7 am

and between 6 pm and midnight. Crashes involving deer comprised 6.7 percent of all reportable crashes in the state, the same percentage of total crashes a year prior in 2003.

The analysis also showed that the likelihood of a deer-related crash is greater the further east you travel in North Carolina. In the mountain counties, about 35 percent of these counties are above the state average for deer-related crashes. As you move eastward, the Piedmont has about 67 percent of their counties above the state average while the coastal counties have about 83 percent of their counties above the state average.

In a county by county comparison of the data, Bertie, Jones, Washington, Duplin, Gates, Pender, Caswell, and Hyde counties each had deer-related crash ratios that were at least 5 times the state average. In terms of absolute numbers, Wake County topped the list with 900 reported deer crashes, which is nearly double the next leading county in the state. Jackson County had the least as there were no cases indicated in the 2004 data.

The analysis, led by Senior Database Analyst Eric A. Rodgman, is derived from the narratives of the crash reports submitted by

investigating law enforcement officers following deer-vehicle crashes reported to the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles in 2004. Therefore, these figures only reflect the total number of reported deer-related crashes. There is evidence that a great many more of these crashes occur than are reported to law enforcement agencies.

[For complete county-by-county crash data, please click here.](#)

The UNC Highway Safety Research Center offers the following tips for lowering your risk of a crash with a deer.

- Reduce your speed in areas with a large deer population and where there are deer warning signs.
- Always wear your seat belt! It's your best protection from injuries in the event of a crash.
- Watch for eyes reflecting in your headlights. Try to look far down the road and scan the roadsides, especially when driving through field edges, heavily wooded areas, or posted deer crossing areas. At night, use your high-beam headlights to increase your sight distance. The sooner you see a deer on or approaching a road, the better your chances of avoiding a crash.
- While a crash involving a deer can happen at any time, be especially careful during the early morning and evening hours and during the months of October, November and December.
- Remember that deer travel in herds. If you see one deer cross the road in front of you, don't assume that all is clear. Deer herds can be fairly large, and the animals often move one right behind the other.
- Do not place confidence in "deer whistles" or other "ultra-sonic" devices that claim to prevent deer collisions.

- Maintain control of your vehicle. If a crash with a deer is inevitable, it is important that you not lose control of your vehicle or veer into the path of an oncoming vehicle to avoid contact with an animal. Loss of control usually results in a more serious crash.

New program aims to develop model for improving mobility and safety among older pedestrians

Recognizing the mobility issues surrounding a growing aging population in the United States, the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center will be developing a model program to create safer and more inviting walking environments for older adults.

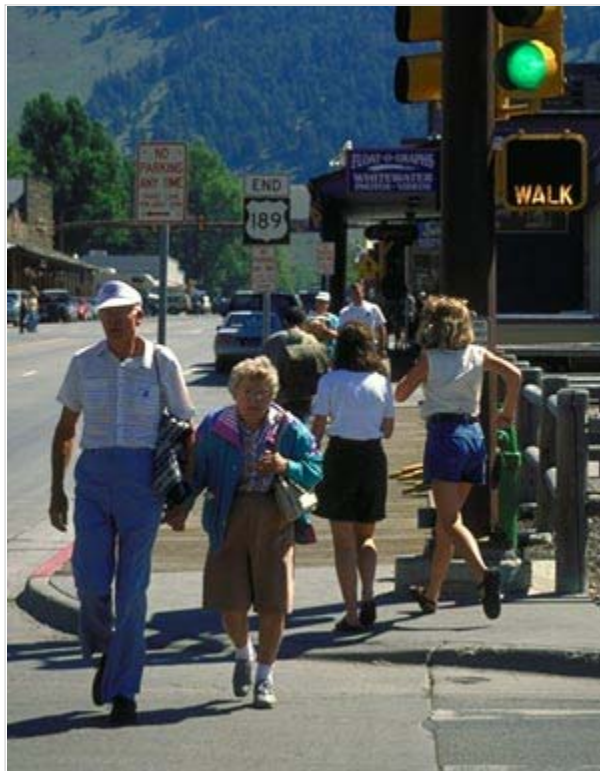
The study, being implemented in Hendersonville, NC, will evaluate the elements needed to implement a community-based, older pedestrian safety program. Center researchers will identify Hendersonville neighborhoods that have a large population of older pedestrians. Working closely with Hendersonville residents, researchers will then conduct assessments of these neighborhoods through pedestrian interviews and environmental audits. The environmental audits will be conducted prior to and following the implementation of the program to examine safety improvements and potential shifts in perceptions of walkability as a result of the program.

Community involvement will be integral in developing a sound, integrated program. A series of town meetings will be executed to allow for extensive input from the community. Hendersonville residents and key stakeholders will also be involved in the development of an action plan to address specific older pedestrian safety needs. The program aims to build community support for and overall awareness of older pedestrian safety issues to facilitate safety improvements in the community.

The program will also aim to educate local traffic engineers, planners, law enforcement personnel and health professionals on additional steps that can be taken to ensure the safety of older pedestrians.

Older pedestrians involved in a crash are much more likely than younger pedestrians to suffer serious or fatal injury, due in part to the increased fragility that often comes with age. In fact, pedestrians ages 75 and older have a higher per population fatality rate than any other age group. Older pedestrians are also significantly overrepresented in pedestrian crashes that occur at intersections.

In addition to funding from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the project will have in-kind support from many state and local agencies and organizations, including the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program, N.C. Department of Transportation, the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services Division on Aging and Adult Services, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center and the Henderson County Partnership for Health.



PBIC launches Safe Routes to School online resource

The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center at the UNC Highway Safety Research Center recently launched an online resource of information on Safe Routes to School programs. The site, www.saferoutesinfo.org, includes steps on starting a Safe Routes program, frequently asked questions, helpful links and a list of sample Safe Routes to School programs currently in place across the country. The resource also includes information on available training programs, including the Center's Safe Routes to School National Course.



The site also offers extensive information on Safe Routes to School legislation and funding opportunities. In July 2005, Congress passed federal legislation that established a national Safe Routes to School program. The program, which was signed into law in August 2005, will dedicate a total of \$612 million towards SR2S from 2005 to 2009. These funds will be distributed to states in proportion to the number of primary and secondary school students in the state, with no state receiving less than \$1 million per year.

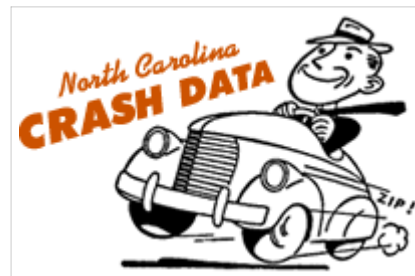
HSRC News Briefs

Updates made to NC crash data site

The UNC Highway Safety Research Center recently completed updates to the [NC Crash Data Query Web site](#), an online analysis tool of North Carolina Department of Transportation crash data. The site now includes additional crash data for the years 2001 through 2003. The revisions also include definitions of crash variables to further assist the user in building and understanding crash data tables.

The site, funded by the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program, allows users to create tables reflecting crash, vehicle, and person counts for crashes in North Carolina. The tables can either reflect the entire state of North Carolina or a specific city, county, Highway Patrol Area, or NCDOT Division. In addition, tables can be requested for specific crash types, such as alcohol-related crashes. Crash data can be analyzed using a variety of variables, including time of day, road surface condition and vehicle count.

For additional information and assistance with the site, please contact Carol Martell at 919-962-8713 or Eric Rodgman at 919-962-8709.



Online tool available to conduct cost-benefit analysis of bicycle facilities

HSRC recently completed work on *Guidelines for Cost Benefit Analysis of Investments in Bicycle Facilities*, a research project aimed to help government officials evaluate the costs and benefits of implementing bicycle improvements. These guidelines provide a means of measuring the costs, demand and benefits of bicycle facilities with the following objectives in mind:

- To help compare investments in bicycling and other modes of transportation;
- To provide tools and knowledge that can advise the choice of bicycle facilities; and
- To better integrate cycling – and its benefits and costs – into the general transportation planning process.

HSRC teamed up with the University of Minnesota, Planner's Collaborative and the Robert Wood Johnson's Active Living by Design Program on this project as a part of National Cooperative Highway Research Program Project 7-14.

*Benefit-Cost analysis
of Bicycle Facilities*

Center presence reaches across the globe

In order to further the international presence of HSRC and its research, several Center researchers have recently participated in international highway safety conferences and events.

Dr. Jane Stutts, HSRC's associate director for social and behavior research, recently presented at the International Conference on Distracted Driving in Toronto, Canada. Stutts discussed the magnitude of the problem of distracted driving. The conference, organized by the Canadian Automobile Association and the Traffic Injury Research Foundation, brought together researchers, industry experts and government officials from around the world. To view the presentation, please visit <http://www.distracteddriving.ca/english/program.cfm>.

Dr. Robert Foss, the Center's senior research scientist and manager of alcohol studies, recently attended the 6th Annual Ignition Interlock Symposium in Annecy, France, where he chaired a session on new research regarding the effectiveness of ignition interlock programs. Alcohol ignition interlocks are devices that can be installed in the vehicle of a DWI convicted offender that prevent the vehicle from starting if the driver's blood alcohol concentration is above a set limit. Interlock programs are increasingly being used to address the problem that DWI offenders continue to drive after their license has been suspended. For more information on this conference, please visit http://www.ignitioninterlocksymposium.com/symposium_en/index.shtml.

Lauren Marchetti and Charlie Zegeer, directors of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, recently presented at the 6th International Conference on Walking in the 21st Century hosted in Zurich, Switzerland. Marchetti and Zegeer presented a paper entitled *Getting There Faster: a framework for accelerating the creation of safe and walkable communities*. The paper outlines the development of the Safe Routes to School National Course as a framework for rapidly moving communities and

state governments to take action to increase safe walking and bicycling. [To read the paper, click here.](#) To read more about the Conference, please visit www.walk21.com.
