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### HSRC News Briefs

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**UNC Highway Safety Research Center announces call for scholarship applications**

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## Highway Safety Research Center contributes to international transportation conference

Nine researchers from the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center were among the presenters or moderators at the 87th Annual Meeting of the Transportation Research Board (TRB), January 13–17, in Washington, D.C.

TRB is one of six major divisions of the National Research Council — a private, nonprofit institution that is the principal operating agency of the National Academies in providing services to the government, the public, and the scientific and engineering communities. The Annual Meeting serves as a forum designed specifically for the formal and informal exchange of information among transportation researchers and practitioners.



In addition to HSRC's presence at the annual meeting, a select group of HSRC researchers were honored with the "Best Paper" Award by the TRB Pedestrian Committee. "Evaluation of the Miami-Dade Pedestrian Safety Demonstration Project" was authored by six HSRC researchers and was chosen as the best paper among a pool of 53.

The Miami-Dade project collected data over a span of 8 years. The purpose of this study was to identify and implement a comprehensive countermeasure program that could reduce deaths and injuries among pedestrians in a large urban environment.

The TRB annual meeting covers all transportation modes. Researchers from the Highway Safety Research Center made presentations on a wide range of topics in several subject areas.

Below is a complete list of HSRC researchers who made presentations at the meeting.

Daniel Carter  
*Safety Evaluation of Installing Center Two-Way Left-Turn Lanes on Two-Lane Roads*

Raghavan Srinivasan, Ph.D.  
*Evaluation of Safety-Effectiveness of Selected Treatments at Urban Signalized Intersections*  
*Safety Evaluation of Flashing Beacons at Stop-Controlled Intersections*  
*Development of a Web-Based Expert System for Setting Speed Limits in Speed Zones*

Charles Zegeer  
*Pedestrian Issues*  
*Evaluation of the Miami-Dade Pedestrian Safety Demonstration Project*  
*Marked Crosswalk Dilemma: Uncovering Some Missing Links in a 35-Year Debate*

Robert D. Foss, Ph.D.  
*Should We Ignore Nobel Prize Winners? The Value of Social and Behavioral Science Theory for Enhancing Traffic Safety*

Libby Thomas  
*Safety Effects of Automated Speed Enforcement Programs: Critical Review of International Literature*

David Harkey  
*Data Needs for New Safety Tools*

Forrest M. Council, Ph.D.  
*Traditional Influences of Surface Discontinuities*

## Center for the Study of Young Drivers aids in national research and policy development



Young drivers have higher crash rates than adult drivers. In 2006, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill established the Center for the Study of Young Drivers (CSYD) within the UNC Highway Safety Research Center (HSRC) to study and improve the safety of young drivers. CSYD's focus is on developing a fundamental understanding of the multitude of factors that contribute to the high crash rate among young drivers.

"We are working on a number of projects that are helping to set the national agenda for young driver research," said Dr. Rob Foss, director of the Center for the Study of Young Drivers. "This is an important, and to date a largely neglected, issue. We are proud to be helping lead the way on efforts by the scientific community to understand the confluence of issues that cause young driver crash rates to be so high."

CSYD has helped promote a more scientific approach to studying and improving young driver behavior than has been the case in the past. At the urging of CSYD, and with CSYD input, a new subcommittee of the Transportation Research Board was created to address young drivers. The subcommittee, which includes leading researchers in the field, will promote efforts to address cutting edge research concerns.

The TRB subcommittee is currently organizing a workshop in which research experts will attempt to develop a young driver research agenda for the next several years, pointing to the most important research needs to address. This is meant to guide both the decisions that funding agencies make and, more generally, the public discussion about young driver issues, drawing attention to important matters and diverting it away from a variety of misconceptions about young drivers.

Additionally, two HSRC researchers, Dr. Rob Foss and Arthur Goodwin, will be leading discussions at the annual LifeSavers Traffic Safety Conference on some of CSYD's recent projects, including young driver cell phone use and a project that looks at parental efforts to help their teens learn to drive.

CSYD contributions can also be seen in the recent publication of the Guide to Reducing Collisions Involving Young Drivers, one of the several guides created under the Transportation Research Board's National Cooperative Highway Research Program Project 500. As part of AASHTO's Strategic Highway Safety Plan that was originally developed in 1998, these guides are intended to assist state and local agencies in reducing injuries and fatalities in targeted areas by providing information on policies and programs that have been shown to reduce crashes.

For more information on young driver research, visit <http://www.csyd.unc.edu/index.html>.

## HSRC launches national research program to measure the impact of Safe Routes to School



The National Center for Safe Routes to School (NCSRTS), housed within the UNC Highway Safety Research Center, has launched a comprehensive national research program to determine the impact of Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs. SRTS programs, primarily funded in the U.S. through the Federal Highway Administration, work to enable and encourage children to walk and bicycle to school. The research program will result in the collection of nationwide SRTS-related data and the identification of effective SRTS strategies.

A number of researchers from HSRC contributed to the establishment of the research program. With the need for research data to be administered and submitted by local program managers, HSRC recognized the need for data collection materials to be as user-friendly as possible, while NCSRTS also provided technical support for questions and collection issues.

"We were very excited to have input and technical expertise from a variety of multi-modal transportation researchers at HSRC," said Lauren Marchetti, director of the National Center for Safe Routes to School. "Their experience in successful start-to-finish research programs helped to expand our thinking to ensure the most comprehensive research program possible."

Elements of the research program include:

- **Standardized Data Collection Forms:** In 2007, NCSRTS developed two data collection forms for SRTS programs to use to identify frequency of various transportation modes for travel to school and parent attitudes that may influence whether children are allowed to walk or bicycle to school
- **National SRTS Tracking Database:** The Center has developed a Web-based data entry system ([www.saferoutesinfo.org/tracking](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/tracking)) to collect the Safe Routes to School-related data being collected by programs. Programs can either enter their own data using the Web interface or send completed data collection forms to NCSRTS for processing. Using this information, the Center will be able to establish baseline information from which program elements will be evaluated.
- **NCSRTS Tracking Reports:** The National Center releases quarterly SRTS Program Tracking Briefs to provide information about State SRTS programs. Each report presents, a different snapshot and brief analysis of one key trend across all State programs. These reports have tracked the increase in announced state SRTS spending from \$17.6 million to \$183.7 million and the growth of participating schools from 285 to 1833. To access the reports, please visit [www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/tracking-reports.cfm](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/tracking-reports.cfm).
- **SRTS Strategy Evaluation:** To support responsible use of resources and strategies that will improve walking and bicycling conditions or encourage use of existing facilities, NCSRTS will select specific SRTS strategies for evaluation. The Center will identify specific strategies for evaluation using both an expert panel and information from the Tracking Database. The expert panel may also decide to identify effective strategies for reaching specific populations such as those served by tribal schools or low income communities.
- **Safety Index Development:** Engineers and other local transportation professionals have requested a tool to assist with the identification and prioritization of infrastructure improvement needs along school routes. NCSRTS will oversee a technical expert group in the review of existing instruments, testing and final development of a safety index to meet this need.

For more information regarding NCSRTS data collection and evaluation, visit <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/index.cfm>.

## HSRC News Briefs

### HSRC expands with administrative and research hires

The UNC Highway Safety Research Center (HSRC) has increased their staff roster with the additions of Jean Justice, Office Assistant, and Carl Sundstrom, Engineering Research Associate.

Jean Justice comes to HSRC with 20 years of experience in administration, all of which have been with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In her role at HSRC, Jean handles all day-to-day needs of the Center, including financial, clerical and organizational. Previous to working at HSRC, Jean served in administration with the Chapel Hill TEACCH Center, UNC School of Pharmacy and UNC Student Health Services.

Carl Sundstrom is a graduate of the Georgia Institute of Technology, where he received both his bachelor's and master's degrees in civil engineering. His previous experience includes Glatting Jackson in Orlando, Florida, where he worked as a traffic engineer and planner. He also worked as an intern with Kittelson & Associates in Portland, Oregon, and the North Carolina Department of Transportation. In his new role, Carl serves as an engineering research associate, contributing to engineering and research projects surrounding general highway safety and pedestrian and bicycle-related issues.

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### Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center launches updated and redesigned Web site for bicycling information

The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, in its continued effort to disseminate information and technical assistance on pedestrian and bicycle safety, has launched its updated and redesigned bicycling Web site at [www.bicyclinginfo.org](http://www.bicyclinginfo.org).

New features of the site include:

- A centralized, Web-based Library of bicycling-related materials and documents compiled by practitioners and researchers.
- A searchable database of Frequently Asked Questions pertaining to bicycle safety. If users do not find their answer within the database, there is a mechanism for them to submit a question to the PBIC.
- A searchable database of upcoming events and training opportunities.
- A compilation of downloadable bike maps from around the country.
- A News Room with PBIC press releases, resources for the media and recent news articles. Users can also sign up to receive email updates and news from the Center.

The new site was developed with input from site users and PBIC stakeholders. Revised and new content on the site was developed in conjunction with bicycling safety experts from across the country. New and updated content includes more detailed discussion of plans and policies that support bicycling, resources for bicyclists, information on how to find bicycle data and statistics, tools for identifying bicyclist concerns, and strategies as well as guidance to assist communities in building bike-friendly communities.

The redesign and update of the site is funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center is maintained by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center with funding from FHWA.

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### UNC Highway Safety Research Center announces call for scholarship applications

The UNC Highway Safety Research Center (HSRC) announces the third annual scholarship for graduate students interested in the field of highway safety.

The \$1,000 scholarship is available to a full-time graduate student with an interest in transportation safety who will be enrolled in the fall of 2008 at any of the University of North Carolina campuses.

"The transportation safety field continues to evolve and create many new career opportunities," said HSRC Director David Harkey. "We have been impressed with the caliber of applicants we've received in the past, and we hope this scholarship will continue to encourage more students to pursue one of the many disciplines of highway safety."

Candidates will be evaluated based on academic performance, extracurricular and professional activities, work experience and an essay on a current highway safety issue.

The deadline for applications is April 1, 2008.

For more information on the HSRC Scholarship and to download an application, please visit [http://www.hsrc.unc.edu/news\\_room/2008-02-13\\_Scholarship.cfm](http://www.hsrc.unc.edu/news_room/2008-02-13_Scholarship.cfm).

The scholarship recipient will be announced in June 2008.

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