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<https://www.drivesafehr.org/traffic-safety-awards-presented-for-outstanding-service/>

## **TRAFFIC SAFETY AWARDS PRESENTED FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE**

**Hampton Roads, VA** – The Annual John T. Hanna Awards, presented by Drive Safe Hampton Roads, recognized ten local individuals and companies for outstanding performance in the area of traffic safety. This year’s recipients included local Law Enforcement Departments, VDOT, GEICO, DRIVE SMART Virginia, and a high school SADD Club.

The awards were presented on January 30, 2019, 5:30 – 7:30 PM in Virginia Beach.

Drive Safe Hampton Roads is a regional coalition comprised of safety advocates from local law enforcement and fire safety divisions, corporations, the military, state, city and county government, and other individuals. For 31 years, Drive Safe Hampton Roads has been dedicated to preventing crashes, injuries, and fatalities on the region’s roadways.

The awards were given in the following 9 categories: The Martin H. Schlosser Award for Traffic Safety Activism, Impaired Driving Prevention, Law Enforcement Initiatives, Pupil Transportation Safety, Youth Traffic Safety, Legal Initiatives, Roadway Innovations, and Occupant Protection. The 2018 Lifetime Achievement in Transportation Safety Award was also presented.

Special Guest Speakers: Michael B. Sawyer, P.E., City Transportation Engineer, City of Richmond, Virginia and Vincent M. Burgess, Retired, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Motor Vehicles, Transportation Safety Services

The 2018 John T. Hanna Award Recipients are as follows:

**Youth Traffic Safety** is presented to persons or programs educating youth and spreading the message on the importance of youth traffic safety.

**The winner of this award is GEICO.**

In an effort to combat distracted driving and educate young drivers about the importance of making responsible decisions behind the wheel, GEICO visits young drivers at area events with its driving simulator. GEICO associates introduce the issue of distracted driving with a safety talk and encourage participants to speak up if they are riding in a car with someone who is clearly distracted. GEICO’s goal was to develop passenger advocates who are aware of the risks of distracted driving and will be able to help communicate that message to their peers. GEICO has reached more than 500 students in the Tidewater Area with its distracted driving message. After the safety talk portion concludes, the participants drive on GEICO’s simulator and attempt to use their phone to compose actual text messages. Since distractions stretch well beyond texting, other participants may try to take a selfie or reach into a bag next to the driver to grab sunglasses or a bottle of water. Nearly every time the participants attempted one of these activities, their driving performance degraded drastically.

**The Martin H. Schlosser Award for Traffic Safety Activism** is presented for outstanding efforts in educating citizens and changing attitudes and behavior regarding transportation safety.

**The winner of this award is the Virginia Department of Transportation Hampton Roads District.**

The Virginia Department of Transportation Hampton Roads District began a concentrated effort on Traffic Safety Activism after Governor Ralph Northam designated April 2018 as “Highway Safety Month” in Virginia and called on state agencies to elevate awareness about potentially dangerous driver behaviors to help save lives. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) responded by pouring efforts into National Work Zone Awareness Week (April 9-13). Last year, VDOT recorded 2,666 work zone crashes across the Commonwealth, resulting in 1,329 injuries and 12 fatalities. The 2017 numbers increased nearly 10 percent, reversing a downward trend in incidents recorded between 2014 and 2016, which had previously fallen over 40 percent. VDOT Hampton Roads targeted its 2018 campaign towards young drivers, amid increasing reports of distracted driving across the U.S. VDOT Hampton Roads, the Virginia State Police and local schools worked together to successfully start conversations about the importance of safe driving in work zones and the dangers of distracted driving during the week-long campaign. Locally, VDOT Hampton Roads teamed up with Old Dominion University (ODU) and the Virginia State Police (VSP) to reach thousands of young drivers with the message that they are responsible for making safe decisions behind the wheel. VDOT Hampton Roads also arranged school assemblies at Denbigh High School in Newport News, Deep Creek High School and Great Bridge High School in Chesapeake as part of a joint safe driving presentation with Virginia State Police during National Work Zone Awareness Week. It is estimated that these programs have reached over 50,000 people.

**OCCUPANT PROTECTION** award is presented for promoting and encouraging the use of safety belts and/or child safety seats through creative and innovative programs and activities.

**The winner of this award is “Boost ‘em in the Back Seat” (Dr. Kelli England).**

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children over age 5, and are a major cause of injury and medical spending for all ages. Each year in Virginia, three-fifths (60%) of the 4-9 year-old children injured in crashes are unrestrained or improperly restrained in a seat belt at the time of the crash. Across the US, less than half (45%) of the children who need a booster seat use one. Children are not ready for an adult seat belt until they reach 4 feet 9 inches tall, and the safety belt fits correctly. Many parents are surprised to know that small children may need a booster seat until 12 years old. Parents need education regarding why booster seat use is so important, why the law is not the best guide for safety, and how to know when their child is ready to transition. The Boost ‘em in the Back Seat program, created by Kelli England’s team in the Pediatrics Division of Community Health and Research at Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS), packs all of this information into one entertaining (and motivating) 4-minute video. The video illustrates the danger of prematurely transitioning children to an adult seat belt before they are 4’9” tall. It conveys the power of crash forces, raises perceptions of risk, dispels misinformation, clarifies the safety belt fit test, and motivates action. In 2018, the video reached over 20 million families with its message. The 4-minute Boost ‘em in the Back Seat Video illustrates the danger of prematurely transitioning children to an adult seat belt before they are 4’9” tall. It conveys the power of crash forces, raises perceptions of risk, dispels misinformation, clarifies the safety belt fit test, and motivates action. Viewers learn about the fit test and are directed to the companion website to learn more.

**Law Enforcement Initiatives (Individual)** award is presented to a law enforcement individual who has shown extra initiative to promote and encourage traffic safety in their community.

**The winner of this award is MPO Eriald Kera.**

The City of Virginia Beach Police Department is the largest municipal police agency in the Commonwealth of Virginia. It’s one of the largest hubs of industrial, tourism, and military activity on the east coast bringing to the area a host of various concerns and safety issues. One aspect of these issues is motor vehicle safety, in particular impaired driving, speeding, occupant protection and distracted driving. The mission of the Traffic Safety Unit is to increase traffic safety in Virginia Beach through various ways such as aggressive enforcement, traffic safety initiatives, citizen

education and prevention programs, the detection and apprehension of impaired drivers as well as planned traffic safety check-points and the enforcement of traffic laws in the city of Virginia Beach. MPO Eriald Kera is currently assigned to the Virginia Beach Police Department's Traffic Safety Unit. MPO Kera has and continues to personify the mission statement through his outstanding effort and dedication to reduce and even prevent serious and fatal crashes. He continuously shows the extra initiative to promote and encourage traffic safety in the community he serves. From October 1, 2017 through Sept. 30, 2018, MPO Kera led the Department with 137 arrests for Driving under the Influence. MPO Kera has authorized and coordinated multiple saturation patrols to purposely address specific traffic safety complaints, high crash, and DUI areas. MPO Kera has also assisted with the Department's Driving Safety Lecture Program, an education and lecture style seminar presentation provided to military personnel and commands. During the year, MPO Kera has scheduled 18 military safety lectures, personally delivering 5 lectures himself, educating hundreds of our Us Military soldiers, sailors, and civilians. MPO Kera has devoted his time to the "Every Fifteen Minutes" program and teaching the high school students of the dangers and consequences of drinking and driving.

**Law Enforcement Initiatives (Group)** award is presented to a law enforcement department who has shown extra initiative to promote and encourage traffic safety in their community.

**The winner of this award is the City of Chesapeake Police Department.**

Car crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers in America. In the spring of 2108, Chesapeake city Police Department spearheaded the "Every 15 Minutes" at Hickory High School in Chesapeake, VA. to try and mitigate this issue in their community. The program focused on teaching high school students the dangers and real-world repercussions of drunk driving. "Every 15 Minutes" began with a mock drunk driving crash and followed the first response team made up of police, fire and EMS, and the Nightingale helicopter. Student volunteers played different roles in the scenario and their parents were heavily involved as well. After the mock crash, the program followed one victim to the hospital where nurses and doctors tried to save the victim's life. The scenario included a mother pleading with hospital staff to save her daughter's life and a second mother having to identify her son's body in the hospital morgue. The final portion of the program ended at the courthouse where a judge presided over the case of the student that was the drunk driver that caused the mock crash. Along with the 2 days of activities surrounding the mock crash, CPD invited other members of the community to Hickory High School in the days leading up to the crash. In just one year, nearly 5,000 students and members of the community were impacted by this program.

The **Legal** award is presented to attorneys, judges, or legislators who have actively supported safety issues thus strengthening existing laws and creating new laws.

**This award is presented to Chesapeake's Assistant Commonwealth Attorney Amy James Stinnette.**

The Chesapeake Commonwealth Attorney's Office plays a crucial role ensuring the highways within the City of Chesapeake stay safe. Their prosecution of cases involving driving under the influence serves to hold people accountable for their unlawful and unsafe actions. The purpose of strict prosecution is to punish offenders and to protect the public by attempting to curb future illegal activity. Mrs. Stinnette has been responsible for prosecuting DUI related cases since 1997. She has been a fixture in training Chesapeake Police Officers for DUI enforcement during their basic training academy for over 10 years. She has developed the legal portion for the DUI training that includes a robust understanding of legal issues and contributes to the department's success with both DUI enforcement and prosecution. Part of this expanded training includes working with other prosecutors and defense attorneys to provide mock DUI court preparation for basic candidates in trial-based scenarios. In addition, Mrs. Stinnette regularly provides education and guidance to Chesapeake Police Officers with their investigation of DUI's and fatal crashes.

Mrs. Stinnette's experience and knowledge are the reasons that she is well respected by the officers of the Chesapeake Police Department. Mrs. Stinnette regularly attends training associated with the prosecution of DUI's. She is also the lead Assistant Commonwealth Attorney for the Chesapeake Police Department's Crash Team. She often responds out to the scene of serious

crashes when the Crash Team is activated. She has extended specialized training associated with investigating and prosecuting cases associated with fatal crashes. Mrs. Stinnette is also the lead instructor for the Commonwealth's Services Council facility in areas of Advance DUI and DUID program.

**Impaired Driving Prevention** award is presented for encouraging the prevention of drunk and/or drugged driving.

**This award goes to DRIVE SMART Virginia**

The mission of DRIVE SMART Virginia (DSV) is to raise traffic safety awareness among all road users in order to save lives and reduce injuries on the roadways of Virginia. This includes programming in the Hampton Roads area of the Commonwealth. DSV has participated in many traffic safety endeavors over the past year. In October of 2017, DSV brought an interactive teen driving program to Green Run High School in Virginia Beach. This event included hands-on educational activities such as a distracted driving simulator and impaired tricycle course. The impaired tricycle course included students using "drunk goggles" and attempting to navigate around cones on adult-sized tricycles. This event was partnered by the Virginia Beach Police Department and was funded by State Farm. There were approximately 400 participants.

Also during that month, DSV presented, exhibited and brought the impaired driving simulator to the Virginia Department of Labor and Industries Conference at the Virginia Beach Convention Center. DSV hosted several sessions at this conference dedicated to traffic safety in the workplace, including preventing impaired driving. The impaired driving simulator installed in a pickup truck and allows for a real-world experience. Participants wear virtual goggles that simulate different roadway scenarios and they use the truck's steering wheel and pedals to try and navigate through the course. The program has the option to select many different levels of BAC and simulates impaired driving by delaying the reaction time of the steering and pedals. The simulation also uses blurred and tunnel vision to mimic impaired driving while using the virtual reality goggles.

In November of 2017, DSV staff presented impaired driving information at numerous workplaces in the Hampton Roads region including the USS George Washington, the USS George H.W. Bush, and a conference with Landin, Inc. in Williamsburg. Approximately 3,000 attendees heard presentations from DRIVE SMART Virginia at these events. Our workplace events are funded by grants through Virginia DMV's Highway Safety Office.

In April of 2018, DSV exhibited impaired driving information at the Virginia Transportation Construction Alliance Spring Conference in Hampton, brought the impaired driving simulator to Langley Air Force Base, and exhibited at the DUI conference in Virginia Beach. An estimated 1,000 people interacted with DRIVE SMART Virginia at these events.

Over the summer of 2018, DSV had season-long signage at the Norfolk Tides stadium, reminding fans to have a safe and sober driver and to buckle up. These signs were placed at each of the stadium exits. The program is called "What's Your Game Plan" and focuses on asking fans to plan ahead for a safe/sober ride home or to be the designated driver. Staff exhibited traffic safety information at one of the Tides games and asked fans to sign a safe/sober driving pledge. Over 350,000 fans attended Tides games in the 2018 season and would have seen the "What's Your Game Plan" signs upon exiting the stadium. This program was funded by a grant through Virginia DMV's Highway Safety Office.

In June, DSV was at both Virginia Motor Speedway and Langley Speedway to raise awareness about the importance of having a sober driver and buckling up through the "Who's Your Driver" program. This is a sister program to "What's Your Game Plan" focused on racing fans. Again, the program's message is to plan for a safe and sober ride home from the track. Staff interacted with race fans and asked them to sign a safe/sober driving pledge. An estimated 6,000 race fans heard from DSV at these events. The "Who's Your Driver" program is funded by Virginia DMV's Highway Safety Office.

In total, an estimated 360,400 people in the Hampton Roads region were impacted by DRIVE SMART Virginia's impaired driving prevention messaging over the past year. The messaging included interacting with fans at sporting events, exhibiting and presenting at workplaces, and using interactive activities such as the simulator and the impaired tricycle course at events and high schools.

**Public Transportation Safety** award is presented for contributions made in educating drivers about safety on public transportation.

**The award goes to Heritage High School Students Against Destructive Decisions (SAAD) Club sponsored by Jamie Plecker.**

In efforts to promote traffic safety, the SAAD group has participated in creating a variety of projects and events that promote safe practices. The goal of these activities was to increase high school use of seat-belts in both students and faculty. Some steps were taken to promote traffic safety included seat-belt challenges, seat-belt PSA's, and morning seat-belt checks. The program uniquely exemplifies the students and faculty taking initiative to be safe when operating a motor vehicle. On Wednesday mornings, members of SAAD would meet at 6am in the student parking lot, teacher parking lot, and student drop off circle to detect whether seat-belts were being worn or not as people pulled in. The SAAD group also did several seat-belt pledges in school sanctioned events throughout the year. These events included school lunches, after prom activities, and varsity basketball games. At these events, people could come to the SAAD table and sign pledges dedicated to wearing seat-belts whenever in a vehicle. Next, SAAD group designed a seat-belt PSA. In the PSA the students were directed by one another to create a scene that depicted an insensitive and careless act of impaired driving. Not only did the SAAD group highlight the importance of seat-belt safety, but the group also captured the importance of distracted driving that tied into texting while driving as well. A message was then said in unison to provide the audience with the lasting effect of what had just taken place in the scene before them. By participating in this PSA, the group was able to reach the entire school population all at once. The SAAD group also participated in the "Arrive Alive Campaign". The group made bulletin boards with graphic designs and motivational messages to spread the importance of arriving alive. The SAAD group also held activities that depicted the effects of drinking and driving and drug abuse. Participants were able to wear drunk goggles that simulated the effects of coordination after intoxication. In addition to the drunk goggles, students could wear marijuana goggles. The marijuana goggles gave participants the impaired vision of a smoker. In total, the SAAD group was able to reach 4,417 face to face interactions throughout the seat-belt pledges. In addition to face to face interactions, the group has reached nearly 19,000 people through social media posts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

**Roadway Innovations** award is presented for individuals and or organizations that show exemplary achievement in the design and or implementation of highway engineering techniques.

**This award goes to The City of Virginia Beach – Traffic Engineering Division.**

Improving pedestrian and traffic safety is a complex endeavor because it involves awareness on the part the pedestrian as to on-coming traffic and appropriate places to cross and the expectations of the driver as to whether they may encounter a pedestrian. The City of Virginia Beach is a resort destination that has over 15 million visitors each year, most of who travel to the Oceanfront area for vacation. The Virginia Beach Oceanfront is bisected by Pacific Avenue which is a 35 mph, 4-lane roadway without adequate pedestrian refuges in most areas. To the east of Pacific Avenue are the ocean, numerous hotels, and the Atlantic Avenue commercial district. To the west of Pacific Avenue are condos, residences, churches, off and on street parking as well as several convenience marts. Pedestrians often need to cross this roadway to access these various areas on either side of Pacific Avenue and it can be challenging at best to get across safely. On Pacific Avenue, the free-standing "Yield to Pedestrian" signs that are often installed in high pedestrian areas would not be appropriate due to the speed and volume of traffic, the narrowness of the travel lanes, as well as a lack of refuge for the sign to prevent it from being struck by passing vehicles.

In an effort to enhance driver awareness that they are entering a high pedestrian area and looking for an alternative to the free-standing "Yield to Pedestrian" signs, the City of Virginia Beach worked with the manufacturer of pavement marking legends to develop a prototype "Pedestrian Crossing" legend that provides supplemental warning for the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) sign W11-2 "Pedestrian" warning sign. This sign is to be used to alert road users in advance of locations where unexpected entries of pedestrians into the roadway might occur and the "Pedestrian" pavement marking legend would supplement the sign.

Pacific Avenue between 10th Street and 17th Street was selected for the demonstration area. City traffic engineers developed the appropriate size and ratio of the markings. From an earlier smaller prototype on a smaller road, the City discovered that to be visible to the driver in the proper shape of the sign, the length needed to be significantly longer than the width. Prior to placing the order for the legend materials, the Engineers for the City chalked the typical for the legend onto the pavement and made dimension adjustments to make sure the perspective was correct. From this sketch, it was determined that the length needed to be 2.5 times longer than the width for the final dimension of 10 feet wide by 25 feet long. Prior to the start of the 2018 resort summer season, these legends were installed on Pacific Avenue NB and SB prior to 11th Street and 15th Street. The initial reception for the legends was extremely positive and, while the full calendar year isn't over yet, the review of pedestrian involved crashes after the end of the tourist season are encouraging: Pedestrian Crashes on Pacific Avenue between 10th St & 17th St, Year Pedestrian Crashes Prior to installation 2014 – 2, 2015 – 2, 2016 -1, 2017 -3, After the installation of the marking in 2018 (thru 10/10/18) -0.

The City of Virginia Beach plans to continue to install additional locations as conditions warrant. The intent is to use these on roads that are 35 mph with an average daily traffic volume of greater than 10,000 ADT and significant pedestrian, essentially where there is pedestrian activity and the free-standing "Yield to Pedestrian" signs are not feasible, in an effort to increase awareness of motorists to the presence of pedestrians.

**Presentation of the 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award to John L. Fentress  
by Karen Pyle, 2017 Lifetime Achievement Recipient**

Approximately 20 years ago, John Fentress was invited to his first Specialized Transportation Safety meeting by two of the Norfolk Motor Carrier Police Officers. As Mr. Fentress' job at E. T. Gresham included permitting cranes and dimensional loads, John felt it would benefit him, as well as his employer, to get the facts from the police who are enforcing the law.

As John continued his employment with ET Gresham for over 30 years, finishing his career as Safety Manager, his commitment to Drive Safe Hampton Roads expanded to other committees and he began volunteering at community events.

Not only has John served as the chairman of the Specialized Transportation Safety Committee, but he has held a position on the Drive Safe Hampton Roads Board of Directors for multiple terms. He continues to step up to volunteer wherever needed, whether it be running the Intoxiclock, an interactive Blood Alcohol Concentration tool, at the Chesapeake Jubilee Designated Driver Booth, or packing educational bags for community events or even serving as a Community Liaison with the Get It Together High School Seat Belt Program. John has tirelessly given of his time to the Peninsula Car Classic, stacked and wrapped child safety seats at the Roundup, and weathered the heat and cold for the Southside and Peninsula Commercial Motor Vehicle Driver Appreciation Days. Even though he retired from ET Gresham five years ago, John continues to dedicate time to Drive Safe. He never slows down in his quest to promote traffic safety in Hampton Roads and he continues to be a vital part of the organization. John is the quiet type that comes in, gets the work done, and leaves with a smile.

For more information: [www.drivesafehr.org](http://www.drivesafehr.org) or call (757) 498-2562.

John T. Hanna, the namesake of the awards, is widely known in the Commonwealth for his years of service dedicated to improving traffic safety in Virginia. Hanna served as the Deputy Commissioner for Transportation Safety at the state Department of Motor Vehicles and worked in the traffic safety field for more than 60 years.

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