



HIGHWAY SAFETY BEHAVIORAL GRANTS PROGRAM

Summer Newsletter 2021

**Drive Sober
or Get
Pulled Over**



The level of alcohol abuse and impaired driving in Wyoming poses significant risks to the public safety. Per the Wyoming Department of Revenue Liquor Division, there was an increase of \$11,729,940 in liquor sales despite fewer liquor establishments operating in 2020 due to COVID-19.

The 2020 WECRS reports that impaired driving crashes (alcohol and/or drug) accounted for 40% of fatal crashes (30% alcohol only) and 13% of injury crashes (10% drugs only). Individuals between ages 26-30 rated the highest percent of DUI arrests at 15%, followed by ages 21-25 at 14% and 31-35 at 13%. In addition, there were 60 teen drivers with a Blood alcohol content (BAC) > .00 (77% were 18-20 years of age). Data shows those individuals closest to the legal age of drinking seem to increasingly partake in risky behaviors.

Furthermore, DUI's accounted for 33.35% of all statewide arrests with an average BAC of 0.16. Fifty-two percent (52%) of persons arrested for a DUI had a reported BAC level above 0.16 and 13% had a BAC of 0.24 or greater. Likewise an emerging trend in impaired driving are DUI's involving drugs. Fifteen and a half percent (15.5%) of persons arrested for DUI's involved drugs. Another troubling statistic is the recidivism rate for persons arrested for a DUI reaching 34%.

With the hard work and help of our subrecipients, the HSO implements HVE enforcement, post DUI interventions, data gathering, communication and outreach, law enforcement training, and coalitions to reduce the number of persons in impaired driving traffic crashes.

FY2022 Highway Safety Plan (HSP) Update

The Highway Safety Plan (HSP) is an application for federal funding to address specific behavioral traffic safety issues: Impaired Driving, Occupant Protection, Distracted Driving, Traffic Records, Youthful Drivers, Pedestrian, Motorcycle Safety and other traffic safety related projects supported by data.

The HSO submits the HSP to NHTSA for approval by July 1st of every year. The HSO goal is to have agreements ready for signature by mid to late September for an October 1, 2021 start date.

Quote from Sergeant Jeff Bullard of the Casper Police Department

“The transition to WYDOT as the Highway Safety Grant administrators was very positive for our agency. We have more control on how we schedule our officer’s time, and what events we want to place an emphasis on. The support staff at WYDOT have been amazing to work with in this transition and have helped get us up and running in rapid order.”

Project Highlight: Law Enforcement Liaison (LEL) Program

Reducing traffic related fatalities, injuries, and crashes in Wyoming is the goal of the LEL Program. The LEL encourages law enforcement to engage the public using education and enforcement of traffic safety laws, especially impaired driving, occupant protection, distracted driving and speed management to change driver behavior. The LEL provides traffic safety enforcement resources through outreach, education and training opportunities offered to all Wyoming law enforcement agencies. He works directly with agencies in the HVE grant program to encourage proactive enforcement, use of earned media and data driven approaches to reduce traffic crashes and fatalities. The LEL works with WYDOT Driver's Services and Records, Data Management, to offer a law enforcement perspective and to provide feedback from agencies on proposed changes.

On issues ranging from ReportBeam to engineering, he is law enforcements point of contact for WYDOT. The LEL visits law enforcement agencies around the state offering free, POST certified traffic safety training and recruiting agencies for the HVE grants. In April Pete facilitated the POST certified "DWI Cannabis -Understanding the Highway High" training in Evanston, hosted by the Uinta County Sheriff's Office. This same course will be hosted June 29th and 30th at the Casper Police Department. He is also busy at his former agency assisting with the implementation of Data-Driven Approaches to Crime and Traffic Safety (DDACTS) using the resources of the HVE grants and the International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training (IADLEST).

The LEL will be promoting Below 100, Traffic Incident Management (TIM) and other traffic safety related training this summer as part of the LEL partnership with the Wyoming Highway Patrol. He works directly with the WHP to provide local training to law enforcement and first responders at no cost. If your agency is interested and local training at no cost and catered to your scheduling demands, please contact Pete directly.

LEL's Upcoming Events:

- **DWI Cannabis - Understanding the Highway High**, Casper, June 29-30
- He will be traveling the state the month of June promoting the HSO HVE grants and recruiting new agencies.
- He is currently promoting Below 100 and Traffic Incident Management Classes statewide in cooperation with the WHP.
- **July 4th- Impaired Driving & Drug Impaired driving**, "Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving, Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over, Ride Sober or Get Pulled Over, If You Feel Different, You Drive Different."
- **August 18 – September 6- Impaired Driving & Drug Impaired National Enforcement Campaign**, "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over, Ride Sober or Get Pulled Over, If You Feel Different, You Drive Different, Drive High – Get a DUI."
- **Fremont County DUI Task Force**- Labor Day Weekend 2021.
- **Casper Police Department October 18th**- DDACTS 2.0: National Agency Strategic Planning Session.



Abrams is the Law Enforcement Liaison (LEL) for the Highway Safety Office (HSO) and joined the team in 2014. He began his law enforcement career at the Natrona County Sheriff's Office in 1989, joined the Casper Police Department in 1994, and retired in 2014 as the supervisor of the Traffic Enforcement and Special Events Unit in 2014. Pete provides traffic safety enforcement outreach and support to all Wyoming law enforcement agencies. He works directly with agencies in the HVE grant program to encourage proactive enforcement, use of earned media and data driven approaches to reducing traffic crashes and fatalities.

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Quote from Sheriff Aaron Appelhans from the Albany County Sheriff's Office

“As a newly appointed Sheriff in Albany County, one of my goals was to partner with other agencies that would help the Sheriff's Office meet our mission. The Wyoming Highway Safety Office (HSO) has been a great partner agency and I've enjoyed working with them. Both of our offices align in our views of improving highway safety by engineering, education, and enforcement. HSO has been instrumental in helping implement tactics for highway safety in my county by providing training, grant funding, statistics, reports, and being a liaison in connecting our county with numerous other entities. They are an invaluable asset to have and I can't recommend them highly enough.”

Upcoming Safety Observations/Events

June:

- **Media:** 21st -National Ride to Work Day Motorcycle Safety
- **DLNS:** 7th-13th Wyoming Seatbelt Survey
- **Governor's Counsel on Impaired Driving (GCID):** 9th General Membership Quarterly Meeting
- **Wyoming Seatbelt Coalition (WYSBC):** Wyoming Seatbelt Coalition meeting (Heinrich)
- **Child Passenger Safety Training:** Instructor Webinar Meeting each month with CEU opportunities.
- **TSRP:** 2nd-3rd ARIDE-Casper, 8th-10th EC/IR Senior Operator Refresher- Casper, 14th-15th (Steamboat) 17th-18th (Fort Collins) Prosecuting the Drug Impaired Driver, June 28th- July 2nd WLEA POB DWI and SFST-Douglas

July:

- **Media & HVE Overtime Enforcements:** 4th Impaired Driving/Drug Impaired Campaigns
- **Child Passenger Safety Training:** Instructor Webinar Meeting each month with CEU opportunities.
- **GCID:** High Risk Offender Subcommittee meetings, Judicial Training Subcommittee meetings, 24/7 Subcommittee meetings, Traffic Injury Research Foundation WY Dashboard Report Subcommittee
- **Injury Prevention Resources:** 1st & 23rd-24th Fremont County events, 9th-17th Natrona County Events

August:

- **Media & HVE Overtime Enforcements:** 18th-Sept 6th Impaired Driving, Drug-Impaired Driving and National Enforcement Mobilization
- **WYHSO:** 3rd HSO Highway Safety Plan Due
- **Child Passenger Safety Training:** Instructor Webinar Meeting each month with CEU opportunities. 2nd Thayne Update Course, 3rd-6th - Thayne Certification Course, 6th - Thayne Renewal Course, 6th Final Update and Renewal Course in State
- **GCID:** General Membership Quarterly Meeting, High Risk Offender Subcommittee meetings, Traffic Injury Research Foundation WY Dashboard Report Subcommittee
- **TSRP:** 24th , & 25th-26th EC/IR Senior Operator Course- Cheyenne
- **Injury Prevention Resources:** July 31st–August 8th Fremont County Fair events & July 31st–August 8th Sweetwater County Bigshow events.

September:

- **Media:** 19th-25th Child Passenger Safety Week Occupant Protection
- 25th National Seat Check Saturday
- **Child Passenger Safety Training:** Instructor Webinar Meeting each month with CEU opportunities.
- **WYHSO:** 30th- Agreement Expiration day for HSO FY2021 Grants
- **TSRP:** 8th-9th ARIDE- Jackson, 21st- 23rd Wyoming Prosecuting the Drugged Driver (Date subject to change to July or August)
- **Injury Prevention Resources:** 24th Child Passenger Safety Inspection Station Fremont County.

The Wyoming Highway Patrol can provide traffic safety education through and hands on activities utilizing driving simulators, seat belt convincer, SIDNE Vehicle, and the little convincer. If there is an event in your area and would like support for traffic safety education, please contact Sgt Momen Elazizi at (307) 777-3843 or momen.elazizi@wyo.gov.

Meet the Highway Safety Behavioral Grants Office Team



Karson James is the Manager of the Highway Safety Behavioral Grants Program at the Wyoming Department of Transportation. Karson, and his team, are dedicated to promoting safe use of all Wyoming roads with the goal of reducing traffic crashes, deaths, injuries, and the associated economic losses through the coordinated efforts of state, local agencies, and other safety and community partners. He holds a bachelor's degree in Agriculture Business and Applied Economics, from the University of Wyoming, has served in the state government for 15 years. He holds the title of the 2019 Wyoming Transportation Department Employees Association fishing derby winner with his catch of a 5.11 pound walleye. Contact Info: karson.james@wyo.gov, 307-777-4200.



Stephanie Lucero is the Senior Grants Manager with the Highway Safety Behavioral Grants Program at the Wyoming Department of Transportation. She has worked for the State of Wyoming since April 1986, working in the Highway Safety Program 30 years. She has a degree in Computer Information Systems and has completed numerous trainings dealing with all aspects of grant management. She has also served as the WYTRCC Vice-Chair for 10 years. Stephanie Lucero was born and raised in Cheyenne, Wyoming. She is the proud parent of one daughter, Samara Lucero who just graduated from the University of Wyoming. Stephanie enjoys spending time with her family enjoying family dinners, game nights, and going to exercise classes. Contact Info: Stephanie.lucero@wyo.gov, 307-777-4198.



Alex Toalson is the Senior Accounting Analyst with the Highway Safety Behavioral Grants Program at the Wyoming Department of Transportation. Alex has been in this position for a little over 2 years and with the Wyoming Department of Transportation for 4 years. Alex was born and raised in Cheyenne, Wyoming. He graduated from Chadron State College with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration, with a focus in Finance. Alex is happily married to Karissa, they have one three year old son, Liam, and one dog. Alex enjoys spending time with his family, camping, and golfing. Contact Info: alex.toalson@wyo.gov, 307-777-4199.



Ariel Villa is the Grants Manager and newest team member with the Highway Safety Behavioral Grants Program at the Wyoming Department of Transportation. She has been with the Wyoming Department of Transportation for a two and half years and specifically with the Highway Safety Office for almost two years. She has a degree in Education and Spanish with extra credits in Business Administration and has completed many trainings dealing with all aspects of grant management. Ariel is married with three children. Ariel enjoys spending time with her family, traveling, camping, and renovating houses. Contact Info: ariel.villa@wyo.gov, 307-777-4272.