

New York Native Nations Transportation Safety Summit

Summit Report



March 21-22, 2012

Turning Stone Resort & Casino

Verona, New York

Prepared by Cambridge Systematics, Inc.



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16. Abstract <p>This report documents the New York Native Nation Transportation Safety Summit held March 21-22, 2012, in Verona, New York. The Summit brought together the full range of interested parties to discuss transportation safety issues and to begin developing coordinated strategies toward the ultimate goal of reducing crash-related injuries and deaths within Native American communities. Specifically, the objectives of the Summit were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise awareness about transportation safety issues and challenges facing Native Nations in New York; 2. Share experiences, success stories, and lessons learned; and 3. Identify available safety resources and begin developing recommendations for moving forward.. <p>The following report includes background information, themes discussed by Summit speakers and participants, Summit results, and next steps for moving forward.</p>			
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Background

The Eight Native Nations in New York

- Cayuga Indian Nation
- Oneida Indian Nation
- Onondaga Nation
- St. Regis Mohawk Tribe
- Seneca Nation of Indians
- Shinnecock Nation
- Tonawanda Band of Senecas
- Tuscarora Nation

Every year, more than 30,000 motorists die and almost 3,000,000 are injured on our Nation's roadways. For ages 4 to 34, motor vehicle-related injuries are the leading cause of death in the United States, and Native Americans are at particularly high risk.¹ Among the Native American population, motor vehicle-related injuries are the leading cause of death up to age 44.² Considering all roadways, Native Americans are between two and three times more likely to be killed in motor vehicle crashes than other citizens. The full impact of severe crashes on Native Americans is not known as researchers and traffic safety experts agree Tribal roadway crash data is under reported.

The New York Native Nations Transportation Safety Summit held March 21-22, 2012 was an important step toward reducing traffic fatalities and injuries among members of Native Nations. This document describes the Summit, focusing on the insights gained, lessons learned, and ideas for moving forward.

The Summit was carried out through the collaborative efforts of representatives from the Oneida Nation Police, Seneca Nation of Indians Transportation Division, Onondaga County Sheriff's Office-Traffic Safety Program, St. Regis Mohawk Injury Prevention Program, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Michigan Tech Tribal Technical Assistance Program (TTAP), SUNY Ulster, Governor's Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC), New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), New York State Police, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)-Federal Lands, and FHWA-New York Division.

■ Purpose of the Summit

The New York Native Nations Transportation Safety Summit brought together the full range of interested parties to discuss transportation safety issues and to begin developing coordinated

¹Subramanian R., Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes as a Leading Cause of Death in the United States, 2005, DOT HS 810 936. April 2008. U.S. DOT, National Center for Statistics and Analysis.

²Hilton J., Race and Ethnicity in Fatal Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes 1999-2004, DOT HS 809 956. May 2006. U.S. DOT, NHTSA.



strategies toward the ultimate goal of reducing crash-related injuries and deaths within Native American communities. The Summit pursued that goal by identifying key safety challenges facing Native Nations, the resources (human, technical, material, and financial) available to address them, and by stimulating multidisciplinary collaboration among safety stakeholders.

Specifically, the objectives of the Summit were to:

1. Raise awareness about transportation safety issues and challenges facing Native Nations in New York;
2. Share experiences, success stories, and lessons learned; and
3. Identify available safety resources and begin developing recommendations for moving forward.

A detailed Summit agenda is included in Appendix A. While separate agenda sessions were designed for presentations and facilitated discussions, the informal nature of the event and interest from participants resulted in more of an interactive, freeform conversation throughout the Summit. Presentations on data, Native Nation safety initiatives, and safety programs and resources promoted healthy dialogue among participants about experiences and challenges, along with recommended actions toward improving tribal transportation safety.

The Summit is a step in the longer process. Follow up within and among Native Nations in New York in collaboration with local, state, and Federal partners, as well as other safety stakeholders, is needed for further progress.

Themes

John Velat, Michigan TTAP, kicked off the Summit highlighting the interactive nature and encouraging everyone to participate. Captain Jay Duda, Oneida Nation Police Department (PD), welcomed everyone on behalf of the Oneida Nation and affirmed the purpose to initiate a collaborative effort among the Nations and build partnerships with NYSDOT, GTSC, and others present. He emphasized, “Our communities are our priority. We do what we need to keep them safe.” Toward that end, several key recurring themes emerged from Summit presentations and discussions: *collaboration and respect, action, and evidence-driven decisions.*

■ Collaboration and Respect

During the opening session, Craig Genzlinger of the FHWA Office of Federal Lands Highway suggested the Summit should be an informal conversation where stakeholders share ideas and hear from one another. FHWA Federal Lands is supporting a number of tribal safety summits around the country as part of the National Tribal Safety Management System (SMS), and they are proving effective and building connections for collaborative efforts among tribal safety stakeholders.

Demonstrating examples of collaboration in New York, Jody Clark (Seneca Nation of Indians), Ron Hayes, and Sanjay Singh (both of NYSDOT Region 5) presented on several capital projects to improve safety on Seneca Nation roadways. With funding provided by BIA, project design from FHWA, and construction oversight by the Nation, an important bridge was replaced improving safety for drivers, pedestrians, and fishermen alike. The grand opening was dedicated to Chief Cornplanter who met with George Washington and was instrumental in building relationships between the Seneca and the Federal government. Additional projects include a bank stabilization project and a pending project to install a roundabout to improve safety at a high crash intersection. These projects all involve formal project agreements signed by both the Seneca Nation and NYSDOT. They also often have two public meetings - one on and one off the reservation so everyone affected feels welcome to provide input.



Debbie Kogut described a collaborative child passenger safety program which involves a partnership between the Onondaga Nation, GTSC, the Onondaga County Sheriff's Department, and the health department. The project used the opportunity of the women's and children's nutritional health program (WIC) to give information about car seats. They have joined with Catholic Charities and now have a car seat distribution program. Other efforts include car seat raffles, car seat clinics, and bicycle helmets giveaways with educational programs. An important aspect of the child passenger safety program is they always request permission from the Onondaga Nation before distributing equipment or conducting surveys or focus groups.



Oneida Nation Police Chief Joseph Smith shared the experience of the Oneida Nation PD participating in bus traffic safety check points. A NYSDOT bus inspector submitted a formal request to the Nation to inspect all buses at the Turning Stone Resort and Casino. The request was approved and the effort has been a success, for which Chief Smith credits the government to government cooperation. Starting out as inspecting buses bringing passengers, the program has expanded to other vehicles and needing inspection (i.e., trailer to heavy for truck).

■ Action

FHWA Division Administrator, Jon McDade opened with a quote from Susan Martinovich (former Director of the Nevada DOT), "A leader's role is to challenge people to think and act beyond their day-to-day responsibilities." Noting deaths and serious injuries are declining, he emphasized how much still needs to be done and further improvements require thinking outside the box.

Chief Smith stressed the loss of opportunities if we do not look for them. The Oneida Nation decision to cooperate with NYSDOT opened another opportunity for improving transportation safety.

Cochise Redeye presented on the Seneca Nation's incident management system, which has required a real change in mentality. They now have a 20 person, level 3 incident management team and are working toward state recognition, which would make them eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds when available.

Taking action and putting forth the necessary effort opens up a range of opportunities and resources as presented by state and Federal partners. With funding and guidance provided by

GTSC Member Agencies

- Department of Motor Vehicles
- NY State Police
- Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services
- Department of Health
- State Education
- Department of Transportation
- Department of State
- Criminal Justice Services
- Probation
- Department of Insurance
- Thruway Authority
- NYS Liquor Authority

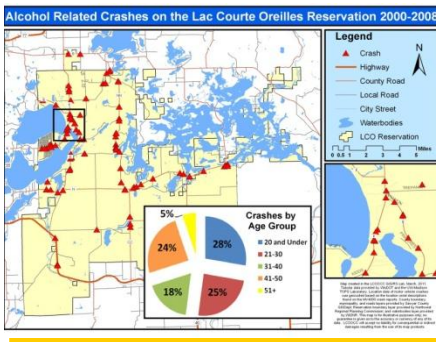
FHWA, NYSDOT manages highway planning, design, and construction. Christine Thorkildsen (FHWA) and Rob Limoges (NYSDOT) shared information about FHWA supported programs and resources include the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), High Risk Rural Roads, and Safe Routes to School. New York's statewide strategic highway safety plan (SHSP) includes engineering related emphasis areas focusing on pedestrian safety, intersections, lane departures, work zones, and data systems. These areas drive the state's engineering safety investments.

Funding and guidance from NHTSA is managed through GTSC and focuses primarily on education and enforcement efforts to promote safer driving behavior. Shannon Purdy (NHTSA) emphasized the need for strong laws, effective enforcement, and targeted media messages. For those interested in adapting materials, the NHTSA website, www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov, provides posters, law enforcement op-ed, radio liners, enforcement and social norming static billboards, enforcement online banners, and more. Booker Brown described GTSC grant programs focusing on impaired driving, police traffic services (e.g., speed, aggressive driving), occupant protection, pedestrian and bicycle safety, motorcycle safety, community traffic safety programs, and traffic records.

Robert Frazier presented two related programs from the BIA. The Division of Transportation, Title 23 Section 202, allocates funding to tribes using a formula based on roadway inventory. While there is no specific set aside for safety, about 15 percent is identified as safety improvement projects, including maintenance, signage, etc. The Indian Highway Safety Program (IHSP) is a set aside with the NHTSA 402 program to support education and enforcement. Two percent of the funding goes to the IHSP, which recognizes tribes and independent "Indian States" and works as a proposal grant program. As with other NHTSA programs, IHSP is a funding reimbursement program. While other categories are allowable, it has mostly funded DUI enforcement projects.

One proven effective strategy for reducing the occurrence of run off the road crashes is the use of rumble strips and stripes. John Velat presented on the *Rumble on the Reservation* project, which is funded by a technical assistance grant from the Roadway Safety Foundation and a grant from FHWA. The project consists of creating an educational video, printed materials, and an awareness campaign. Almost all reservation roads are rural two-lane, the type where over half of run off the road fatalities occur, which makes rumble strips and stripes important candidates for consideration by those seeking to take action to improve safety.

■ Evidence Driven Decisions



The collaborative actions described above must be routed in evidence driven decision making to maximize the potential to reduce fatalities and serious injuries. Data is used to support grant applications, evaluate outcomes, plan and prioritize resources, and communicate with the community. Sovereign Nations are not required to provide data to the state, but there are some incentives for doing so, including access to resources.

Alternatives to quantitative data that can be used to inform safety decisions include standards, community knowledge, and experiences of neighboring or similar communities. Road safety audits (RSA) can also provide a great deal of useful information to guide safety improvements and apply for safety funding. FHWA has supported a number of RSA on tribal roadways and can provide training to Nations wishing to learn how.

New York’s statewide SHSP and NYSDOT’s highway safety projects are data driven. NYSDOT uses data to identify and treat specific problem locations and to treat widespread crash types.



NYSDOT Data Collection and Analysis Process

GTSC Program Areas are also data driven, using crash data, enforcement data, and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) data, among other sources to focus investments on grant projects with the greatest potential to improve safety.

Recognizing the importance of evidence driven decision making, participants discussed data issues at great length. NYSDOT and GTSC expressed commitment to working with the Nations to resolve issues and identify solutions for improving availability of quality safety data for tribal roadways. Important issues raised that require consideration include:

- Maintaining Nation sovereignty and sensitivity around sharing personal identifiers;
- How the MV 104 Motor Vehicle Accident Form might be used on tribal roadways;
- Ensuring Nations have access to the data they share with the state;
- Identifying resources to support Nations developing their own data systems; and
- How Nations might work with their local traffic safety boards to access and analyze data.

While most of the discussion focused on technical issues around data and the need for data to access funding, Pamela Wanning of SUNY Ulster also pointed to data as necessary to support quality of life. She stressed, “We are not statistics. It’s personal. Data tells the story.”

Summit Results

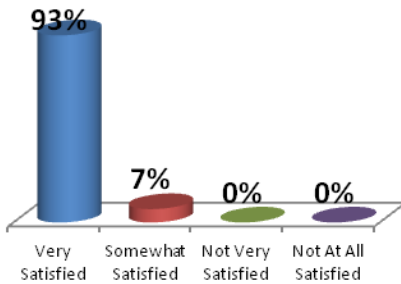


A primary Summit objective was to develop coordinated approaches to help reduce fatalities and serious injuries on Native Nation roadways. To achieve this, Summit participants discussed their experiences and offered potential opportunities to collaborate and implement approaches for improving safety. The following recommendations were developed during facilitated discussion.

- Explore opportunities to adapt the MV 104 Motor Vehicle Accident Form for use on tribal roadways;
- Engage Native Nations in DMV efforts to review MV 104 form and identify the most important elements;
- Native Nations get engaged with county traffic safety boards;
- Engage Native Nations in quarterly NYS Association of Traffic Safety Boards (NYSATSB) meetings;
- Identify opportunities to share resources between Nations (i.e., others are invited to attend RSA training requested by the Seneca Nation; Seneca Nation plans to make their incident management system available to other Nations when ready.)
- Work with PTSI to improve information about student transportation safety on tribal lands;
- Provide Native Nations simple materials (i.e., tri-fold, handout, or reference card) for conducting local outreach where new roundabouts are being installed;
- Add cultural sensitivity training to annual transportation conferences (i.e., annual highway safety conference, law enforcement meetings, etc.);
- Look for opportunities for law enforcement agencies to meet, share experiences, and learn from each other;
- Work with individual Nations to develop transportation safety plans; and
- Develop online contact list for Native Nations.

Moving Forward

Participant Satisfaction



“The presentation was relaxed but comprehensive with a great opportunity for networking and resource building.” – Participant and Native Nation Representative

Stakeholders in New York are committed to take the next steps in the pursuit of safer transportation for Native Americans. As emphasized at the beginning of the Summit and throughout, an important component of any future direction should be to continue to foster collaboration around evidence-driven decisions and action.

Participant evaluations collected at the end of the Summit indicated and overwhelming majority were “very satisfied” with the event and every respondent expressed a willingness to attend similar events in the future to continue efforts toward improving transportation safety for Native Nations.

Native Nations, along with Federal, state, and local partners, are encouraged to begin implementing applicable recommendations immediately. Participants will inform the elders, leaders, and other safety stakeholders in their communities about the Summit results and recommendations.

More information about resources available from state, regional, and Federal partners involved in the Summit can be found at:

Michigan Tech TTAP: www.ttap.mtu.edu;

GTSC: <http://www.safeny.ny.gov>;

NYSDOT: <https://www.dot.ny.gov/safety>;

FHWA Office of Federal Lands Highway:
<http://flh.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/irr/safety>;

FHWA Office of Safety: <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov>;

BIA: <http://www.doi.gov/bia>; and

NHTSA: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>.

Appendix A: Agenda

SUMMIT OBJECTIVES

- Raise awareness about transportation safety issues and challenges facing Native Nations in New York.
- Share experiences, success stories, and lessons learned.
- Identify available safety resources and begin developing recommendations for moving forward.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21ST

11:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Registration
1:00 PM – 1:45 PM	Opening Session Opening Ceremony Welcome & Introductions <i>Chief Joseph Smith, Oneida Nation</i> <i>John Velat, Michigan Tech TTAP</i> Native Nation Leaders/Representatives Federal Representative <i>Craig Genzlinger, FHWA Office of Federal Lands Highway</i> <i>Jon McDade, FHWA - NY Division Office</i>
1:45 PM – 3:00 PM	Identifying the Issues Exploring the Data <i>John Velat, Michigan Tech TTAP</i> <u>Exploring the Data Panel</u> <i>John Velat, Michigan Tech TTAP</i> <i>Robert Frazier, BIA DOT Central Office</i> <i>Craig Genzlinger, Federal Highway Administration</i> <i>Shannon Purdy, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration</i> <i>Rob Limoges, NYS Department of Transportation, Data Systems</i> Prioritizing Transportation Safety Issues <i>Roundtable Discussions and Report Outs</i>
3:00 PM – 3:15 PM	Break
3:15 PM – 5:00 PM	Native Nations Safety Initiatives Collaborative Capital Projects (Engineering) <i>Jody Clark, Seneca Nation of Indians</i> <i>Ron Hayes & Sanjay Singh, NYSDOT Region 5</i> Successful Projects/Needs (Engineering) <i>Ernie Thompson, St. Regis Mohawk</i> Child Passenger Safety (Education) <i>Lynne Thompson, St. Regis Mohawk</i> <i>Debbie Kogut, Onondaga County Sheriff's Office-Traffic Safety Program</i> Bus Traffic Safety Check Points (Enforcement) <i>Chief Joseph Smith, Oneida Nation of Indians</i> Tribal Emergency Management (Emergency Response) <i>N. Cochise Redeye, Seneca Nation Emergency Management Department</i>

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Dinner

THURSDAY, MARCH 22ND

8:00 AM – 8:15 AM	Reflecting on Day One
8:15 AM – 9:15 AM	Safety Programs and Resources Engineering Improvements for Safety <i>Rob Limoges, NYS Department of Transportation</i> <i>Chris Thorkildsen, FHWA-NY Division Office</i> Improving Driver Behavior <i>Booker Brown, Governor's Traffic Safety Committee</i> <i>Shannon Purdy, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration</i> Rumble on the Reservation <i>John Velat, Michigan Tech TTAP</i> Indian Highway Safety Program <i>Robert Frazier, Bureau of Indian Affairs</i>
9:15 AM – 10:15 AM	Looking for Solutions <i>Roundtable Discussions and Report Outs</i>
10:15 AM – 10:30 AM	Break
10:30 AM – 11:30 AM	Recommendations for Collaborative Action <i>Facilitated Discussion</i>
11:30 AM – 12:00 PM	Continuing the Dialogue & Next Steps

Appendix B: Participants

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