



# MTEA NEWS

## Billings West adopts *It Can Wait* Campaign

By Doug Van Zee, Billings West High School and MTEA Board Member

**D**ue to the ever increasing dangers of electronic devices being used behind the wheel, Billings West invited the *It Can Wait* campaign from AT&T. A presentation was given during the freshman health enhancement classes in early September. The students watched a short presentation, then were able to rotate through the simulator. The students were excited to try out the virtual reality (VR) technology used to simulate the dangers of texting and driving.



Billings West student with *It Can Wait* pledge cards. Photo by Kelly Deming.



Photo by Bob Zellar, Gazette Staff

The *It Can Wait* campaign made a lasting impact at Billings West High School in Montana. Many students experienced the virtual reality simulator and were shown an accompanying documentary about a teenager who was struck and paralyzed in a hit-and-run crash. According to the Billings Gazette, Montana is one of four states without a texting and driving law, but most cities, including Billings, have their own ordinances prohibiting the use of handheld devices while driving. "It's important for young people to take an active role," said campaign spokesman Christopher Johnson.

I would encourage all traffic ed programs to reach out to the AT&T campaign to schedule a presentation in your area. It would work best in a small classroom setting as we found there was not enough time to get all students the experience in the simulator.

Check out their website for classroom resources, including pledge cards students can sign in class. <https://www.itcanwait.com/>

*The following is an excerpt from the Billings Gazette (used with permission)*

BY MATT HOFFMAN, STAFF WRITER

West High freshman Josh Payton doesn't have his driver's license yet, but battling through a texting-and-driving virtual reality simulator left him "honestly scared."

"You'd, like, try to read the text messages, you almost hit a kid on a bike, you almost hit a car," he said.

The event was part of the "It Can Wait" campaign from AT&T Wireless. Students at West watched an accompanying documentary about a teenager who was struck and paralyzed in a hit-and-run crash. Seeing the effects on someone in their age group can help students relate to the message, Johnson said.

Texting and driving has become ingrained in society. When Johnson asks students if they had seen their parents text and drive "all their hands go up."

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates nearly 3,500 people were killed in crashes involving distracted drivers in the mainland U.S. and Puerto Rico in 2015, up from almost 3,200 in 2014. The number of deaths in which cellphones were the distraction rose from 406 in 2014 to 476 in 2015.

Reprinted with permission. [http://billingsgazette.com/news/local/education/west-high-students-see-dangers-of-texting-and-driving-in/article\\_9d3772dd-9388-55dd-b9e2-941a9dfdb156.html](http://billingsgazette.com/news/local/education/west-high-students-see-dangers-of-texting-and-driving-in/article_9d3772dd-9388-55dd-b9e2-941a9dfdb156.html)

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## MTEA News

This newsletter is published by the Montana Traffic Education Association in the fall, winter, and spring. MTEA, PO Box 637, Conrad, MT 59425. Jim Carroll, Executive Secretary, (406) 278-7856. Web: [MTEAOnline.org](http://MTEAOnline.org).

MTEA News is mailed to members and active contributor/sustainers. The spring issue is mailed to all traffic educators in Montana to provide annual conference registration information.

To submit an article, photo, or letter to the editor, contact newsletter editor Steffani Grogan at [sgrogan@forsyth.k12.mt.us](mailto:sgrogan@forsyth.k12.mt.us).

Newsletter deadline for articles:

Fall issue—October 1

Winter issue—December 1

Spring issue—March 1

## President's Message

Dear Fellow Traffic Education Instructors,



I cannot believe it is already time for me to write my first letter as MTEA President. I look forward to doing all I can to put my mark on this wonderful association and at the same time contribute something positive. I realize I cannot do it alone and am very fortunate to be surrounded by some very valuable and wonderful people.

I sincerely hope everyone is off to a great start to the new school year. For me it has been very interesting. Here at Great Falls High, we started teaching driver's education during the school day. We are offering it as a class and so far, so good. Derik Senger and I are teaching five classes and doing our drives before and after school.

Like I said, so far everything is going great. I especially like the teaching part in the day, because I don't feel like I am giving them an hour and half of very important information after the students just spent six hours in school. We are offering a ½ credit, so are extending the class time to a semester of learning. Again, I really like this format. Hopefully, I can share this new experience with you in a future issue of MTEA News and at the conference.

What we do as traffic educators is not easy. Ask anyone if they would like to be a driver's education instructor and you will get a response like "are you crazy?" Well, we must be "crazy dedicated" to making it safer for all road users.

I appreciate all you do with your programs and our association. I feel we are making a huge difference for a lot of people. I hope all of you are having a great year and I look forward to hearing from you, talking with you, and seeing you at the conference.

Take care and be safe,

**Jerry A. Olson, MTEA President (2016-17)**

*Jerry Olson is an art and driver education teacher at Great Falls High School and has taught driver education there since 2005. He was honored to serve as MTEA's 2012 Outstanding Traffic Educator of the Year and in 2013 was hired by the Office of Public Instruction as a Montana DRIVE advanced driving workshop instructor.*



**MTEA is on Facebook!**

Search for Montana Traffic Education Association

## Summary: Executive Board Meeting

Here's an overview of the Executive Board meeting on April 24, 2016 in Billings:

- Minutes, finances, and correspondence were reviewed.
- Conference overviews by guest presenters were heard.
- Reports from awards, door prizes, newsletter, auction, and OPI were heard.
- Classification reports were heard.
- President-Elect and Classification Director nominations were reviewed.
- Special recognition for MTEA member was approved.
- Purchase of Intersection DVD's for membership was approved.
- Possible giveaways to celebrate 50 anniversary of MTEA were discussed.

The next meeting was tentatively planned for late October or early November. Anyone having items for discussion should contact Jerry Olson, President, or Jim Carroll, Executive Secretary, as soon as possible to be included on the agenda.

You can also send a note via the Contact page at [MTEAOnline.org](http://MTEAOnline.org).



## MTEA Membership

Did you know there are over 300 teachers around the state assigned to schools to teach Traffic Education? Of that amount, almost 200 of them are members of MTEA.

**Encourage a colleague to join MTEA! Besides friendly colleagues, there are many benefits of membership:**

- Annual Traffic Education conference (conference fees are extra) that brings 200 teachers together with experts in the field, college credit or renewal units for professional development, and the latest research and resources for traffic educators.
- Three newsletters per year (Fall, Winter, Spring).
- \$5,000 AD&D/life insurance policy.
- Voting on and eligibility for board elections and annual recognition awards.
- A voice in the ongoing improvement of driver education in Montana through policy and legislative actions.

If you attended the spring conference in Billings, your membership into MTEA automatically renewed with your conference payment. If you know of someone who is not a current member of MTEA, encourage them to join. Contact Jim Carroll at the MTEA address and he will send an application form and letter to those people you identify as potential members.

Annual membership dues are \$45, payable to MTEA. Learn more about MTEA membership and download a membership form at [MTEAOnline.org](http://MTEAOnline.org).



**Did you know that MTEA is almost 50?**

**MTEA was founded in 1967. Next year will be our 50th Anniversary! We are almost a half century old. Tens of thousands of teen drivers have benefited from the long and dedicated careers of our state's traffic educators.**

**We will celebrate and mark this achievement at our 2017 conference in Great Falls.**

### MTEA MILESTONES

Dan Marinkovich was one of the founders and MTEA's first president. He still actively serves on the board and attends almost every spring traffic ed conference.

In 1972, MTEA had 38 members. Today it has 190.

In 1987, MTEA launched the Teacher of the Year and Dealer of the Year awards.

In 1978, NMC and MSU offered a new traffic ed minor. (Now just at MSU Northern, Havre)

**50** MORE MILESTONES IN THE NEXT ISSUE ...

## 2016 Outstanding Traffic Educator of the Year: Jeff Mead



Sidney instructor Jeff Mead received MTEA's **2016 Outstanding Traffic Educator of the Year** award at the conference this spring.

Mead has mostly taught traffic education in Sidney, but has also provided this service to the nearby towns of Savage, Fairview, Plentywood and Medicine Lake.

Thom Barnhart, his colleague and friend of 19 years, wrote in his nomination of Mead that he is deserving of this recognition due to his 39 years in the field, his long and active service on the MTEA board—serving as its president in 1991-92, his integration of technology into the classroom, involvement in bicycle safety, and conducting car seat checks in Eastern Montana. Mead is also a longtime Montana DRIVE summer workshop instructor.

Barnhart wrote: "For the past 39 years, Jeff has given of his time to instruct our youth in fitness and health, traffic

education, sportsmanship, and citizenship. He likes to refer to himself as 'old school' as he incorporates all four ethos into everything he participates in involving our youth, yet while he commands respect he has that subtle sense of humor that can put his students at ease while he instructs them in the most difficult tasks, be it behind-the-wheel, in the classroom, on the court/field, or just dealing with life in general."

Barnhart also wrote that "Jeff's continued intensive involvement in traffic education after 39 years is a strong indicator of his commitment to our youth and our MTEA membership."

In his candidate statement, Mead wrote that the most powerful aspect of his program is making it "relevant to the local environment. The classroom and BTW take the basic concepts of the curriculum and apply them to the situations our students will encounter." He also said parent feedback regarding their driving time with teens is encouraged and useful.

**Congratulations, Jeff!**

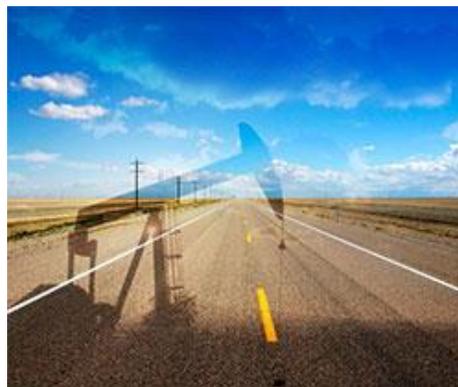
## Learning to Drive in the Bakken "made us all better drivers"

By Jeff Mead, 2016 Outstanding Traffic Educator of the Year

**N**ow that life has slowed down in Eastern Montana, one can reflect back on the changes that occurred and how we produced better drivers. The population influx brought people from all over the country and habits specific to their area.

Students needed to learn to deal with the range of skills as well as the faster pace of life. They made these adaptations without realizing it, they really didn't know any different. Their decision making needed to be done quickly with many more variables than students in previous years. It was and is enjoyable to guide the students through this process.

Previous to the Bakken boom, I was contemplating leaving Traffic Ed because it was difficult to challenge the students due to the slow life and lack of situations in Richland County that they would encounter in larger areas. The boom brought situations that were similar to larger areas. Engineering and design changes were implemented with safety in mind: centerline rumble strips,



turn lanes, traffic signals with protected turns, and reflective outlines and multiple roundabouts. Lesson routes were changed to provide exposure to as many situations as possible i.e., driving to Williston instead of Glendive.

Classroom sessions were designed to be more specific to what the student would experience in our area. As a result, students and teachers both benefited from these challenges and I think made us all better drivers.

Keep up when possible on trends around the country. With that in mind, I share this link to an article from New Jersey: *How to navigate the confusing new traffic signal popping up across N.J.* <http://s.nj.com/ebYh0NW>

Photo courtesy of the Montana Department of Transportation from a report: **Impacts to Montana State Highways Due to Bakken Oil Development.** <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/pave/oil.shtml>



## Emergency Notification System Signs at Railroad Crossings



*Have you seen the blue Emergency Notification System (ENS) signs at every highway-rail grade crossing?*

The ENS is for emergencies that would require stopping train traffic due to an obstruction on the tracks, or any other problem at the crossing such as nonworking lights or gates. Call 911 if there are injuries to report.

The **ENS 1-800** telephone numbers connect 24/7/365 to railroad dispatchers who can attempt to stop all train traffic at the crossing during an emergency. Simply provide the information on the sign, including the Department of Transportation railroad crossing location numbers.

If you are stuck on the train tracks, remember the word "GO" as in GET OUT of your vehicle and away from the tracks. Once the railroad crossing warning lights activate, 20 seconds is the minimal amount of time that it takes a train to reach the grade crossing.



### BTW Back Seat Activity

Ask students observing in the back seat to search for the blue ENS signs located on the cross buck sign post or the mast of the active warning devices by the train tracks.

If your students find a RR crossing without an ENS sign, contact BNSF Railway at (800) 832-5452 or Montana Rail Link at (406) 523-2409.

Questions to ask your students:

- If your vehicle is stuck on a railroad grade crossing what would you do?
- What would you do if you saw a truck or vehicle stuck at a railroad grade crossing prior to the lights and gates activating?
- When would you activate the grade crossing Emergency Notification System?
- When the lights begin flashing and the gates begin to descend at a railroad grade crossing, what is the minimal amount of time before a train reaches the grade crossing?
- How long does it take to stop a freight train? (over one mile at 55mph)

Source: Amtrak and Federal Railroad Administration:  
<http://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P0894>

*Montana Operation Lifesaver (MTOLI) is a non-profit public information program dedicated to reducing collisions, injuries and fatalities at highway-rail crossings. MTOLI is part of a national program known as Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI).*

### CLASSROOM PRESENTATIONS

OLI Presenters are trained and certified to provide important safety information to driver's education students and other school children, community service clubs and civic groups, school bus operators and professional truck drivers, company safety programs and others.



<http://www.mtoli.org/>

*Montana has 1,491 public railroad crossings.*

## State Farm Insurance Receives MTEA Award

Every year the Montana Traffic Education Association (MTEA) honors a company or individual who has gone the distance to support traffic education in Montana. This year, the **State Farm Insurance Company** received the **Contributor of the Year** award at the Montana Traffic Education Conference in Billings.

A longtime partner of the OPI and the MTEA, State Farm was recognized "for sustained support for teen drivers through peer-to-peer traffic safety campaigns, Montana DRIVE Teen Workshops, and exceptional research and resources contributing to the practice of driver education."

State Farm has provided funding for educational resources for traffic education and donated vehicles to the OPI's Montana DRIVE Program. The OPI is especially grateful for State Farm's annual grant that has been received since 2009 providing a \$200 Montana DRIVE teen workshop scholarship to teen drivers who apply. This brings the cost of the one-day workshop to \$85, making it possible for up to 36 teens each summer to benefit from advanced driving training on the track in Lewistown.



*State Farm is a leader in teen driver safety with peer-to-peer traffic safety campaigns, like their #DRIVE2N2 campaign that reminds drivers to keep two hands on the wheel and two eyes on the road.*

For more information, visit  
[teendriving.statefarm.com](http://teendriving.statefarm.com)

## The Classroom on Wheels: Help Create a BTW Study Guide

The OPI and MTEA are looking for a team of experienced and new teachers to share strategies, ideas, and best practices for behind-the-wheel (BTW) teaching. This BTW project will lead to a **teacher study guide** to distill, present and explain driving skills. Our newest traffic education teachers know how to drive and how to teach, but the “classroom on wheels” is distinctly different. In-car lessons build on classroom activities and information and there is more to teaching the complexity of driving than start, steer, and stop.

How do you guide students who are learning precision turns, speed control, stopping, tracking on a straight path, judging gaps, and scanning for hazards? What do you say and when do you use commentary driving?

We integrated driver decisions points, real world driving scenarios, and learner-centered activities when we updated our Montana Traffic Education Curriculum. We want to add to the BTW resources that already include a pre-drive checklist and a table of 12 in- car lessons with objectives, environment, and suggested sequence. We have two pages of guidelines on preparing for in-car lessons and Scot Ferda’s Commentary Driving Vocabulary. With your help, we can expand and improve these BTW resources for teachers.

For more information and to participate in the **BTW Teacher Study Guide Project**, contact Fran Penner-Ray at (406) 444-4396 or email [fpenner-ray@mt.gov](mailto:fpenner-ray@mt.gov).



## Traffic Education Conferences in 2017



The **2017 Montana Traffic Education Conference** will take place April 23-25, 2017 at the Best Western Heritage Inn in Great Falls. Visit: [MTEAOnline.org](http://MTEAOnline.org).

Remember, the costs of attending the conference are an allowable expense for local program costs under OPI guidelines. *Earn one college credit or up to 16 OPI renewal units.*



If you are looking for another great regional traffic education conference, the **2017 Pacific Northwest Driver & Traffic Safety Conference** will be held March 3-5 in Portland, Oregon. Visit: <http://trouw.org/projects/tse>.



The **2017 ADTSEA conference** will be held July 16-19 in Sacramento, California. The conference will provide you with a wealth of information and an opportunity to network with other professionals from across the United States. Visit the American Driver and Traffic Safety

Education Association website at <http://www.adtsea.org>.

Remember, MTEA has a scholarship program that will provide up to \$300 per person to offset ADTSEA conference costs. If you can't attend, at least consider joining your national organization.



### Plan Ahead for the 2017 State Legislature

The 2017 legislative session opens January 2, 2017, and MTEA will be there with the help of our lobbyist Jane Hamman, pushing for more funds for traffic education programs.

This general election season is a good time to chat with your state representative and senator about their positions on traffic education and safety issues and about your own local traffic education program.

For up-to-date information on the Montana State Legislature, visit [www.sos.mt.gov/elections](http://www.sos.mt.gov/elections).

## Fran's Findings



**A**utumn transitions are filled with falling leaves, new classes, golden days and stormy skies. We have the chance to work with students, explore different paths and hopefully learn from failures. One teacher told me if he learned from all his mistakes he'd be a genius by now. I

wonder what the 17-year-old Billings driver learned from flipping his jeep down a hill off Airport Road. Luckily, he walked away with a reckless driving ticket.

In late September, I reflected on his crash and the journeys of two young women, both age 27. One crashed on I-94 near Fallon after texting and speeding. She was unbelted and ejected after she lost control and her vehicle rolled over. The other is my daughter who drove 2,600 miles through wind, rain, and big city traffic. She prefers to drive in daylight and knows how to stay focused and drive in rain. She learned from driver education, parent coaching, and her first crash. The electronic stability control (ESC) in her 2014 Chevy Spark also helps.

Many vehicles already have elements of highly automated vehicles with ESC since 2012 and Anti-Lock Braking System (ABS) since 2011. Driver assistance systems include sensors, warning beeps and vibrations for parking and lane changes. New technologies include

Contact Fran Penner-Ray ([fpenner-ray@mt.gov](mailto:fpenner-ray@mt.gov)) and Patti Borneman ([pborneman@mt.gov](mailto:pborneman@mt.gov)) by email or call the OPI Traffic Education Office at (406) 444-4432 with any questions about Teen Driver Education in Montana.

automatic emergency braking that will slam on the brakes if the driver fails to respond to slowing vehicles ahead. Adaptive cruise control will adjust speed to maintain the following distance a driver sets.



"Self-driving" cars are in the news along with the increase in traffic fatalities. Engineering and technology are part of the solution, but more than 90% of crashes are a result of driver error. For more on this subject, read the article, *Cars today are safer than they were 50 years ago*. *Where will safety technologies go next?* at [MyCarDoesWhat.org](http://MyCarDoesWhat.org).

In Montana, we are aiming for Vision Zero by preventing injuries and fatalities on our roads through safer drivers, safer cars and safer roads. Driver education needs to adapt and evolve to help students use critical knowledge and skills to make safe driving decisions. Even in "adaptive" vehicles, the driver behind the wheel is still a car's best safety feature.

It's an honor to work with dedicated teachers to reduce young driver crashes.

*Fran Penner-Ray,*  
*OPI Traffic Education Director*



Montana  
Office of Public Instruction  
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

[opi.mt.gov](http://opi.mt.gov)

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/DriverEd>

## Funding Available to Schools for Teen Peer-to-Peer Traffic Safety



MDT continues to partner with the **Family, Career and Community Leaders of America** (FCCLA) to promote Teen Traffic Safety. FCCLA's Families Acting for Community Traffic Safety (FACTS) program is a national peer education program through which students strive to save lives by educating youth and their community about traffic safety. **MDT is offering grants (up to \$1,000) to students who want to promote teen traffic safety in their schools.**

Topics can include increasing seat belt use; reducing speeding; reducing distracted driving; and reducing other behaviors by teen drivers that lead to injuries and fatalities. Applicants will determine the methods of educating their peers on traffic safety issues. This may include social media campaigns, in-school contests (i.e., video messaging contest, poster contest), flyers, etc. School groups will be given guidance on how to implement a successful traffic safety peer-to-peer program.

School districts that have participated in this program include Forsyth, Plevna, Sunburst, Three Forks, and Fairview. This grant program provides reimbursement for project expenses and applications are accepted year-round.

For details, visit: <http://plan2live.mt.gov/teen-challenge.shtml>.



Montana Traffic Education Association  
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## CELEBRATE MONTANA TEEN DRIVER SAFETY DAY!

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2016 (and every day)

*Celebrate safe teen driving with peer-to-peer activities that bring together students, teachers, families, and communities. Montana Teen Driver Safety Day is always the third Tuesday in October. It was designated by the Montana State Legislature in 2009 to "increase public awareness and promote teen driver safety." (MCA 1-1-229)*

### **Celebrating Montana Teen Driver Safety Day?**

- SHARE your activities and outreach activities on the **MTEA Facebook** page (search for *Montana Traffic Education Association*).
- SEND an email to Traffic Education Director Fran Penner-Ray at [fpenner-ray@mt.gov](mailto:fpenner-ray@mt.gov) or CALL the Traffic Education Office at (406) 444-4432.
- TAKE OPI'S Online Survey by October 31. Look for an email from the OPI Traffic Ed Program with the survey link.

***We want to recognize the activities and celebrations that take place this year (or in past years). Please let us know!***

**DOWNLOAD** the OPI's [Ideas and Resources](#) handout for safety messages and ways to help teens develop safe driving habits and encourage their friends to drive safely, too.

### **Here are a few ideas to get you started:**

- Invite AT&T's It Can Wait campaign to give a presentation (see Doug Van Zee's article in this issue).
- Host lunchtime videos and encourage safe driving pledges.
- **Stay in Your Lane** distracted driving awareness activities.
- Morning announcements encouraging safe driving habits.
- Positive messages on reader boards at your school, sports stadiums and local businesses.
- Conduct seat belt and cell phone surveys to raise awareness.
- Contest to design a safe driving poster or social media meme.
- Chalk up the sidewalk with "stay alert, arrive alive" messages.