



MTEA NEWS

Highlights of the 2017 Montana Traffic Education Conference

By Steffani Grogan

MTEA's 50th anniversary celebration at the conference this year was a success. After looking over the evaluations it was clear that our mystery keynote speaker, Rick Lewis, aka the "surprise waiter," overwhelmingly took the top spot in our hearts. Personally, I laughed so hard that I had tears running down my cheeks even though I knew who he was.

Crowd reactions fluctuated from anger to empathy for this poor soul. A feeling of relief swept the audience as the comedian revealed his true purpose: to break the default rules in our culture which are roadblocks to excellence and change.

The Lesson Slam added a positive twist to the sharing of resources and networking with peers. Most comments supported this style of roundtable with some need to tweak the time frame.

Everyone's ideas were compiled and a few resource files were provided by generous educators for download on the MTEA website. In the next three issues of this newsletter, we will include Lesson Slam activities shared by teachers for teachers.

The session on Special Education (SPED) and Driver Education generated a lot of interest, with many questions and comments about special cases from individual schools. A SPED workshop on how to coordinate with local resources, dealing with specific disabilities and clarification on requirements of summer traffic education programs for SPED drivers was requested for a future conference. The OPI's handout, *Accommodating Students with*

Disabilities in Traffic Education (reprinted on page 6 of this issue) was used by the presenter as the basis for special education considerations.

The Tire Safety session was rated by one attendee as "super awesome." Darryl Nielsen, owner of Darryl's Tire and Service Center in Vaughn, described how tire technology affects driver performance. He earned high praise and multiple requests for a workshop repeat.

The community traffic safety video presented by Mike Kincaid was also well received. Many attendees found the demonstration of the video clips helpful and everyone received a DVD. The videos are also on Youtube at https://youtu.be/3wZjFAhI_6Y.

The Deer Lodge drive session presented by Bob Schalk gave an interesting glimpse into another traffic education program designed to respond to a particular traffic environment. The organization and format of this session was greatly appreciated.

We have such a great network of driver education professionals. I look forward to seeing you again next year when Bozeman hosts the 2018 Montana Traffic Education Association Conference on April 22-24.

Plan to attend and remember to bring a best practice lesson, video, BTW activity or helpful resource, so the Slam can be repeated at the spring conference.



2017 Traffic Educator of the Year, Jennifer Wasson, Montana School for the Deaf and Blind, Great Falls



2017 Contributor of the Year, Gary DeGooyer, Great Falls



2017 Contributor of the Year, Patricia Ehli, MVD Driver Examiner, Missoula



Conference presentations and handouts for the 2016 and 2017 conferences are available for download on the OPI's Driver Educators webpage: <http://opi.mt.gov/driver-educators>.

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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.

MTEA News is mailed to members and active contributor/sustainers. The spring issue is mailed to all traffic educators in Montana as an invitation to the annual traffic education conference.

To submit an article, photo, or letter to the editor, contact newsletter editor Steffani Grogan at sgrogan@forsyth.k12.mt.us.

Newsletter deadline for articles:

Fall issue—October 1

Winter issue—December 1

Spring issue—March 1

President's Message

Greetings Traffic Educators!

I hope that you were all able to recharge over the summer and that your 2017-18 school year is off to a fantastic start. I am honored to serve as MTEA President this year and look forward to getting down to work on the planning phase of next year's conference.

It was great to meet new members and catch up with longtime members at the 2017 spring conference in Great Falls where we celebrated MTEA's 50th Anniversary. The extra effort put forth by your executive board added some very heart-warming touches to the conference.

I was particularly humbled to stand among the past presidents as they were honored for their contributions to traffic education over the past 50 years. The legacy of service, dedication, and professionalism was felt as each of the past presidents was presented a gold coin to commemorate their enduring commitment to safer drivers on our roads.

The new Lesson Slam idea exchange was a hit! As Steffani Grogan writes, we will be publishing your ideas in the next three issues of MTEA News. It would be great to get feedback on any of the lesson ideas you've started using in your own traffic education programs.

I think it is worth reminding you all how important you are and how important your job is. We are on the front lines of traffic safety. People always ask me why I do this job. I am often asked how I can stand the stress of driving with teenagers the first time they are behind the wheel. Though my answers are sometimes humorlessly flippant, my most common response is: I believe in the program. I believe it helps. I believe that the teachers around the state are making the roads, and our children who drive them, safer.

Thanks for all you do for kids! Be safe out there,

Kurtis Koenig, MTEA President (2017-18)

English Teacher, Football Coach, Traffic Education Instructor, Ennis



Dan Marinkovich, MTEA's first president (1967-68 and 1999-2000) and Kurtis Koenig, MTEA President (2017-18)



L-R, back row:
Terry Grant, Jerry Fisher, Charlie Brown, Doug Clanin, Jeff Mead, Jim McGrane, Jerry Olson, Kurtis Koenig.

L-R, front row:
Mick Davis, Tom Zuhoski, Harold Lair, Ken Watson, Dan Marinkovich, Diane Prongua, Karen Covert, Jim Carroll.

Summary of MTEA's Last Executive Board Meeting

Here's an overview of the last Executive Board meeting held April 24 in Great Falls:

- Minutes, finances, and correspondence were reviewed.
- Conference overviews were provided.
- An OPI and Legislative report was shared.
- Reports from awards, door prizes, newsletter, and silent auction were heard.
- Classification reports were heard.
- President-Elect and Classification Director nominations were reviewed.

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



Retiring from Teaching? You can still teach traffic education!

If you retired this year or have plans to retire from education soon and have been an active MTEA member, please send Jim Carroll a note at the MTEA address. We would like to honor you at the next spring conference.

Download the Service Recognition/Retirement Award form at MTEAOnline.org and send to Jim Carroll.

You can still teach driver education!

If your retirement is based on a termination date of January 1, 2014 or later, ***you must wait 150 calendar days before you can return to work as a working retiree*** in a TRS reportable position. The 150 calendar day break begins on the first day following your termination.

To comply with IRS public pension qualification standards, an unmistakable interval of time between a member's retirement and their return to work as a retired member is necessary. The break-in-service requirement applies to all TRS members, including members employed by the University System.

For more information, visit the Teacher's Retirement System website: <http://trs.mt.gov/>.

Help MTEA Recruit Members

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

- Annual Traffic Education conference (conference fees extra) that brings 180 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 know someone who teaches traffic education and 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 anyone you identify as a potential member.

Annual membership dues are \$45, payable to MTEA. Your membership in MTEA is automatically renewed when you attend the annual spring conference.

Learn more about MTEA membership at MTEAOnline.org.



Search for:
**Montana Traffic
Education
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Diane Prongua with her pup at the 2017 Montana Traffic Education Conference

CONTACT US! Send a note via the Contact page at MTEAOnline.org or contact MTEA Executive Secretary Jim Carroll at (406) 278-7856. Write to MTEA at PO Box 637, Conrad, MT 59425.

Keeping the Connection in Classroom and Behind-the-Wheel Instruction

By Kurtis Koenig, Ennis

Like many of you who teach in a smaller community, I typically offer only two summer sections of Traffic Education. This summer, I went a different route. Due to scheduling issues beyond my control, I was forced to teach only one section. With 30 students enrolled, and a need to keep the class under seven weeks, we determined that hiring a second teacher was necessary. Fortunately, I was able to hire my father who came out of retirement to give me a hand. Though the joys of working with my dad—the person who taught me how to drive—could serve as an enjoyable story on its own, I want to discuss the multi-teacher program.

I, like many of my Class C and B counterparts, have been the lone instructor in Ennis for the past 10 years. What I have enjoyed by this is the close relationships I've been able to forge with my students. I have been able to observe the various strengths and weaknesses in the classroom and behind the wheel for each student. Knowing where my students' strengths and weaknesses lie has allowed me to provide individual feedback and instruction, tailor-made for each of my young drivers.

Inasmuch as we strive to provide concurrent instruction, the anecdotal knowledge gleaned in a classroom oftentimes does not translate into the practical skills we require of our novice drivers behind the wheel. Being a solitary teacher in my program, I have typically enjoyed an acute awareness of what my students have mastered in the classroom and what they have not. Additionally, the



same is true for each of my drivers behind the wheel. This summer, I did not have this luxury.

Some of the students I taught in the classroom were never scheduled to drive with me. Likewise, many of my drivers were never in my classroom. I noted a disconnect with what the students were learning theoretically and how they were applying that knowledge in practice. I know the material was being taught effectively and consistently both in the classroom and in the car, but I didn't know the individual challenges, nuances, or short-comings of each of my students. It was very different for me. I realized that many of my fellow traffic educators have exclusively used the multi-instructor approach similar to the session I had this summer.

I have spoken with many outstanding traffic education instructors who haven't done a BTW lesson in years, or who have never been in the classroom. If the multi-teacher approach described here applies to you, I might suggest changing things up. Try to schedule a session in which you work with the same group of students in the classroom and in the car.

I feel very comfortable and confident that the multi-teacher classes around the state have produced quality results for our young drivers. I know that the single-teacher environment does as well. I have now done both and can therefore decide which I prefer. If you are in a larger community, try a single-teacher approach. Comparing the two class structures might help you discover some interesting things about the way you work with young drivers.

2017 Legislature: Motor Vehicles and Traffic Safety Bills

The 2017 Legislature considered bills related to seat belt education, seat belt laws, local distracted driving ordinances, bicycle safety and road access, DUIs, and learner licenses. To learn more visit www.leg.mt.gov. Here are some of the bills related to traffic education and safety:

PASSED AND SIGNED INTO LAW

HB 471 Can exceed speed limit by 10 MPH when in passing zone.

HB 415 Travel only in right lane on highways.

HB 144 Generally Revise Motor Vehicle Laws amends 61-5-106 . TELL is now called a Learner License. "If the licensee is under 18 years of age, the driver supervising the licensee must be a parent or legal guardian or with the

permission of the licensee's parent or legal guardian, a licensed driver 18 years of age or older." Effective May 4, 2017

FAILED OR KILLED IN COMMITTEE

SB 9 Primary enforcement of seat belt laws.

HB 580 Primary seat belt law for minors.

HB 380 Prohibit texting while driving.

HB 194 Prohibit local restrictions on electronic devices while driving.

SB 238 Speeding - Doubling the fines for violating the maximum speed limit by more than 10 miles per hour.

HB 528 Restrict use of light bars on vehicles.

LC2137 Eliminate seatbelt education program.

HB 562 Exempt certain cell phone use from local ordinances; vetoed by governor: "Cell phone ordinances are local decisions based on local circumstances that are best left to local governments."



MDT'S New Seat Belt Message

So far in 2017, over 150 people died on Montana roads. Preliminary data from the Montana Highway Patrol shows that almost half (47 percent) were not properly wearing a seat belt. This isn't a new problem in Montana. In 2011 through 2015, fatal crash data shows 67 percent of vehicle fatalities were not using seat belts. As part of MDT's effort to address traffic safety issues and driver behavior, a new media campaign focusing on seat belt use was launched prior to the start of the busy summer travel season. The messages remind people to buckle up, as historically June through August is when the highest number of fatalities occur.

As part of the Vision Zero effort, the "Just one reason" campaign features two new videos. One video shows a dad and his daughter and his reason to buckle up is for his child. Another video features three friends shooting hoops and discussing their reasons to wear their seat belts, including one who survived a crash because of his decision to buckle up.

The "just one reason" campaign appeals to each driver and passenger to consider their "one reason" to arrive safely at their destinations. The messages aired on television, radio, and social media platforms. The news videos and more information are available at <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/onereason/>

DOJ-MVD Update

The DOJ/MVD website has been updated with GDL guidelines and resources for new teen drivers. Please share this link with your teen drivers and their parents/guardians for information on the GDL, making appointments for the restricted license, and other helpful information: <https://dojmt.gov/driving/driver-licensing/#DLID6>.

CDTP Best Practices include:

- **Timeliness**—3 days after learner licenses issued, submit all driver license applications with the test scores to the driver exam office with the Student List.
- **Completion**—Within 10 days of class completion update Student List in TEDRS and submit with passing CDTP Road Test forms to the driver exam office.

New Montana Traffic Law: Travel in the Right Lane

During the 2017 Session, the Legislature passed HB 415 requiring vehicles to be driven in the right-hand lane on roadways having two or more lanes of travel in the same direction (i.e. four and five-lane roads).

The bill does provide exceptions in cases where driving in the left lane is warranted, such as when passing other vehicles, traveling at a speed greater than the traffic flow, moving left to allow traffic to merge, when making a left turn, or moving over for safety reasons (provide room for vehicles stopped on the shoulder, snow removal equipment, etc.).

The bill also doesn't apply to roads within the boundaries of a city or town except for the Interstate, unless signing directs traffic to use the left lane.

This change is effective October 1, 2017. Begin changing your habits now to drive in the right lane and stay on the right side of the law!

Excerpted from the *MDT Newslines*, June 2017 <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/newsletters/newslines.shtml>



Steffani Grogan at the 2017 Montana Traffic Education Conference

Lynn Mason, Traffic Education teacher from Corvallis, shared these teen safety slogans:

Think Protected instead of Ejected! Buckle Up!

Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over

Think, Don't Drink

Park Your Phone Before You Drive

Don't Let What Matters LESS Overpower What Matters MORE ... Don't Text and Drive

Be a Thinker, Use Your Blinker

Accommodating Students with Disabilities in Driver Education

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) applies to traffic education programs in Montana even if the courses are not offered during the normal school day. The guidelines below are distributed by the Montana Office of Public Instruction. Additional information on this topic is at: https://www.teendriversource.org/more_pages/page/driver_ed_for_people_with_special_needs/support_parents.

Guiding Principles

1. All driver candidates, regardless of mental or physical attributes, must prove their ability to safely operate a vehicle in complex highway situations.
2. Many individuals with disabilities can learn to drive safely with appropriate accommodations, but not all.
3. Some individuals with severe and profound physical disabilities may be accommodated to drive safely using high tech solutions in specially equipped vehicles, but not all. An advanced rehabilitation center providing driver services may be necessary.
4. All drivers must pass a vision test and meet a minimum threshold of knowledge for a learner license and driver license to be issued.
 - Reasonable learning accommodations are allowed to master the cognitive material.
 - The only accommodation allowed for the knowledge test is for the test to be read aloud by the examiner or approved proctor.
 - Medication may be a consideration.
5. All drivers must meet a minimum threshold of ability to participate in Behind-the-Wheel (BTW) instruction and a minimum level of skill to be issued a driver license.
 - Reasonable accommodations can be made for individuals to safely operate a vehicle, which may, among other things, include hand controls, spinner knobs, and seat and pedal modifications.
 - Higher tech and more sophisticated accommodations may require the expertise and training from a rehabilitation center.
 - Medication may be a safety consideration.



Decision Authority

1. **Parents/guardians** decide whether their teen is ready to pursue licensing, assume liability for driving, and provide guided practice.
2. **Special Education experts** facilitate decisions for learning and vehicle accommodations in consultation with parents, **Traffic Education (TE) teachers** and other involved professionals, including, but not limited to **physical and occupational therapists** and **medical experts** when appropriate.
3. TE teachers determine if the teen can operate a vehicle safely enough to participate in Behind-the-Wheel (BTW) training and successfully complete Driver Education. **If the safety of vehicle occupants is in doubt for BTW learning, prior to BTW and subsequent to making appropriate accommodations, the instructor should make an in-vehicle assessment in a vacant parking lot with no passengers** and evaluate driver's ability to:
 - Manipulate controls.
 - See and collect important information.
 - Stay on task and refrain from distractions.
 - Respond correctly and timely to instructor directions.
 - Operate vehicle safely so that other occupants and roadway users are not at risk.
4. Medical professionals make decisions rooted in medical, psychiatric and medication issues.
5. Motor Vehicle Division (MVD) examiners ultimately decide whether a teen will be issued a license based on favorable medical evaluation(s), successful completion of state vision, knowledge and skill tests, and other state-established mechanisms.

Working Toward your Traffic Education Minor?

Are you still working toward your traffic education minor and endorsement on your educator license? Remember that you need 20 college credits, 12 which are required courses earned at MSU-Northern or transferred from other institutions and approved by MSUN.

It's a good idea to plan ahead and keep earning college credits before your educator license comes up for renewal. That's usually the year you need to apply to renew your traffic education approval and if you don't have a TE minor yet, you will need 4 traffic education credits every five-year renewal period to continue teaching driver education.

For advice on earning your traffic education minor from MSUN, contact **Virginia Braithwaite** at **(406) 265-3757**. Learn more about summer and online courses at <https://www.msun.edu/distance/traffic.html>.



Fran's Findings



We nearly missed summer with drought, wildfires, and smoke and we welcomed a wet, snowy change in the weather to clear the air. I was astounded to hear over 14,000 miles of fence burned in the eastern Montana fires. I've been considering near misses as we drove hundreds of miles on two-lane highways and gravel roads this summer. We travel with trust that drivers will stay in their lane on curves, winding roads and straightaways. The *Proceed When Clear* sign surprised me on Route 236 where road crews were working on the gravel road with big trucks, orange cones and a simple stop sign between Big Sandy to Judith Landing. It was a trustworthy reminder that we need to be watching for a clear path on any road especially with wandering cattle, elk and antelope.



The OPI launched a new web page at the end of August with improved navigation, searching, and viewing on mobile devices. The OPI web address is still <http://opi.mt.gov>, but you'll need to find the Driver Education pages in the search box or under the heading: **Families & Students**. Please bookmark the new [Driver Education main page](#), where you will also find the TEDRS login link and other resources. Visit the new site and let us know what you think.

The Montana Teen Driver Curriculum includes a new 33-page *Behind-the-Wheel Instruction Guide* for driver educators learning how to teach new teen drivers. We adapted sections of the 511-page Model Driver Education Instructor training developed by the Association of National Stakeholders in Traffic Safety Education. The guidelines for effective questions, common errors and section on driver evaluation are a good review for new and experienced teachers. *More info below.*

We appreciate the work you do to encourage our students, families and friends to make smart driving choices.



Contact Fran Penner-Ray (fpenner-ray@mt.gov) and Patti Borneman (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. <http://www.opi.mt.gov/DriverEd>.

Behind-the-Wheel Training for Teachers

The Traffic Education Office at the OPI has published a new *Behind-the-Wheel Instruction Guide* for driver educators teaching new teen drivers. It was developed as a resource for behind-the-wheel instruction and evaluation of beginning drivers.

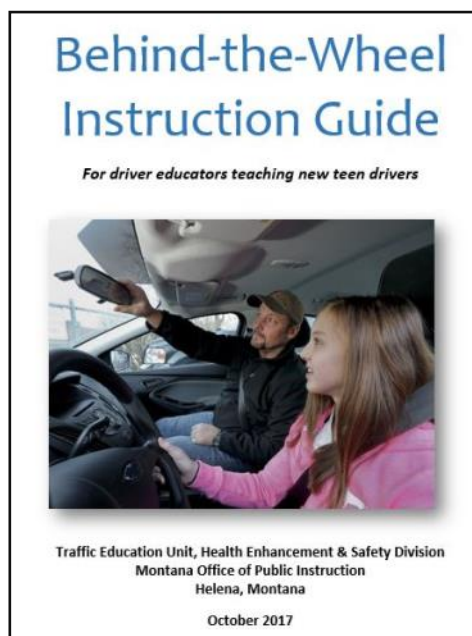
It will be used at MSU-Northern for all teachers taking the initial traffic education coursework to become traffic educators. We plan to distribute printed copies at the 2018 Montana Traffic Education Conference. If you don't want to wait until April, you can download the guide at <http://opi.mt.gov/curriculum>.

Here is a summary of the contents of this new BTW guidebook:

1. Planning for In-Vehicle Instruction
2. Managing Students in the Mobile Classroom
3. In-Vehicle Teaching Techniques
4. Managing and Taking Control of the Vehicle
5. Driver Evaluation

The Traffic Education Unit in the Health Enhancement and Safety Division of the Montana Office of Public Instruction excerpted and adapted this guide from the Instructor's Guide of the *2017 Model Training Curriculum for the Teaching Task Instructor Preparation Program* with permission from the Association of National Stakeholders in Traffic Safety Education (ANSTSE). It was developed with assistance from Susan Carney, Steffani Grogan, Harold Lair, Jerry Olson, and Melissa Robbins.

If you would like to provide feedback on the new BTW guide and have suggestions for improvement, contact Fran Penner-Ray at fpenner-ray@mt.gov or call (406) 444-4396.





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Traffic Safety and Driver Education Conferences in 2018

March 2-3, 2018—Pacific Northwest Driver & Traffic Safety Conference



If you are looking for another great regional TE conference, the 2018 Pacific Northwest Driver & Traffic Safety Conference will be held March 2-4 in Portland, Oregon. Check out the following website for more information: triwou.org/projects/tse.

April 22-24, 2018—Montana Traffic Education Conference



The 2018 spring conference will be held at the Best Western GranTree Inn in Bozeman. Look for more details as the year progresses and on the MTEA website. Remember, costs of attending the conference are considered to be an allowable expense for local program costs under OPI guidelines.

Look for registration details in the Spring issue of *MTEA News* in March and at MTEAOnline.org.

July 22-25, 2018—ADTSEA Conference



The 2018 ADTSEA conference will be held July 22-25 in Rosemont, Illinois. Check out the ADTSEA website at <http://www.adtsea.org> for more details. The conference will provide you with a wealth of information and an opportunity to network with other professionals from across the United States. Remember, MTEA has a scholarship program that will provide up to \$500 per person to offset conference costs. If you can't attend, at least consider joining your national organization.

Visit the American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association website at www.adtsea.org.