

# NETWORK

JAN 1 1979

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## Youthworks

**Nebraska** is mounting a fall effort to build youth participation in highway safety programs.

SUNS, or the Students United for Nebraska Safety, is the statewide umbrella under which local teenage safety clubs can unite.



Groups have been sparse and isolated up to now, says Larry Bowers, who helped develop a notebook guide for organizers.

Bowers will carry the SUNS guidebook to schools and show students how to organize a club that can undertake effective safety projects.

One project already tried—buckle up for bucks—lets students give away one dollar to motorists who are wearing safety belts.

The Students of **Michigan** Attaining Safer Highways (SMASH), another youth safety group, ran its own taxi service for students who had too much to drink. Other projects involve child pedestrian Tot Town instruction and vehicle inspection.

A recent conference, which presented awards for these activities, included sessions on publicity, leadership and summertime activities for local

SMASH groups.

**Virginia's** upcoming youth safety conference (Nov. 3-4) will discuss motorcycle, moped, alcohol, safety belts and handicapped drivers. About 450 are expected. For fun, a rocking night of disco.

To find out more about Nebraska's program, write Larry Bowers, Youth Safety Coordinator, Dept. of Education, 301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, NB 68509.

Michigan's SMASH can be reached through Sheridan Rhoades, OHSP, 7150 Harris Dr., Lansing, MI 48913.

To receive an "idea starter" packet and information about Virginia's program, contact Arlene Cundiff, Va. Dept. of Education, Box 6Q, Richmond, VA 23216.

# NETWORK

This is **NETWORK**: a monthly meeting place for sharing ideas among highway safety public communications professionals.

**NETWORK** covers the highlights. If you want more, it tells you where to go.

Need help? Got some ideas? Working on a good campaign? We want to hear from you. Write **NETWORK**, NHTSA, NTS-10, Washington, DC 20590.

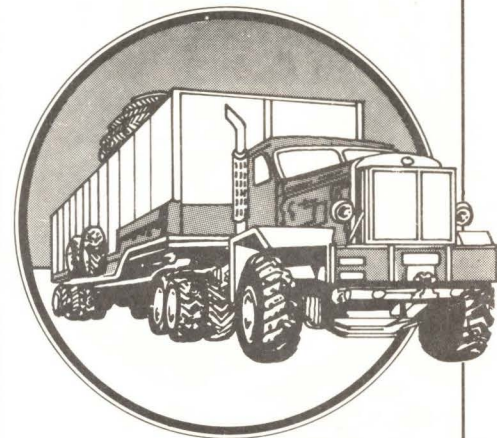
**NETWORK** is a publication of the Office of Driver and Pedestrian Programs, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

## Don't break it

"Don't break the image barrier" is the name of a 55 mph brochure produced by the **American Trucking Associa-**

**tions** for members.

Why is it important to have a good public image? asks the copy. Answer: "Without a good public image, it is more difficult for the (trucking) industry to achieve support for its legislative and regulatory goals. It is better to have friends than enemies."



A major way to develop a good public image is by driving the speed limit, contends the brochure.

"For decades, truck drivers have proudly worn the mantle of 'knights of the road.' But, it is an honor that must be constantly re-earned. When the drivers roll along the highways the image they create is under their control. To use an often heard expression... 'You're in the driver's seat.'

"Hundreds of thousands of courteous, safe, nonspeeding drivers are a vast public relations army winning friends for themselves and their industry," says the brochure. Copies of the brochure have been distributed to Governor's highway safety reps through NHTSA regional offices.

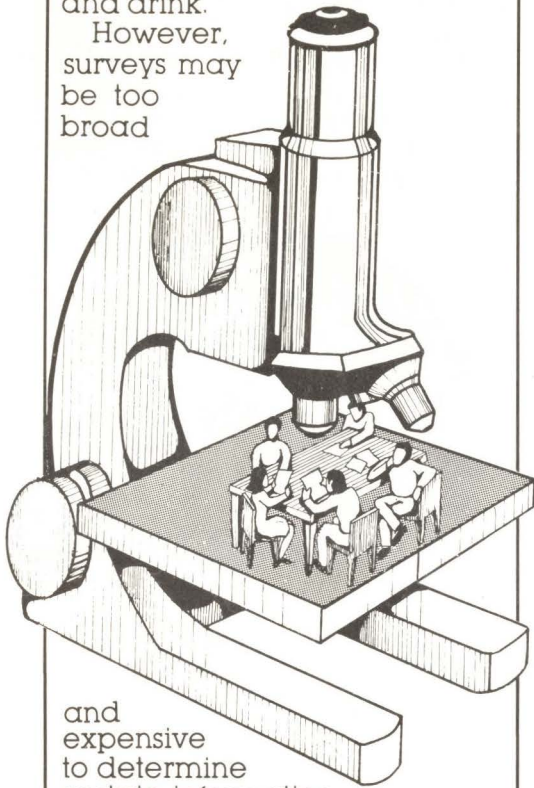
Copies are available from the Public Relations Council, American Trucking Association, Inc., 1616 P St. NW, Washington, DC 20036.

## How to focus

Probability surveys, similar to the Gallup poll, are often used to find out what people believe about particular issues.

Advertisers, for example, may use surveys to determine if the public will buy more luxury cars than compact cars or want less chemicals in food and drink.

However, surveys may be too broad



and expensive to determine certain information, such as "why do people prefer smaller cars even at an increased safety hazard?" or "what messages can we use to influence the motorcyclist to wear a helmet?"

Focus groups can help.

A focus group is a small gathering of people chosen to give their opinions on certain issues in an informal session. The proceedings are recorded and used to develop campaign messages. Members of the group generally have a vested interest in the campaign issue.

Focus groups aren't large enough to comprise a representative sampling of community attitudes, but they can provide valid detailed information about specific target groups.

"A focus group can replace

a survey," says Bob Berger, Teknekron, Inc., "if, for instance, the surveyor doesn't have enough money, time or resources to do a really sophisticated study of audience attitudes.

"A better use of the focus group is a preliminary test—to help you develop your own survey. If you are designing a survey based on your own perceptions of what people are thinking, you may miss the issues that need to be asked about.

"A focus group is also good for finding out the different kinds of arguments which can persuade specific target audiences... How they will react if you say this or that.

"And finally, it's useful for pretesting your finished message. A focus group can tell you what works, what needs reworking."

Teknekron, Inc. is a marketing research firm under contract to NHTSA to do communications research planning for highway safety issues.

## National survey

NHTSA has completed a major survey of public attitudes toward motor vehicle safety. The survey of 2016 driving-age Americans reveals most people think their cars should be built with as many safety features as possible, consider them an important element in purchasing a car, and are generally in favor of government auto safety regulation. The survey also shows Americans overwhelmingly prefer passive restraints to active safety belts.

Specific findings of the survey indicate:

1) Americans support more than 2-1 (58% to 25%) Secretary Adams' decision to require passive restraints (generally airbags or automatic belts) in all passenger cars sold in this country by 1984.

2) Americans aren't in favor of a mandatory seat belt use law which would have fines for non-compliance. Only 21% think that kind of law is a



"good" idea; 18% a "fair" idea; and 57% a "poor" idea.

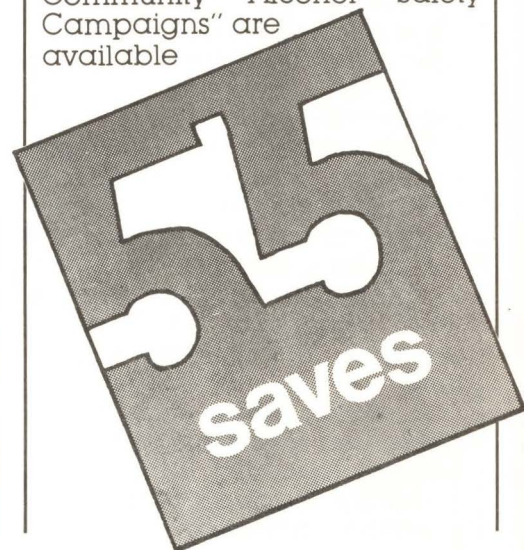
3) Americans don't wear safety belts very often. Only a quarter report wearing them all or most of the time.

4) When asked to choose between airbags and automatic belts, Americans are fairly evenly divided in their preference, about one-third favoring airbags regardless of price; one-third favoring automatic belts regardless of price; and one-third whose preference depends on the cost of the two systems.

Copies of the survey summary can be obtained by writing to NHTSA, General Services Division, NAD-42, 400 7th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590.

## Non-limited access

Two new highway safety publications—"55 Saves" and "A Manual for Managing Community Alcohol Safety Campaigns" are available

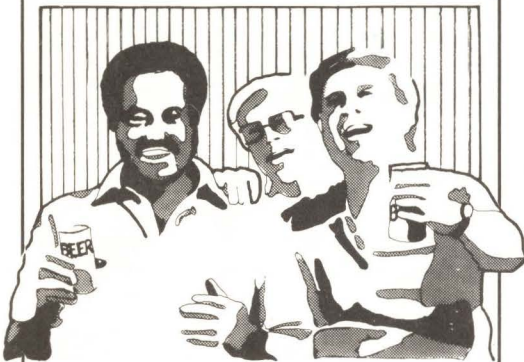


from NHTSA. The former is written for a general audience to summarize benefits of obeying the speed limit. The latter is a 50-page, 8-1/2" x 11" illustrated booklet for planners of drunk driving campaigns. For copies write Office of Driver and Pedestrian Programs, NTS-10, NHTSA, Washington, D.C. 20590.

• "High speed arteries—the highways most affected by the speed limit—showed a remarkable 40 percent drop in fatalities between 1973 and 1975, although the traffic level remained about the same.

• "About 52 percent of all the petroleum used in the United States goes for transportation, and some three-fourths of that is for highway vehicles.

• "Eight public opinion surveys conducted in 1977 all found that a large majority of motorists favor keeping the lower speed limit."



• "Mass media materials can be difficult to place. To gain editors' and broadcasters' confidence, you should familiarize yourself with their operating procedure and preferences. Learn their format, content, and style requirements.

• "Above all, honor the media's deadline. Broadcasters don't want to hear about your program when they are close to air time; editors are busy people when their deadline is close."

## Focus groups

A focus group study of national attitudes about alcohol, safety belts and 55 mph speed limit reveals:

\* People may underestimate the amount of personal control that they can exercise over accident situations.

\* Once attitudes are made favorable toward belts, the biggest stumbling block to belt usage is habit. To establish this habit, drivers will need constant reminders such as road signs, buzzer systems, the suggestion of friends, etc.

\* It will be harder to sell youthful drivers on the 55 than adult drivers.

\* Many people are now aware of the problem of drunk driving and are favorable toward intervention in alcohol-related situations.

\* It may be difficult to persuade most people that driving over 55 is dangerous, since much of their own driving experience contradicts this perception.

Want to know more? Send for your free copy of the "Report on results of NHTSA public information and education focus group study." Write NHTSA, NTS-10, Washington, DC 20590.

## Texas research

The **Texas** Office of Traffic Safety has let a \$90,000 contract with a Houston research firm to do market research for the 55 mph speed limit.

The contract calls for Creative Consumer Research of Houston "to generate data on Texas drivers' beliefs, attitudes, motives and behavior on the 55 mph speed limit and to develop recommendations for a public information and education program to increase voluntary compliance with the law."

The project will divide Texas drivers into segments with common characteristics (like truckers, salesmen, vacationers, etc.); then find out what kind of messages will be most effective in getting these subgroups to increase voluntary compliance with 55. All of the information necessary to make these determinations will be gathered by more than 50 clinical interviews, 18 focus groups and a 4,000 person survey.

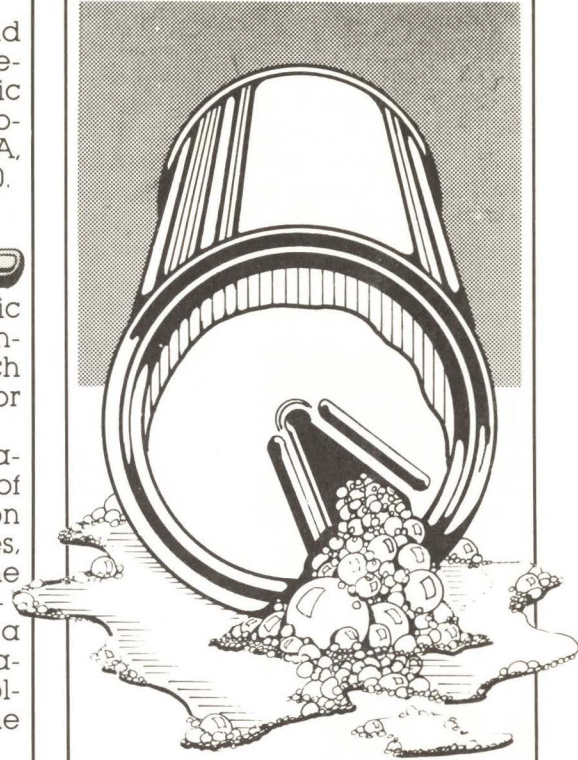
Research for this project began July 1 and is scheduled to be completed by December 31. Copies of this contract have been sent to NHTSA regional offices for distribution to state highway safety offices.

## Drink, drank . . .

An outstanding series of newspaper articles on drinking in

**Wisconsin** is available from the Governor's Office of Highway Safety, Suite 803, James Wilson Plaza, 131 West Wilson St., Madison, WI 53702.

The series, by Bill Stokes, originally appeared in The Milwaukee Journal in January. It talks about drunk drivers, alcohol, social rites of drinking, booze facts, weekend drinking, liquor advertising, and the author's drinking problem.



## Operation CARE

Operation CARE, the 48-state law enforcement program conducted over holidays this summer, will continue in 1979 according to Captain Paul Ruge, **Michigan** State Police. Capt. Ruge is the National Chairman of CARE. Ruge met Aug. 1 with Col. John Shuttle and his staff from the **Indiana** State police to discuss continuation of the program.

Indiana plans to host a meeting in November of the 10 regional coordinators and the executive committee of Operation CARE to map plans for 1979.

That session will also prepare by-laws for a permanent organization and discuss public information strategies for

next year's holiday periods, Ruge says.

Plans call for a meeting of police representatives from all participating states in Indianapolis around February. Indiana would pick up the tab for lodging and meals. Participants would be asked to pay for their own travel.

Tom Reel, Governor's highway safety representative in Michigan, says he plans to write all Governor's reps notifying them of Operation CARE plans and soliciting participation and support.

Captain Ruge says a summary of Operation CARE results in 1978 is being prepared for release at the November meeting.

NHTSA provides support in preparing public information materials for Operation CARE, but participating states develop plans and operate the program.

## 55 saves lives

"55 Saves Lives," the campaign theme for the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT's) public service advertising program, is carried over into print, outdoor and collateral materials due for release within 60 days.

The theme is already on the airways in television and radio spot announcements released by the Advertising Council, which is conducting the cam-

paign for DOT.

The new print material stresses that it's people we're talking about when we say "55 saves lives." The key illustration is a montage of faces.

Copies of television, radio and print materials are available by writing NTS-10, U.S. Department of Transportation, Washington 20590.

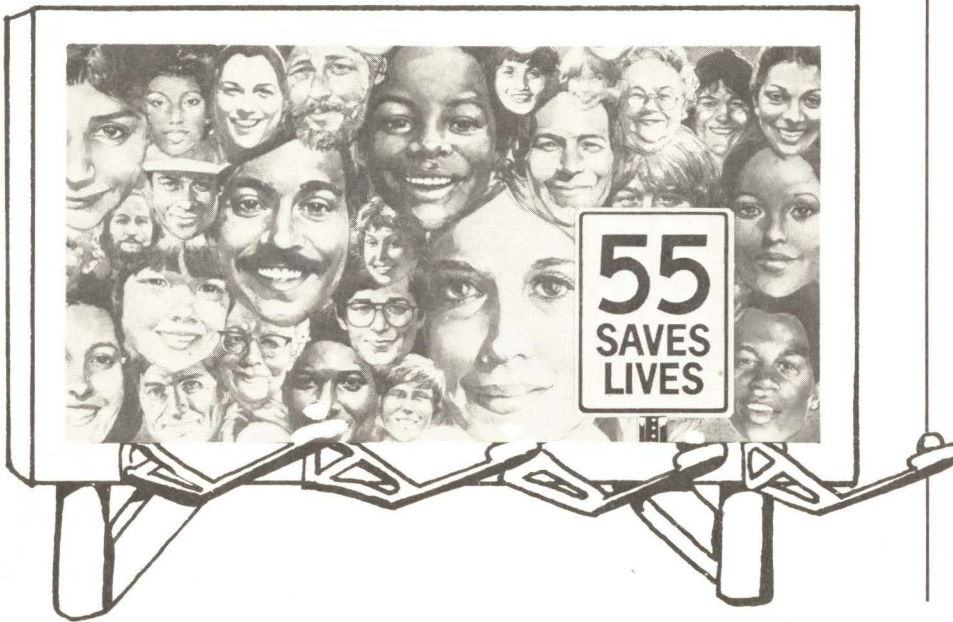
## Radiophone

Talk about promotional gimmicks! To publicize "**The Double Nickel Challenge**" to traveling truckers, staffers from the Department of Transportation's truck and bus fuel economy program called up 17 all-night disc jockeys. Their conversations, often live, were heard on big rig radios all over the U.S. that July 11 morning starting at 12:30 a.m.

Stations were selected that would yield the largest audiences. Conversations with the announcers lasted as long as 20 minutes and ended with the staffers inviting truckers to prove to NHTSA that driving 55 doesn't save fuel.

Early morning is prime listening time for a lot of long-distance truckers, who prefer the deserted highways and cooler temperatures.

This free exposure—along with other publicity activities—yielded 160 volunteer truckers, of which 32 were chosen to challenge the "double nickel."



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