

VISION ZERO

Zero fatalities. Zero excuses.

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Traffic Safety Advocates Recognized at Partner Conference

Bismarck, ND – Representatives of law enforcement, transportation, engineering, public health, and other partners from across the state gathered virtually today to discuss traffic safety during the North Dakota Department of Transportation's Vision Zero Partner Conference.

Topics today included presentations on seat belt use, infrastructure updates, Vision Zero partners, road safety and emergency medical response. Tomorrow's agenda will focus on law enforcement and the dangers of distracted driving, as well as a networking session for Vision Zero partners to coordinate efforts to further advance North Dakota's Vision Zero initiative.

The Vision Zero Partner Conference holds an awards ceremony for those who showed outstanding service and dedication to accomplish the overall goal of Vision Zero, to eliminate motor vehicle crash fatalities and serious injuries on North Dakota roads.

The Grand Forks region winners are in the following categories:

- **2021 Vision Zero Traffic Safety Officer of the Year** – This award is for a single officer who has displayed a well-rounded effort for traffic safety through enforcement, community education and training.
 - Trooper Nevon Heisler - North Dakota Highway Patrol
 - Over the course of the year, Trooper Heisler made 11 DUI arrests, 108 drug-related arrests, three felony arrests, 23 arrests for suspended/revoked license violations, and made four other misdemeanor arrests. He received two agency awards, is a top 10 trooper in criminal and drug arrests and is tied for the most drug arrests for the Highway Patrol in 2019-2020. He also completed several school bus inspections and safety talks in the Grand Forks area.
- **2021 Beyond the Traffic Stop** – This award honors officers who used outstanding investigative skills that led to multiple arrests for narcotics, stolen property, and outstanding warrants from a single routine traffic stop.
 - Officer Luke Wentz – Grand Forks Police Department
 - Officer Wentz was on patrol when he noticed a vehicle with an equipment violation. He stopped the vehicle and detected a strong odor of marijuana. Officer Wentz noticed a large blue cooler in the back seat which held nine pounds of marijuana, a large number of pills and \$28,000 in cash.

- **2021 Child Passenger Safety Award** – This award recognizes Child Passenger Safety Technicians and/or instructors for their commitment to child passenger safety.
 - Amy Covington - Car Seat Technician
 - Amy helps ensure that patients getting discharged to other communities have the follow-up care that they need for their special needs car seats. Amy took over at Altru Health System as the hospital-based car seat coordinator, where she has updated patient teaching materials, created a logging system for special needs car seats, and assists with recruiting new technicians.

- **2021 Infrastructure Individual of the Year** – This award recognizes an individual that improves infrastructure safety to roadways, bridges, or bicyclists/pedestrians throughout the state, region, a county, or an organization.
 - Clarence Greene - Spirit Lake Tribal Roads Director
 - Clarence has led his organization since 1985 and has been a champion for safety-focused infrastructure improvements for years. He has successfully led many safety enhancements from preliminary concepts through on-the-ground completion. Completed projects include shared-use pathways, rumble strips, chevrons, destination lighting, shoulder widening, in slope flattening, pavement marking, and signing upgrades.

- **2021 Honor Roll Award** – This award recognizes outstanding service to the community, information technology, safety, public affairs and consumer education programs throughout the state of North Dakota in the area of traffic safety.
 - Gene LaDoucer of AAA – The Auto Club Group
 - Gene participates in the annual sobriety checkpoint in Cass County. His partnership with law enforcement and health care has been helpful to the program over that last two years.

The Vision Zero Partner Conference is made possible thanks to Hess Corporation, AAA – The Auto Club Group, and Puklich Chevrolet.

Join the mission of Vision Zero to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries caused by motor vehicle crashes in North Dakota by becoming part of the [Vision Zero Partner Network](#).

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