



Kansas Department of Transportation

# Strategic Highway Safety Plan

## Local Roads



## Introduction

The Kansas State Highway System is highly visible to those traveling long distances across the state but represents only a fraction of all the miles of public roads in the state. Of 140,752 miles of highways and streets, only 7.3 percent are part of the highway system. The Kansas Turnpike Authority oversees another 0.2 percent. The remaining 92.5 percent of public roads – 130,170 centerline miles – are owned by cities, counties and townships. Traffic on these roads account for about 43 percent of the total vehicle miles traveled in Kansas, and crash data show that between 2005 and 2009 45 percent of fatalities and 52 percent of disabling injuries occurred on roads owned by local public authorities. Clearly, if we are to achieve our overall goal of halving fatalities and serious injuries by 2029, locally owned roads must be included as a significant part of the plan. The Local Roads Support Team, or LRST, was formed to identify and coordinate strategies aimed at saving lives on local roads.

In helping to fashion the Strategic Highway Safety Plan, support teams like the LRST function in the same way as emphasis area teams: They identify overall goals, select specific strategies and create action plans to implement those strategies. The difference is that the emphasis area teams focus on specific crash variables (such as seat belt use, driving while impaired and intersections) while support teams (such as education, data and local roads) address issues relevant to the SHSP as a whole.

Why have a dedicated local roads chapter? Because addressing safety on local roads involves different considerations than on state highways. Many roads owned by local governments were not built to modern operational and safety standards. Local governments generally have less access to professional engineers and to dedicated funding to address safety problems. There are different stakeholders for safety — including local elected officials, public works and law enforcement agencies. There are varying levels of awareness about local safety problems and how to best address them. To reduce crashes at the local level, we need strategies to address local realities and needs.

The LRST, driven by its mission of reducing by half fatal and serious injury crashes on locally owned roads by 2029 by reference to the 4 E's of roadway safety – engineering, enforcement, education and emergency medical services – committed itself to:

- ❖ Promoting the SHSP to local governments,
- ❖ Communicating with emphasis area teams to make sure they address local roads,
- ❖ Identifying goals and strategies that may not be specific to an emphasis area but are important to reducing crashes on local roads,
- ❖ Keeping abreast of new developments in local road safety, and
- ❖ Assisting fund managers to distribute their local safety funds on the basis of local safety priorities.

Many programs aimed at saving lives on local roads are already in place. Some of the more significant follow:

- ❖ Training and Technical Assistance
  - Traffic Assistance Service for Kansas, or TASK, a partnership of Kansas State University and the University of Kansas
  - Kansas Local Technical Assistance Program, or LTAP, at the University of Kansas
  - Traffic Engineering Assistance Program, or TEAP, through the Kansas Department of Transportation's, or KDOT's, Bureau of Local Projects
  - Road safety audits by KDOT and Kansas LTAP
  - Technical assistance provided by the Kansas County Road Engineer at the Kansas Association of Counties
  - Drug recognition expert training and certification through the International Association of Chiefs of Police
- ❖ Funding for Engineering Improvements
  - High Risk Rural Roads Program, managed by KDOT's Bureau of Local Projects
  - Intersection Safety Program, managed by KDOT's Bureau of Transportation Safety & Technology
  - Railway-Highway Grade Crossing Program, managed by KDOT's Bureau of Design
  - Safe Routes to School, managed by KDOT's Bureau of Transportation Planning
  - Federal Fund Exchange Program, managed by KDOT's Bureau of Local Projects. This program allows local agencies to exchange federal funds for state funds on projects including, but not limited to, safety improvements.
- ❖ Partnering and Education
  - Destination Safe, a regional safety coalition administered by the Mid-America Regional Council
  - Seatbelts Are for Everyone, or SAFE, managed by the Kansas Traffic Safety Resource Office
  - National Highway Transportation Safety Administration-funded Highway Safety Program
  - AAA training for older drivers

Many programs are already in place, yet the rates of serious and fatal crashes on local roads indicate that there is more that needs to be done. The team decided to focus individually on three of the 4Es: engineering, enforcement, and EMS, with the fourth E, education, woven into each discussion. The discussions will ultimately result in strategies to dramatically reduce fatal and serious injury crashes on local roads. For each of the three discussions, a survey was sent asking team members to identify who is responsible for decision-making affecting that E on local roads, what safety resources and programs already exist for that E, what gaps exist, and what the data suggests for strategies for reducing crashes.

As the team worked through these discussions some dominant themes emerged:

- ❖ Spending federal dollars is more cumbersome and less efficient than spending state dollars. Project delivery, productivity and flexibility improve when the locals handle the projects themselves.
- ❖ When spending safety dollars the primary emphasis should shift to low-cost systemic safety improvements, with a secondary emphasis on higher-cost infrastructure projects at high-crash—or black spot—locations.
- ❖ Access to data is important to locals, but so is training to use the data to effectively reduce crashes.
- ❖ Single-vehicle crashes are more common on local roads than on state highways. In the event of a serious crash on a low-volume road, discovery, reporting, and EMS response could be compromised.
- ❖ There is a decline in interest among law enforcement personnel in enforcing traffic laws.

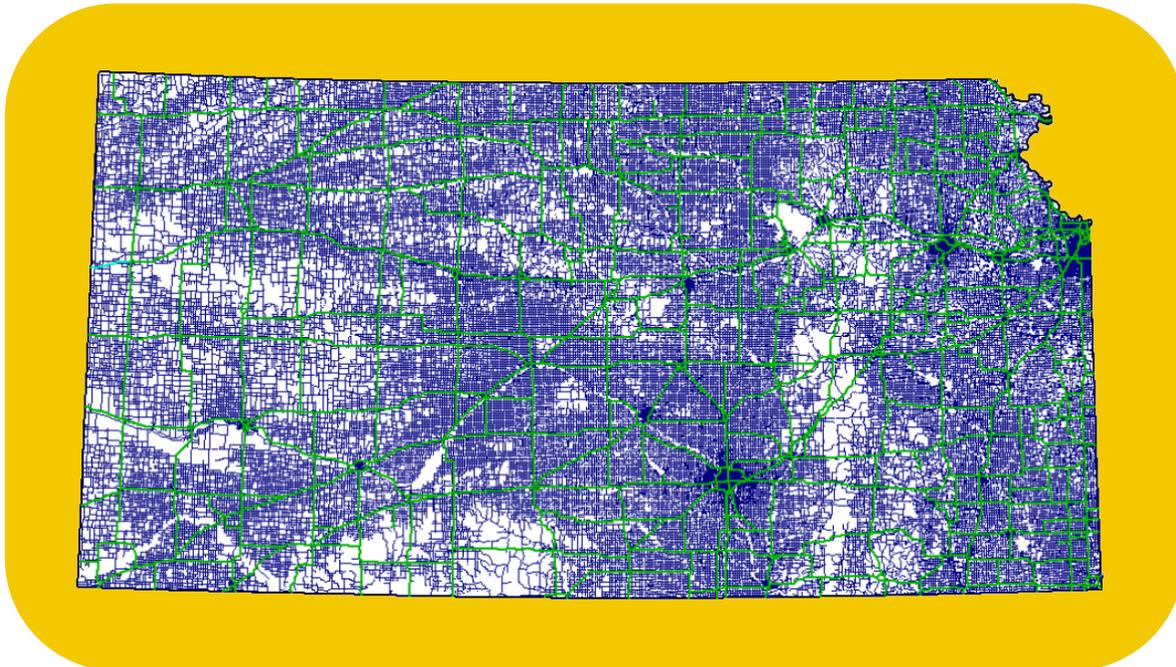
The Local Roads Support Team first met April 24, 2012. These agencies were represented.

- ❖ Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT)
- ❖ Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Organization
- ❖ American Public Works Association (APWA)
- ❖ Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE)
- ❖ City of Topeka Traffic Engineering
- ❖ Kansas Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP)
- ❖ Kansas Association of Counties (KAC)
- ❖ Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- ❖ Lyon County Sheriff's Department
- ❖ Barton County Engineering
- ❖ Sedgwick County Traffic Engineering
- ❖ Kansas Board of Emergency Medical Services
- ❖ Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE)

A thorough understanding of the data and research related to local road crashes is essential to the wise expenditure of our safety dollars. With input from the Data Support Team, the LRST will have the tools to assist local agencies when managing safety investments. The following are data the team considered when developing their strategies.

## Data Points

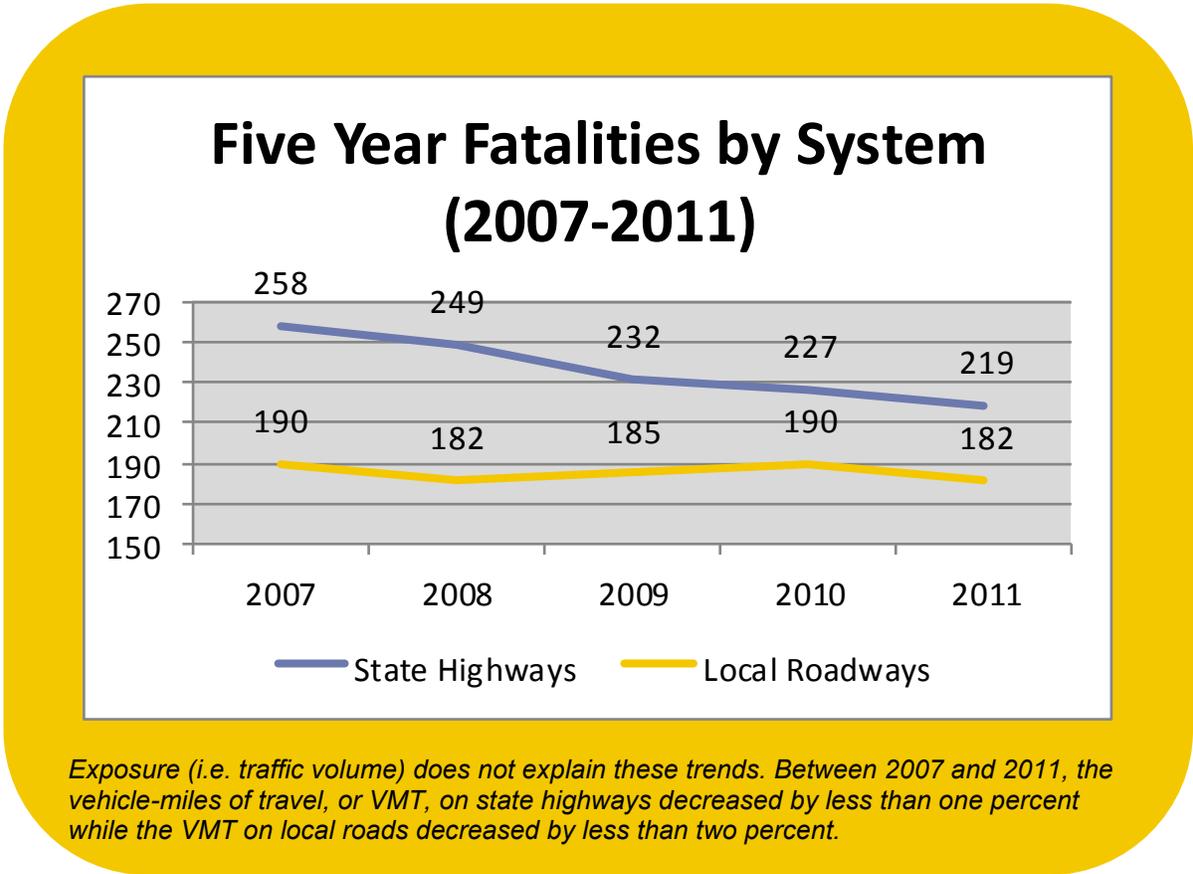
For the purpose of this chapter, a local road is defined as any public road not maintained by the state and not part of the State Highway System (such as K-10, US-54, and I-70.) Local roads represent 92 percent of all roads in Kansas and carry 43 percent of all traffic. To put these numbers in perspective, the state image below shows local roads in blue and the State Highway System in green.



The data presented in the charts below represents the roads shown above in blue—it does not include the State Highway System. The data indicates that what is happening on local roads is often different than what occurs on state highways. Some of the data points to strategies addressed in other chapters of this plan, such as seat belts and teen drivers; other data points to goals and strategies detailed below. Additional data specific to local roadways is presented in other chapters of the plan.

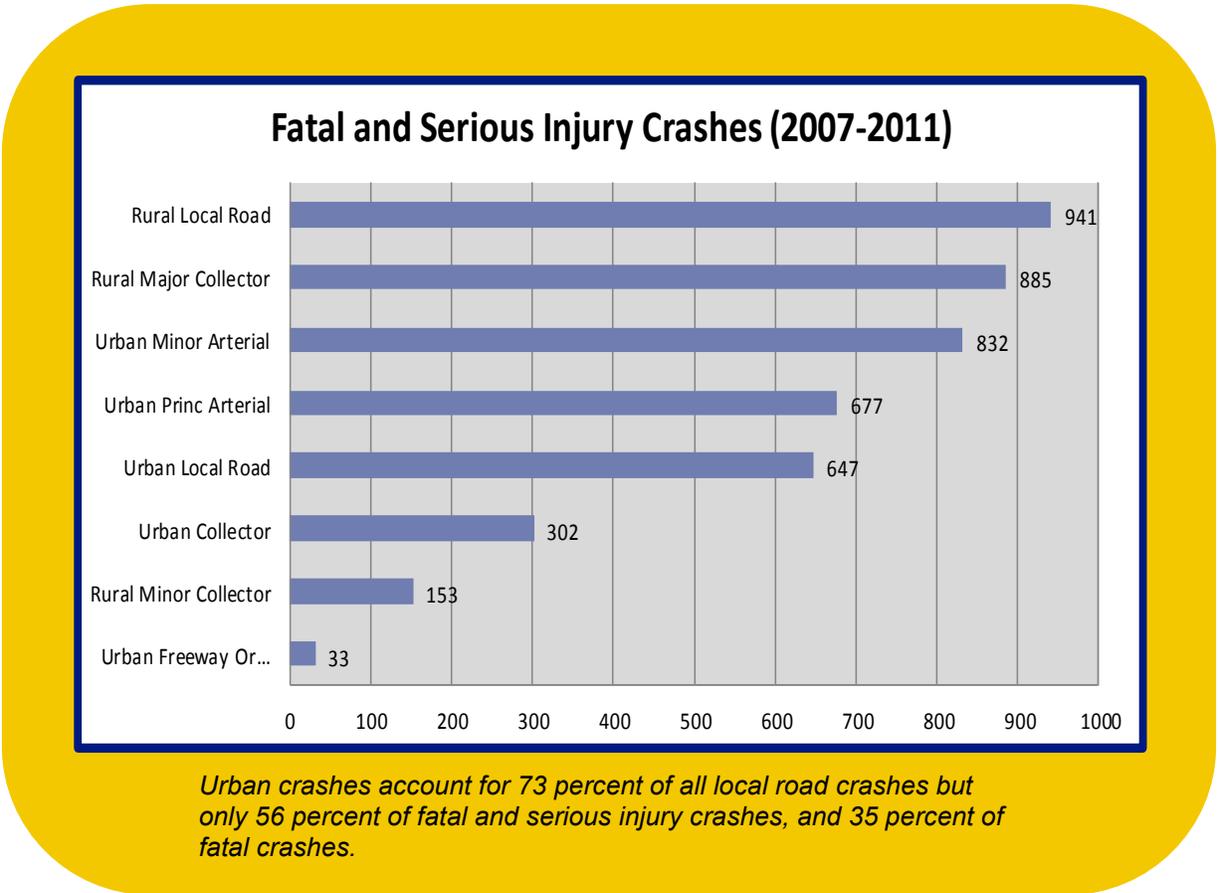
## 1. Local roads are not benefiting from the statewide reduction in fatalities

Fatalities in Kansas have been trending downward for the past decade. However, most of the reduction is found on state highways and not local roads. Based on five-year averages, in 2007 local roads represented 42 percent of all fatalities; by 2011 that share increased to 45 percent. Over this four-year period, the five-year average for state highway fatalities decreased by 15 percent; for local roads it only decreased by 4 percent.

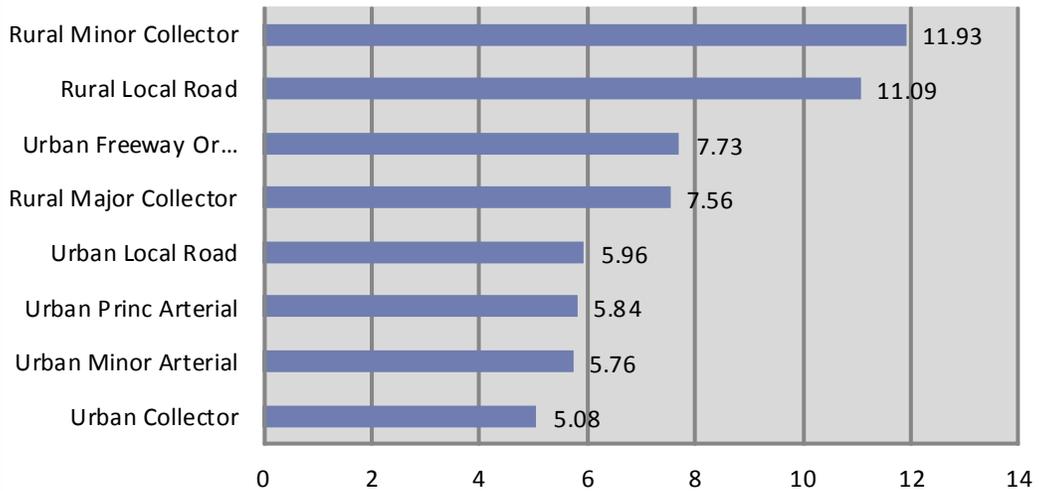


## 2. Rural local and rural major/minor collectors have high rates of fatal and severe injury crashes despite low traffic volumes.

About two percent of all crashes on locally-owned roads involve a fatal or serious injury. There are three levels of injury severity: possible, non-incapacitating, and disabling/incapacitating. Only the latter is considered serious injury. Most fatal and serious injury crashes occur on roads classified as rural local roads and major collectors. However, when traffic volumes are factored in, rural minor collectors have the highest crash rate. (Note: Information on the functional classifications used in the tables below can be found in Appendix C. Cities with a population less than 5,000 are classified as rural, while some rural areas on the edge of large cities may be classified as urban.)



## Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes (2007-2011)

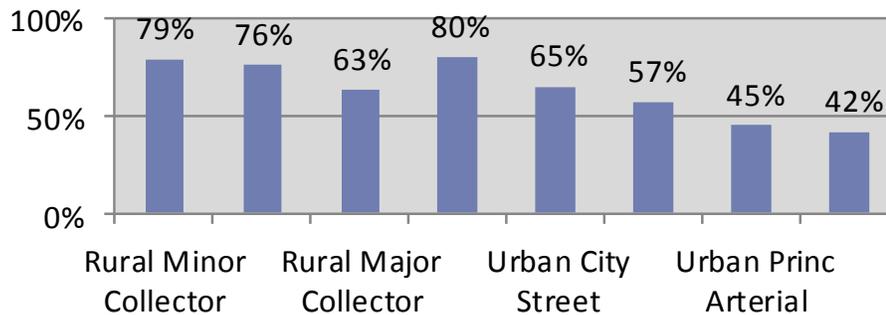


*Two-thirds of all the miles driven on local roads occur in urban areas.*

### 3. Low seatbelt use on rural roads.

People in fatal and serious injury crashes on local roads are less likely to be wearing a seatbelt than those on the State Highway System. For all roads, 55 percent of fatality victims were not wearing a seatbelt; for local roads this number increases to 65 percent; and for *rural* local roads this number further increases to 70 percent (348 unbelted fatal occupants out of 494.) Similarly, for all roads 34 percent of serious injury victims were not wearing seatbelts compared to 37 percent for local roads and 50 percent for *rural* local roads (739 unbelted seriously injured occupants out of 1467.) See the chapter Occupant Protection Emphasis Area for strategies to increase seatbelt compliance.

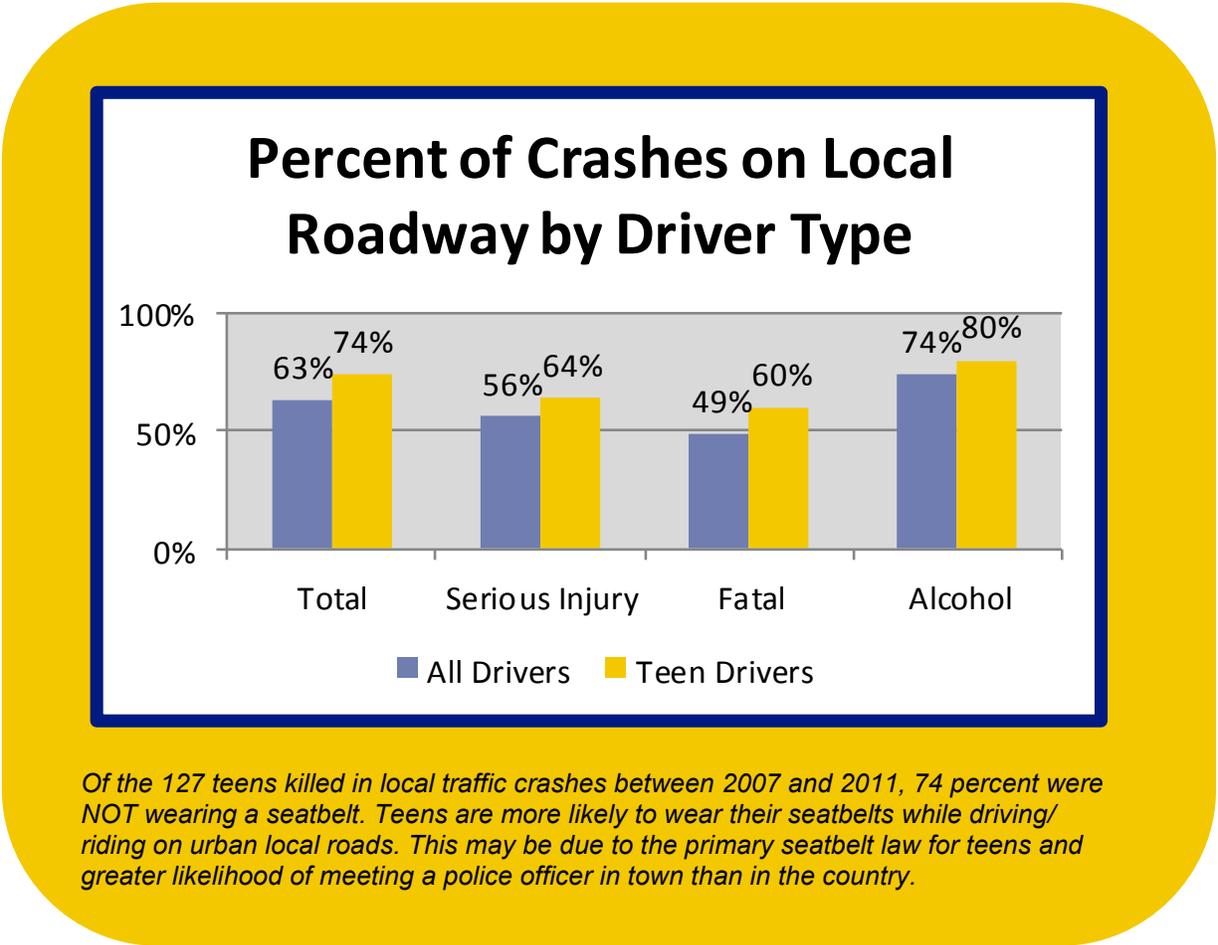
## Local Unbelted Fatalities by Functional Classification (2007-2011)



*Local traffic and rural traffic are both indicators of low seatbelt use. For example, 79 percent of fatalities where a seatbelt was available (i.e. non-motorcycle, bicycle, pedestrian) on rural minor collectors were NOT wearing a seatbelt.*

## 4. Inexperienced drivers are over-represented in local road crashes.

Seventy-four percent of all teen crashes (i.e. crashes that involve at least one driver from age 14 to 19) occur on local roads, including 60 percent of fatal crashes, 64 percent of serious injury crashes, and 80 percent of impaired teen driver crashes. Of the fatal crashes involving teen drivers, 71 percent occurred on *rural* local roads. The graph below compares teen drivers to the population as a whole. See the chapter Teen Drivers Emphasis Area for strategies to address inexperienced drivers.



## 5. Single-vehicle crashes.

Seventy-seven percent of all crashes on rural locally-owned roads do not involve multiple vehicles; that is, they are single-vehicle crashes—typically run-off-the road. This is much higher than the 47 percent on all roadways and the 56 percent on state highways. This creates problems because a lone driver or occupant may not be able to call for help. In addition, since rural areas carry much less traffic and have much lighter patrolling, a crash is less likely to be reported by another driver or law enforcement. Although EMS issues are critical to safety on local roads, the strategies discussed are considered relevant to all roads. See the chapter EMS Support for strategies to address emergency response and the chapter Roadway Departure Emphasis Area for strategies to address run-off-the road crashes.

### The “Golden Hour”

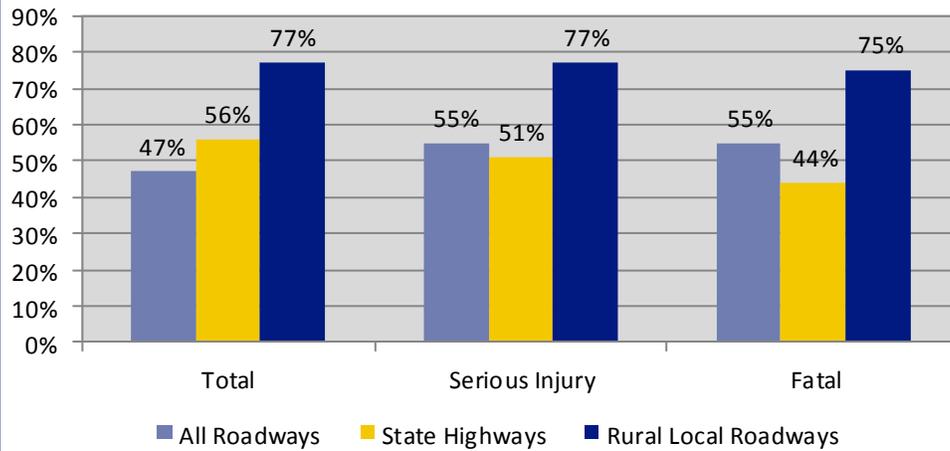
In general, the time to deliver patients to definitive care consists of the six time intervals:

1. Time between crash occurrence and EMS notification,
2. Response time for EMS personnel to be notified and depart the station (i.e., chute time)
3. Travel time to the crash scene by EMS
4. On-scene EMS rescue time
5. Transport time to a hospital or trauma center
6. Emergency department resuscitation time

The best chance for survival following a traumatic injury occurs when the injured person is seen and treated within an hour of the event, known as the “Golden Hour”. However, the average elapsed time for several of these time intervals typically is longer in rural areas than in urban areas.

National Average: Approximately 30 percent of the rural fatal crashes exceeded the golden hour, while only about 8 percent of the urban fatal crashes exceeded it. (NHTSA Study 2004)

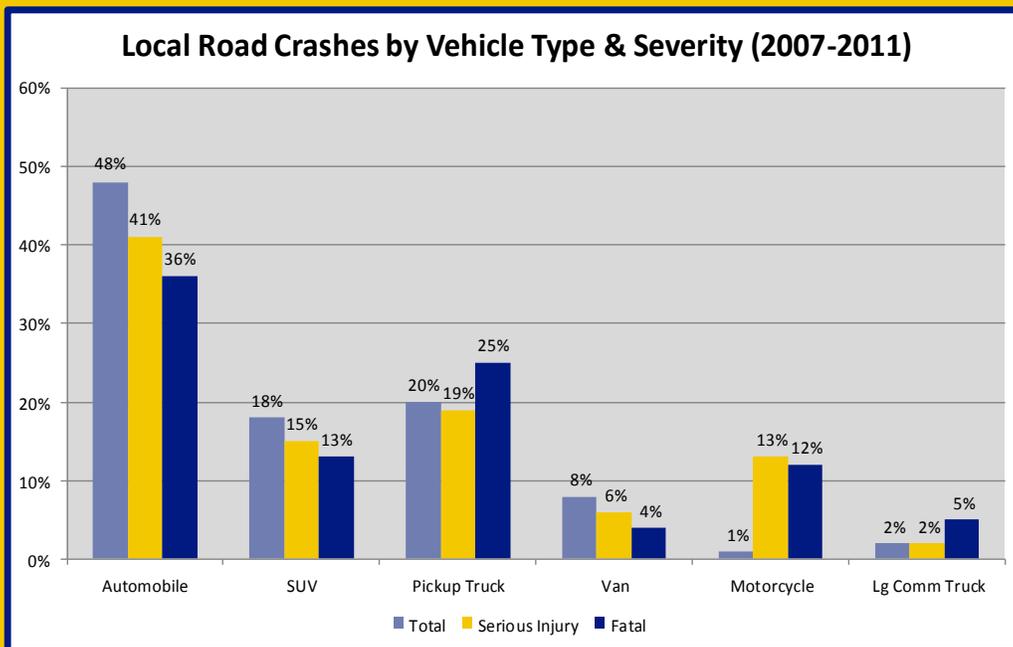
## Percent of Single Vehicle by Severity (2007-2011)



*According to a 2004 study by NHTSA, approximately 30 percent of the rural fatal crashes exceeded the "golden hour", while only about 8 percent of the urban fatal crashes exceeded it.*

## 6. The percent of pick-up trucks and motorcycles increase with crash severity.

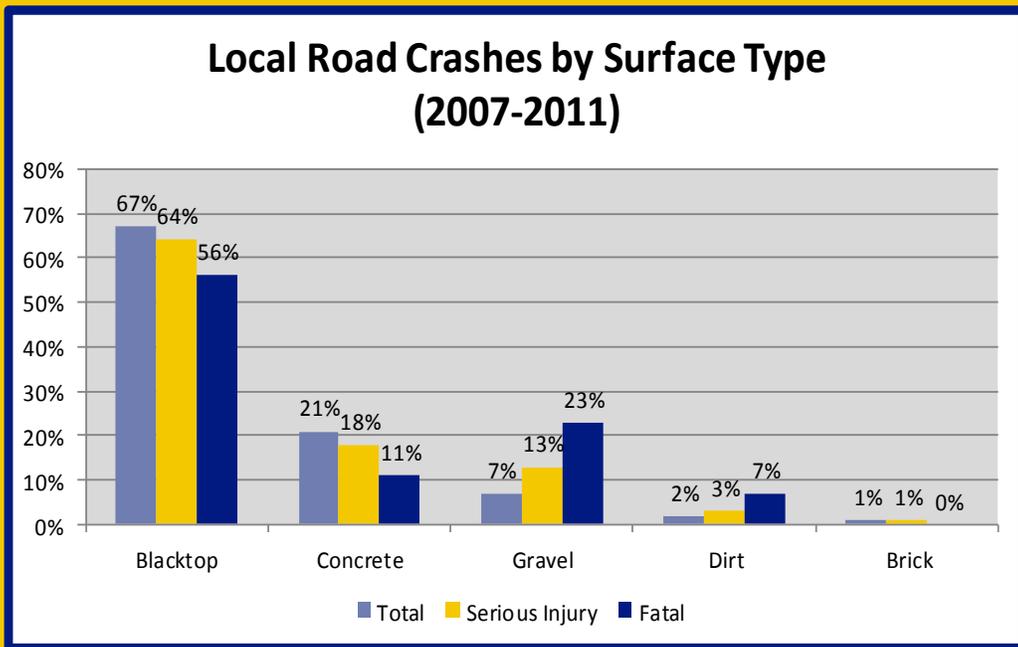
There is an increase in the frequency of pick-up trucks involved in local road crashes as the severity increases, accounting for 20 percent of all local road crashes, 19 percent of all local road serious injuries, and 25 percent of all local road fatalities. Motorcycles represent only one percent of crashes on local roads, but about one in eight fatal and serious injury crashes. Finding the right message to reach the typical driver of pickups and motorcycles is a serious challenge for those in behavioral safety.



*While the numbers are much lower, large trucks show a pattern similar to pickup trucks and motorcycles.*

## 7. Unpaved roads are over-represented in local road fatalities.

There is an increase in the frequency of gravel road surfaces in local road crashes as the severity increases, making up: 7 percent of all local road crashes, 13 percent of all local road serious injuries, and 23 percent of all local road fatalities. There is a similar increase on dirt roads, making up: 2 percent of all local road crashes, 3 percent of all local road serious injuries, and 7 percent of all local road fatalities.



*As severity increases, the percent share of paved roads (blacktop and concrete) decreases; this trend reverses for unpaved roads (gravel and dirt.) This could be due to a variety of factors; most notably unpaved roads typically have less “forgiving” roadsides than paved roads.*

## Performance Measures

Consistent with our plan’s overall goal, the Local Roads Support Team seeks to halve fatalities and serious injuries on local roads within 20 years. In the five years between 2005 and 2009, Kansas averaged 185 fatalities and 915 disabling injuries on local roads annually. Therefore, our target performance measure for the effectiveness of our goals and strategies to reduce crashes is to average fewer than 93 fatalities and 458 disabling injuries during the years 2025 to 2029.



*Reaching these goals will be slightly easier should VMTs on local roads continue to decrease over the next 20 years, or more difficult should VMTs increase. Projecting VMTs on local roads—especially rural—is difficult due to changing demographics and shifting population distributions.*

## Goals and Strategies

While there are many safety issues on local roads that could be addressed with goals and strategies in this chapter, the LRST chose those that had the best potential to significantly reduce the number of fatal and serious injury crashes on local roads. The LRST has chose the following goals.

1. Make access to federal and state safety dollars for roads and streets less cumbersome for local agencies by identifying and acting on opportunities to improve efficiencies
2. Maximize benefit from available funds by tying funding to the greatest needs, as indicated by crash data and crash research.
3. Improve local public authority, or LPA, access to crash data
4. Catalyze multi-disciplinary collaboration and cooperation on safety at local and regional levels to reduce crashes on the local system
5. Train and otherwise assist LPAs in developing safety programs and identifying low-cost strategies
6. Emphasize to the law enforcement community the important role of law enforcement to improve safety on local roads

These goals and strategies are in addition to those of the other SHSP emphasis area and support teams that include local roads.

### **Goal 1: Make access to federal and state safety dollars for roads and streets less cumbersome for local agencies by identifying and acting on opportunities to improve efficiencies**

Current strategies:

- ❖ Continue the Federal Fund Exchange Program that allows local agencies to exchange federal funds for state funds on projects including, but not limited to, safety improvements.
- ❖ Allow local agencies to submit applications for funding at any time in the year.

## New strategies:

- ❖ Take advantage of all flexibilities to maximize federal participation on projects.
  - Background: Staff and budget at local agencies are often stretched thin. Typically, on federally funded local projects, the federal share is 90 percent of the costs of construction and inspection and the local agency picks up the remaining 10 percent. However, the local agency is often responsible for 100 percent of the cost of design, utility adjustments and right-of-way acquisition. The result is that many times a 90/10 project may turn into one where the costs are borne equally by the local agency and federal funds when the total project cost is considered. This strategy aims to simplify the application process for funds, lower the local match where possible, and allow more work phases in funding eligibility while striking a balance that ensures local ownership of project outcomes.
  - Method: policy
  - Costs: potentially fewer high-cost, spot improvement projects could result, as more dollars will need to be programmed on projects where the local agency requests funding of additional work phases.
  - Lead agency and contact: KDOT, Bureau of Local Projects
  - Challenges: changing established ways of doing business in KDOT and local governments
  - Target date: ongoing

## ❖ Consider alternatives to minimize construction engineering costs on city and county federal aid safety projects.

- Background: Local federal aid projects usually employ consultants to perform the construction engineering. Fees are based on hourly rates, and in some cases have exceeded 40% of construction costs. Construction engineering fees subtract from funds that can be used for construction. Possible alternatives are to reduce working days, or have local agency staff monitor the project when non-critical construction is underway.
- Method: policy
- Costs: current system assures compliance
- Lead agency and contact: KDOT, Bureau of Local Projects
- Challenges: finding alternatives that satisfy KDOT as well as federal regulations
- Target date: FY 2014

## Future strategy:

- ❖ Consider eliminating federal-aid safety programs and move committed dollars to a state program, similar to the federal-fund exchange program.

**Goal 2: Maximize benefit from available funds by tying funding to the greatest needs, as indicated by crash data and crash research.**

Current strategy:

- ❖ Promote systemic low-cost safety improvements in KDOT's High Risk Rural Roads Program.
  - Background: This programmatic approach is based on FHWA's former High Risk Rural Roads Program and uses state-wide crash data to address roadway departure crashes on rural roads functionally classified as a rural major or minor collector or rural local road. The most common non-state highway fatality crash type involves a vehicle leaving the roadway and striking a fixed object. Approved strategies include tree removal, headwall removal, and culvert extension. This approach allows use of federal funds without the need for site-specific data for each project location.

New strategy:

- ❖ Expand the systemic low cost safety improvement program KDOT's High Risk Rural Roads program
  - Background: A paradigm shift is occurring in the world of highway safety spending, from doing large projects at a few "hot spot" sites to doing smaller projects at numerous locations. To meet our objective requires both approaches. We can't ignore the high-crash spot in need of serious improvements (installing traffic signals, for example, where stop signs alone aren't working). Nor can we ignore common crash causes that can be addressed before a crash occurs, such as removing a tree too close to the road. This strategy will allow KDOT, in consultation with local officials to further develop a list of eligible countermeasures that don't require site-specific crash data and to identify means of implementation, including on-call contractors. Should funding requests exceed the money available, a project selection methodology would be created. Suggested countermeasures include signing retro-reflectivity, pavement markings, clearing for sight distance, street lighting, advance street name signs, signal timing studies, curve signing and longitudinal rumble strips.
  - Method: program
  - Costs: funds allocated from the HSIP
  - Lead agency and contact: KDOT, Bureau of Local Projects
  - Challenges: scoring and ranking projects if applications exceed available funds
  - Target date: FY 2014

## Goal 3: Improve local public authority, or LPA, access to crash data.

### New strategies:

- ❖ Create an online form that LPAs can use to request crash data.
  - Background: Most crashes on city streets and county roads are reported by local police officers and sheriff's deputies. These reports are submitted to the state for record-keeping, and unless local road agencies maintain their own databases or are able to obtain crash reports from their local law enforcement agencies, they need to contact the state to request the data. KDOT provides crash locations and data to LPAs upon request. The current process isn't difficult, but it can be improved upon. This strategy will be similar to the [online form agencies use to order blank accident reporting forms](#).
  - Method: project
  - Costs: none
  - Lead agency and contact: KDOT, Geometric and Accident Data Unit, or GAD
  - Challenges: ensuring LPAs know about this new tool and increasing the workload of the GAD Unit
  - Target date: April 2014
  
- ❖ Improve local access to geo-coded crash maps through an automated process.
  - Background: A new strategy in the Data Support plan is to geo-code all crashes on locally-owned roads. The next obvious step is making these maps available to local agencies. One option is to use the existing platform developed by the Kansas Data Access and Support Center.
  - Method: project
  - Costs: TBD
  - Lead agency and contact: KDOT, Geometric and Accident Data Unit, or GAD
  - Challenges: ensuring LPAs know about this new tool
  - Target date: April 2014

### Future strategy:

- ❖ Create an interactive website that LPAs can access.
  - Background: Sound decisions require accurate information, and sound safety decisions require accurate crash information that is easily available. This strategy will create an online portal that will allow LPAs (and the general public) to pull their own crash data.

**Goal 4: Catalyze multi-disciplinary collaboration and cooperation on safety at local and regional levels to reduce crashes on the local system.**

Current strategies:

- ❖ Support regional safety coalitions in metropolitan Kansas City and Wichita.
- ❖ Publicly recognize champions of safety in order to raise the profile of traffic safety.
  - Background: A highlight of the annual Kansas Transportation Safety Conference is the People Saving People awards that recognize individuals who have championed traffic safety in their communities. Also, the AAA Foundation annually recognizes outstanding law enforcement agencies with their Community Traffic Safety Awards.

New strategies:

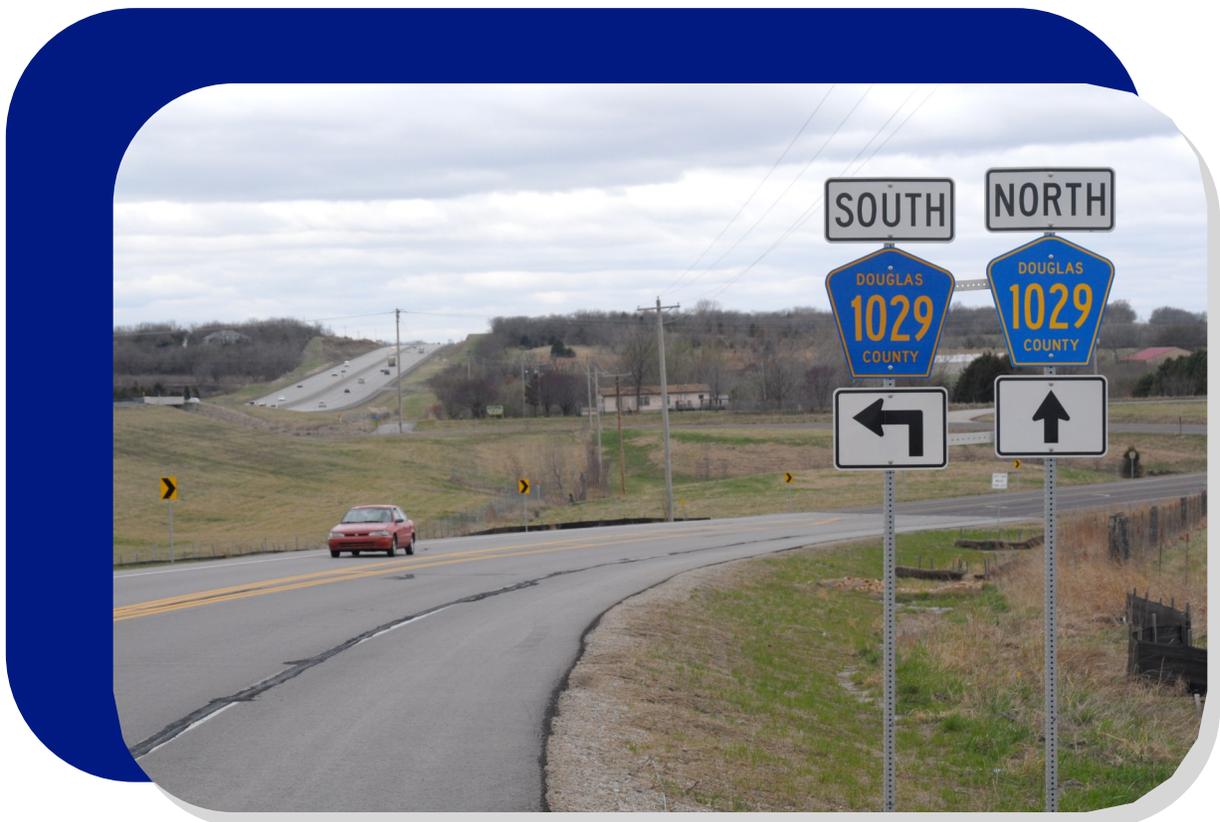
- ❖ Promote regular meetings of local personnel representing such interests as public works, law enforcement, EMS and trauma centers to review crash records and develop solutions.
  - Background: Silo . . . stovepipe . . . box. Terms like these describe a tendency to isolate from others when trying to solve a problem. The SHSP process encourages a multidisciplinary approach to reducing fatal and serious injury crashes. Such partnering at least fosters communication and, preferably, action-based outcomes. Packaged crash data, analysis, and best practices could be provided to spur discussion.
  - Method: program
  - Costs: staff time
  - Lead agency and contact: KDOT, Bureau of Transportation Safety and Technology
  - Challenges: breaking down barriers among agencies, identifying a local safety champion or lead agency
  - Target date: as soon as practical
  
- ❖ Pilot regional or local safety coalitions.
  - Background: The Kansas SHSP addresses safety at the statewide level. As such, emphasis areas are selected based on statewide data. However, statewide data is not necessarily representative of local or regional data. Local safety coalitions will identify issues that could be unique to their area and develop strategic plans to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes. See Appendix D, “Safety in Numbers”, for an example.
  - Method: program
  - Costs: seed money to plant interest
  - Lead agency and contact: KDOT, Bureau of Transportation Safety and Technology
  - Challenges: encouraging voluntary participation from individuals and groups, identifying a regional safety champion and administrative support
  - Target date: pilot a new coalition in 2014

❖ Pilot local road safety plans.

- Background: Many states have developed local road safety plans to advance safety on locally-owned major and minor collectors. In fall 2013 a delegation from Kansas attended a peer exchange to learn from the experiences of Minnesota and others. Local road safety plans assist LPAs to select and prioritize projects that will have the biggest impact on safety based on the crash types and high-risk roadway characteristics in their jurisdiction. Because of the random nature of crashes—in particular on lower-volume local roads—these plans place emphasis on low-cost systemic improvements; that is, the approach is proactive rather than reactive.
- Method: program
- Costs: Minnesota spent on average \$45,000 per county
- Lead agency and contact: KDOT, Bureau of Local Projects
- Challenges: staff to administer new program, funds to implement plans, roadway and crash data, and low number of county engineers
- Target date: pilot a local road safety plan in 2014

Future strategy:

- ❖ Add roadway safety to local coalitions that already exist for areas such as health and transportation.



## **Goal 5: Train and otherwise assist LPAs in developing safety programs and identifying low-cost strategies**

### Current strategies:

- ❖ Provide road safety audits through KDOT and LTAP.
- ❖ Provide assistance to LPAs in applying for funding.
- ❖ Package solutions with data through programs such as TEAP.
- ❖ Provide safety education through publications, technical assistance and face-to-face training. (See Appendix B for a description of the Kansas LTAP.)
- ❖ Provide technical assistance through the Kansas Association of Counties.
- ❖ Provide training for front-line workers, supervisors and executives through the Kansas Road Scholar Program.
- ❖ Promote engineering-related safety topics through TASK.
- ❖ Inform LPAs of issues pertaining to local road approaches to state highways as part of the county-wide road safety assessments performed on the State Highway System by KDOT.

### New strategies:

- ❖ Design a course that addresses analyses and solutions based on local roadway crash data and proven research on effective systemic improvements.
  - Background: The cliché “jack of all trades and master of none” applies to most local public works staffs. Few cities, and even fewer counties, have the benefit of, for example, a full-time traffic engineer. Nevertheless, the agency that owns a road and is responsible for its maintenance is principally responsible as well for its safety. Training is a key. It should be basic, relevant and brief.
  - Method: project
  - Costs: TBD
  - Lead agency and contact: Kansas LTAP
  - Challenges: competing priorities for training, developing and promoting the course
  - Target date: 2014

- ❖ Initiate lower-cost road safety audits on rural county highways and urban city streets.
  - Background: A road safety audit, or RSA, is a formal safety performance examination of an existing road or intersection by an independent, multidisciplinary assessment team. KDOT has hired engineering consultants to conduct a few RSAs as part of the HRRRP. The goal of this strategy is to scale back the scope and reporting requirements of RSAs for corridors to minimize costs while maintaining the greatest benefit: identifying recommendations that when implemented will reduce crashes. One target is to identify low-cost safety improvements (e.g., tree removal for roadside safety or to remove sight line obstructions) that could be implemented by the local agency within existing budget constraints. This is in addition to more traditional “project” type improvements. A side benefit of this approach is that local officials will become more attuned to how to look at their facilities with safety in mind and also to become familiar with a toolbox of options for achieving practical safety improvements.
  - Method: program
  - Costs: staff time
  - Lead agency and contact: KDOT, Bureau of Local Projects
  - Challenges: finding knowledgeable personnel willing to commit their time
  - Target date: begin in summer 2013

Future strategies:

- ❖ Start a Safety Circuit Rider program.
  - Background: Other states have developed similar programs that use crash data and crash research to locate actual and potential high crash sites along roadways and assist LPAs in finding low cost roadway solutions.
- ❖ Develop tools to train elected officials on the importance of local road safety plans and funding safety improvements.



## Enforcement

Kansas cities, counties and townships oversee more than 130,000 miles of state road. That means that halving fatalities and serious injuries in the next 20 years will take lots of help from local partners – law enforcement in particular.

A short survey of police officials from Butler, Lyon, Johnson, Crawford and Stafford counties turned up several barriers to success in reducing crash numbers, including having too few officers and too little crash data.

John Koelsch, chief deputy at the Lyon County Sheriff's Office, who conducted the survey, noted that "law enforcement almost always has fewer personnel than needed to concentrate on traffic-related matters."

Three of the other four officers agreed, citing the problem, in their words, of a lack of "manpower," "people" or "extra officers to patrol."

The fourth said that a lack of personnel is less important than "motivation and permission to do traffic enforcement."

To reduce crashes on local roads also requires, according to Koelsch, "crash data easily accessed . . . in a timely matter."

The data could include, for example, the day of the week and time of day, along with such contributing factors as road and weather conditions, ages of drivers, impairment by alcohol or drugs, speed of vehicles and presence of hazards at crash "hot spots."

Those areas could then be worked more than others "when deputies have time," said Crawford County Sheriff Sandy Horton, "but to be honest with you, to work traffic for this office is a luxury, as we are so busy responding to other calls."

KDOT is working to set up an accessible database that will contain such information linked to the location of accidents established by use of GPS technology.

Other needs mentioned included updated equipment (to replace aging radar, for example), as well as training related to impaired driving, both within the academies and on the job.

Some grant money is available to help law enforcement reduce crashes on local roads – the KDOT Special Traffic Enforcement Program is one source – but budget constraints at all levels of government restrict access to funds.

One of those surveyed, Dave Corp, now retired from service with the highway patrol, mentioned the importance to officers of feeling supported by judges and prosecutors when they do make arrests. "Officers do not want to write tickets if some judge or prosecutor . . . dismisses them," he said. "That sends a message to the officer."

## **Goal 6: Emphasize to the law enforcement community the important role of law enforcement to improve safety on local roads**

### Current strategies:

- ❖ Provide funding for local law enforcement to attend training in the latest techniques of traffic enforcement thru KDOT.
- ❖ Support KDOT's Law Enforcement Liaison (LEL) program.
  - Background: KDOT utilizes three LELs to promote occupant protection/impaired driving issues as well as maintain/enhance a good working relationship between KDOT and the nearly 450 diverse local law enforcement agencies within the State.
- ❖ Award grants to participating Kansas law enforcement agencies to increase education and enforcement efforts directed at compliance with Kansas safety belt, child passenger safety, and impaired driving laws through the Special Traffic Enforcement Program, or STEP.
- ❖ Purchase and distribute equipment to STEP agencies that promote and participate in traffic safety enforcement efforts.
- ❖ Support Operation Impact in Wichita and Kansas City regions.
  - Background: Operation Impact is a multi-agency initiative to address traffic safety on specific corridors. Education, awareness, and enforcement are typical priorities of each operation.
- ❖ Encourage partnerships between local media and law enforcement agencies.

### New strategy:

- ❖ Promote the importance of traffic enforcement to the law enforcement community.
  - Background: There appears to be a decline in interest among law enforcement personnel in enforcing traffic laws. Traffic enforcement allows direct contact and a great chance to educate drivers. On local roads especially, there is sometimes a reluctance to arrest or ticket a "local", who may also be a neighbor. Regardless, traffic laws are written for a reason and law enforcement needs to enforce them. Delivering analyzed crash data is one way to initiate this conversation.
  - Method: practice
  - Costs: none
  - Lead agency and contact: KDOT, Bureau of Transportation Safety & Technology, Law Enforcement Liaisons
  - Challenges: competing with other law enforcement units
  - Target date: beginning 2014

### Future strategies:

- ❖ Provide training to law enforcement on such topics as traffic laws, distracted driving and the importance of writing tickets for infractions that result in crashes.
- ❖ Create incentives for law enforcement agencies to participate in traffic safety campaigns by tying safety grants to enforcement activities.
- ❖ Identify local road corridors that based on crash data would benefit from enhanced enforcement activities.