

Distracted Driving High Visibility Enforcement Project

Bend, Oregon – 2015

Executive Summary

Oregon participated in the second annual national Distracted Driving Month during April, 2015 by partnering on a project to study, and ultimately reduce, distracted driving. The coordinated campaign, “The Distracted Driving Attitudes and Behaviors Survey and Report,” was conducted so that Oregon could measure and compare the effectiveness of a distracted driving campaign and future campaigns held throughout the state. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) set in motion the project, which included awareness pre-enforcement, enforcement, post-enforcement results, and an attitudes and



behaviors survey and report. ODOT partnered with Bend Police Department and Portland State University (PSU) to conduct the campaign.

The partners, along with TV and radio stations, local agencies, businesses and schools, distributed key messages about distracted driving. The main message

was “U Drive U Text U Pay” from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s national campaign. According to the survey, this was the most recalled message during the campaign at 42.3 percent.

Bend Police conducted pre- and post-campaign 100-car observation surveys; the results showed a 1 percent decrease in texting/talking while driving before/after the campaign. During the high visibility enforcement, April 21-25, there were 72 citations and 15 warnings given for distracted driving during 59.5 hours. Local media reported on the results, which helped raise awareness.

ODOT then worked with PSU to measure the results of the high visibility enforcement campaign. The survey, based on the 2012 NHTSA Distracted Driving Attitudes and Behaviors Survey, was conducted in June 2015. There were 346 surveys completed with people that reside in Bend and drive with a cell phone in their vehicle.

The study found that since the driving safety campaign was implemented in April, almost 12 percent of people surveyed reported texting less while driving. The most common reason for respondents decreasing their texting-while-driving was “increased awareness of safety” at 30 percent. Other results followed national trends, such as the age of most offenders being 35 – 44 year olds, not the younger, inexperienced drivers as many assume.

TV news interviews were most commonly cited as the source of information; radio came in second. Among other findings was that while only about one-quarter of respondents reported ever sending or reading text messages while driving, nearly 64 percent of those who do send or read a text message with a hand-held device while driving agreed they were either distracted or “not as aware of things.”

All the partners involved believe the high visibility pilot project was a success. It’s clear that distracted driving awareness in Bend increased, and partners hope this will result in reduced crashes with fewer serious injuries and fatalities, and fewer citations as well. The full report is available online.

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