



# DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# NEWS

## OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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Opening Statement of Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe at the Research Triangle Institute, Raleigh, North Carolina, Thursday, May 18

I have just spent most of the morning reviewing the highway safety programs underway here at The Research Triangle Institute, The University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center, and the National Driving Center. The reports have reemphasized the high level of professional innovation that North Carolina is utilizing in fighting the battle against death and destruction on our Nation's highways.

As you know, 55,000 persons were killed in automobile accidents last year -- an increase of 200 over 1970. The number of deaths per 100 million vehicle miles driven, however, dropped to 4.7, the lowest in history.

This paradox points up the tremendous challenge we face in highway safety. Our highways and cars and drivers are becoming safer. But the number of cars and drivers continually increases. In fact, we add three and one half million new drivers and nearly 10 million new cars every year.

So we have to pinpoint our efforts in making the greatest highway safety impact possible. The safety programs I have reviewed this morning are helping us do that. We must get the drunk driver off the highway. We must improve vehicle safety. And we must improve the quality of our drivers.

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We are getting significant national contributions to this cause from the State of North Carolina. Members of my Department have long enjoyed a cordial team relationship with the several agencies here in North Carolina concerned with the entire highway safety spectrum. And we shall continue that relationship to improve highway safety in North Carolina and across the Nation.

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