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SAFETY FIRST: SAFETY PRECAUTIONS ON A RURAL ROAD

**A Report To:
The Federal Highway Administration**

**By:
Langston University's
Transportation Center of Excellence**



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ABSTRACT

Accidents occur due to several environmental and human factors. The purpose of this study was to study the causes of death on State Highway 33, a rural highway that has been described as one of the six most dangerous highways in the State of Oklahoma. Along this highway is located Langston University, a historically black university. People who respond to traffic accidents (the police officers, fire fighters, sheriffs or their representatives, and newspaper publishers) were asked a series of questions on what the main causes of accidents were, as well as strategies to reduce the accidents. Also, the Oklahoma Highway Safety Office (OHSO) was asked for information regarding the accidents that occurred between 1980 and 2002.

Results from this preliminary study, along with results from survey questionnaires and spot checks were used to first, assess seat belt usage at Langston University, and then use the findings from the study and the surveys to design a seat belt campaign.

Results from the investigative study indicated that human factors that contributed to accidents were not paying attention while driving, driving above posted speed limits, and driving under the influence of alcohol. Environmental factors included being impatient during inclement weather, curves in the road, driving in bad or inclement weather, and narrow roads. Data from the OHSO office confirmed these findings but driving at unsafe speeds, failure to yield, and being inattentive while driving were the major causes of accidents.

Results from the Pre-test questionnaires and spot checks indicated seatbelt usage at Langston University in 2001 was 64% and child restraint usage was 68%. Results also indicated that freshmen and sophomore students were more vulnerable to crashes on SH-33 due to a lack of knowledge of the dangers of SH-33 and inexperience in driving in a rural area. Campaign efforts were directed at increasing awareness of the dangers of SH-33 and the hazards of rural driving, as well as encouragement to cultivate safe driving behaviors and seatbelt usage.

Results of the Post-Test indicated that seatbelt and child restraint usage went down instead of up after the campaign. This may have been due to the reconstruction of SH-33 between Langston and Guthrie, giving the Langston University community the impression that the highway was safer. Thus, diligence in buckling up decreased.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project team, which is made up entirely of the Langston University Transportation Center of Excellence's staff, would like to thank the Federal Highway Administration for giving us the opportunity to conduct this vital research and safety campaign. University community. Was it not for FHWA providing this funding, and thus this opportunity, many lessons learned may have never occurred. And this project has brought many benefits to the Langston University community in the way of safe driving behaviors and seat belt and child restraint usage.

It goes without saying that had Langston University's president, Dr. Ernest L. Holloway not been there for support and guidance, this project would have never got off the ground. He was there from the beginning and did everything in his power to assure it was a success. This was truly a direct result of his love and loyalty for Langston University and his deep concern for the safety of the students first, but also most definitely the faculty, staff and administrative employees.

The project team would also like to thank the Langston University faculty, staff, and administration for their cooperation and support. Especially noteworthy is the support and cooperation provided by: the Langston University Chief of Security, Algray Pettus; the Physical Plant Contract Manager, Mr. Reuben Oliver; and, Langston University's Director of Student Services, Mr. Troy Beasley. These three gentlemen work hard and are very dedicated in doing their best to provide the safest environment for Langston University. Without their support and cooperation, the Safety First Campaign and the Safety First Week would not have been the success that it was.

Lastly, the project team would also like to acknowledge the countless local, state and government agencies for their involvement in the campaign, whether it was through donations of materials, presentations, or personal time and attention. All involved made this project a pleasure to work on, and an inspiration for the Transportation Center staff to continue to conduct both a safe driving and seat belt and child restraint usage campaign and an Annual Safety First Week.

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SAFETY FIRST & SAFETY CHALLENGES ON A RURAL ROAD

Introduction:

In 1999, national statistics revealed that 86 percent of speeding-related fatalities occurred on non-Interstate highways (National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NHTSA), 1999: 6). Of these speeding-related fatalities, 34 percent of the male drivers and 17 percent of the female drivers involved were 21 to 24 years old; or better said for this study's particular interests – college-age students. Additionally, there were 37,140 fatal crashes for this same year, and 60 percent of them (22,208) occurred on rural roads (NHTSA, 1999: 52), with a total of 41,717 fatalities.

Moreover, alcohol use is a major factor in traffic fatalities among college students. In 1999, the nation's highest intoxication rates were 27 percent for drivers aged 21 to 24 and 24 percent for those aged 25 to 34 years old (NHTSA: 4). Thirty-eight percent of the total traffic fatalities for the same year were alcohol-related (NHTSA: 3).

Road conditions, distances driven to acquire goods and services, population and traffic density, attitudes, behaviors, and the ability to make the right kinds of choices *all* play an important part in providing the safest transportation environment possible for a college campus.

The state of Oklahoma has over 112,510 miles of roadways, many of them covering county, state and U.S. highways. Although only 15.5 percent of Oklahoma's crashes occurred on county roads, state, and U.S. highways in 1999, of the number of total fatal crashes (625) in 1999, over 55 percent (344) occurred on county, state, and U.S. highways. In those 624 fatal crashes, a total of 747 individuals died (OHSO, 1999).

Moreover, in Oklahoma, Table 1 shows that fatalities associated with college age students and rural roads and highways include alcohol and drug related problems. Crashes

involving fatalities in this age group on county roads or state or U.S. highways totaled 72, or 17 percent, of the 747 statewide fatalities; moreover, 35.8 percent of all alcohol/drug-related crashes occurred on these same roads (OHSO, 1999).

Nationwide, the average use of seat restraints among individuals in the 15-25-year age group is very low (NHTSA, 1999). This is also a major concern, because according to NHTSA, nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of the passenger vehicle occupants killed in traffic crashes in Oklahoma in 1999 were unrestrained (OHSO, 1999).

Table 1: Fatal Crashes on Oklahoma Roads

Oklahoma Fatalities: 1999	Crashes on County, State & U.S. Highways	Fatal Crashes on County, State & U.S. Highways	Non-Seatbelt Usage Among Fatalities	Fatalities Among College-Ages on Co. & State Roads
747	15.5%	55%	62%	17%

Rationale:

Parents consider many factors when they are selecting a college. Variables include quality of education, finance, location, social and natural environment, *and safety*. Particularly, personal safety in reference to health, accidents, and crime is carefully examined. Transportation safety with respect to traffic conditions, environment, roads, and distance traveled from services and goods to the university campus plays a major role in the decision-making process. The safety and welfare of a son or a daughter, who may be away from the parent’s supervision for the first time in their young life, is paramount. Other things being equal, many parents encourage their children to attend a college or university in a small town or rural area away from the larger

cities because of safety concerns, fewer environmental risks and less traffic. Additionally, parents are not the only persons concerned about safety; everybody wants to be safe.

But travel to a university or college located in a rural area or a small town increases the likelihood of accessing county roads, and state highways; and, because these types of roads have a smaller traffic volume than turnpikes, interstates, freeways, and highways in larger towns and big cities, many people wrongly assume travel would be safer.

The large numbers of Oklahoma's college age students attending universities and colleges in rural areas demanded a program that would seek preventive measures and implement outreach and educational activities to reduce traffic-related fatalities among their numbers.

Purpose and Scope:

Since many of America's young adults attend colleges and universities in rural areas, and with the fore-mentioned facts in mind, a research study that included a campaign to protect college students from premature death caused by environmental factors and behavior was necessary. Beginning with a study of the conditions of a dangerous and unfamiliar stretch of road such as State SH-33 (SH-33) followed by an evaluation of the effects that an educational campaign on the dangers of the particular road, imprudent behaviors such as alcohol and drug abuse previous to driving, or failure to use a seat restraint can be used as a guideline for colleges and universities throughout the country. Strategies implemented, lessons learned and recommendations established from this project will provide valuable knowledge and information that will lead to feasible steps toward creating a safer and more secure transportation environment, not only for Langston University students, but also for other students on rural roads throughout the country.

Locally, this project provided protection through knowledge for new students, faculty, and staff at Langston who are unaware of the dangers of SH-33. It also provides warnings and reminders for those who have resided and/or worked in the area to always acknowledge and respect the unsafe road conditions and the necessity of cautious driving behavior choices. Langston's students especially benefited from this project. Being one of America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities, most students who attend Langston are African American; a group that needs as many of their young adults as possible to attend a school of higher learning and live to become some of its future decision makers.

Since Langston University in Langston, Oklahoma offered a unique opportunity to meet these objectives, Langston University's Transportation Center of Excellence (LUTCE) staff conducted this combination research study/seatbelt campaign between October 2001 and September 2004. Located on Oklahoma SH-33 in Central Oklahoma, Langston is a very small town with a population of 1,471; mostly college students (Oklahoma Department of Commerce, 1998). With few services, goods, and entertainment offered in the town, students drive 11 miles on SH-33, a two-lane highway, to the nearest larger town, Guthrie, Oklahoma, to acquire them. This section of SH-33 has been rated as one of the most dangerous stretches of road in the state with 12 fatalities in the last 13 years (ODOT, 1999). The majority of these fatalities have been Langston University students, faculty, or staff.

Before SH-33 was reconstructed from a two-lane highway to a four-lane highway, the posted speed limit was 55 mph. Since the reconstruction was completed in 2004, the posted speed limit is 70 mph.

At the time of the beginning of this project, Sh-33 was rated by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation as inadequate to critically inadequate based on the lack of paved

shoulders, inadequate vertical and horizontal alignment (1997). Crash rates along SH-33 from Guthrie to the junction of SH 33/US 177(North) in 1997 were higher than the statewide average on at least seven of the sixteen segments (1997, p1)

The purpose of this project was to conduct a research study on the dangers of SH-33, investigating the details of the fatalities and their causes. Simultaneously, a survey of seat belt usage and driving behaviors at the University was conducted to assess the percentage of use among the college students, faculty, and staff. These two objectives were Phase One of this major project. After collecting this information, a campaign was implemented to educate the Langston University community on the dangers of the road, and encourage seat belt usage. This was Phase Two of the project. Phase Three began after the campaign had been conducted for a year and a half. This was the evaluation phase, which compared the results of seatbelt usage and driving behaviors in the Pretest in Phase One with the same type of data collected in the Post Test in Phase Three.

The Project team conducted the project in the above mentioned phases. Phase One consisted of reviewing and investigating the detailed circumstances surrounding fatal accidents on SH-33. This involved collaboration with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, Oklahoma Highway Patrol, local law enforcement agencies, and local municipalities.

An assessment of seat belt usage and driving behaviors by students, faculty and staff at Langston University was conducted. This phase of the project concluded in the first six months and required cooperative efforts between LUTCE and Langston University administration, faculty, and staff.

Thus, in Phase One, the investigation of the accidents, fatalities, and injuries were conducted, a research instrument for the seat belt assessment designed, a research team was fully constituted, seat belt assessment carried out, and the safety campaign was organized.

In Phase Two, the campaign was conducted for a 24-month duration. LUTCE's Project team took the lead in the campaign and utilized Langston faculty, staff, and administration to carry out many of the campaign activities. Additionally, it incorporated the assistance of the University media and its facilities in campaign advertising. The Project team also worked closely with Langston's Security and Personal Counseling Center, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Oklahoma Highway Safety Office.

Phase Three involved continuation of the safety campaign and the final evaluation of the effects of Phase One and Phase Two. The evaluation commenced at the end of Phase Two (the campaign Phase). It consisted of both an identical spot check and an identical survey of the safety practices and comparison of the percentages of seat belt usage both observed in the spot check and reported in the surveys.

Objectives:

Safety issues included driver familiarity with the area, use of restraints, drug (alcohol) use, road conditions, season, surface quality, and type of vehicle. The Project team worked with the Oklahoma Highway Patrol, fire departments, sheriffs, local municipalities along SH-33 between Interstate 44 and Interstate 35, Oklahoma Department of Transportation, insurance companies, others involved in traveler safety, the media, Langston University Security, faculty, and staff, to accomplish the following specific objectives:

- a) Identify safety problems on SH-33;
- b) Compile information relevant to the accidents, determining common factors;

- c) Develop guidelines to mitigate common safety deficiency;
- d) Develop a University-wide campaign to encourage astute behaviors such as seat belt usage and avoidance of drug and alcohol use before driving; and
- e) Educate Langston University students, faculty, and staff on the dangers of SH-33, important factors to keep in mind, and steps they can take to insure personal safety.

Safety problems on SH-33 were identified and information on accidents was compiled by an investigation through interviews and collaboration with public agencies such as the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, the local law enforcement agencies, and the Oklahoma Highway Patrol Office. The results of this investigation were used to develop safety guidelines.

Seat belt assessment was accomplished by a campus-wide survey where an actual count of seat belt usage was taken at the entrances and exits to the University. Additionally, a written survey was distributed to a sample population at the University. The Project team used the information gathered by the investigation and the surveys to develop the campaign and educational programs.

The campaign was conducted for 24 months, followed by the final survey and evaluation, which included another seat belt usage and driving behavior assessment to determine the rate of seat belt usage and driving behaviors after the campaign was conducted.

PHASE I: THE INVESTIGATIVE STUDY

Factors Leading to Accidents on SH-33

Introduction:

Accidents occur due to several factors, including human and environmental conditions. Human or behavioral factors include driving above posted speed limits, driving under the influence of alcohol, driving under the influence of drugs, tiredness, not paying attention while driving, and road rage. Some accidents are fatal. Several factors have been attributed to fatalities on the road, including not wearing seatbelts or child restraints, impact of high speed, average response time, impact of weather conditions, impact of collision, and internal bleeding. Particularly, young drivers on the road tend to experience more accidents on the road than other more experienced drivers. Young people tend to exhibit risky driving behavior such as driving too fast, not wearing seatbelts, and not paying close attention to driving while they are behind the wheel. Environmental factors include bad or inclement weather conditions, curves in road, narrow roads, small or no shoulder, time of day, and number of vehicles on the road at a given moment in time.

The purpose of the Investigative Study of SH-33 was to research the danger of SH-33, investigating the details of the fatalities including their causes. The specific objectives were to identify safety problems on SH-33 and compile information relevant to accidents.

Review of Literature:

Speeding, or driving above posted speed limits, leads to many accidents. In 1999, 86 percent of speeding-related fatalities occurred on non-Interstate highways (National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NHTSA) 1999:6). Sixty percent or 22,208 of the 37,043 fatalities

occurred on rural roads (NHTSA 1999:52). Thirty-four percent of the male drivers and 17 percent of the female drivers involved in speed-related fatal accidents were between the ages of 21 and 24 years (i.e., college-age students). Alcohol use is a major factor in traffic fatalities among college students. In 1999, intoxication rates were 27 percent for drivers aged 21 to 24 and 24 percent for those between 25 and 34 years of age, respectively (NHTSA 1999:4) Overall, 38 percent of the total traffic fatalities were alcohol related (NHTSA 1999: 3).

Roads that are not part of the interstate system contribute to fatal accidents. The National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimated that 86 percent of the speed-related fatalities occurred on non-interstate highways (NHTSA 1999a). In Oklahoma, in 1999, 15.5 percent of traffic accidents occurred on county roads as well as state and U.S. highways. There were 624 fatal accidents, of which 55 percent or 344 occurred on county, state, and U.S. highways. These 624 accidents led to 747 deaths (Oklahoma Highway Safety Office (OHSO) 1999). Alcohol and drugs were involved in many accidents. Twenty-seven, or 200 of the deaths were for individuals between 16 and 25 years of age, 25 percent of which were due to unsafe speeds (OHSO 1999). About 36 percent of the accidents were related to use of alcohol or drugs that occurred on county, state, or U.S. highways (OHSO 1999). Of the overall 8 percent rollover crashes involving fatalities, 73 percent of them occurred on these same highways. Unsafe speed was another factor that led to fatal crashes. OHSO (1999) has estimated that 25 percent of fatal accidents were due to unsafe speeds.

Studies show that seatbelt use among African Americans is at least 10 percent below the national average, and particularly among the males between the ages of 15 to 24 years (NHTSA 1996). Also, there is a lower percentage of child restraint among African American children aged 5 to 12 years. Moreover, African American youth are not as likely to be buckled up as often as

children from other racial groups (NHTSA, Meharry Study); and, African American (and Hispanic) male teenagers are twice as likely to die in motor vehicle crashes than Caucasian American male teenagers (Baker 1998).

Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death and injury for African American children through the age of 14 years, and the second leading cause of death for African American males between the ages of 15 and 24 years (Centers for Disease Control 1997). A large percentage of deaths among the children has been attributed to the consideration that usually when parents do not buckle up, 76 percent of the time their children would not be restrained either (NHTSA 1997); on the other hand, when the driver buckles up, usually 87 percent of the children are also restrained (Air Bag and Seatbelt Safety Campaign 2000).

In 1999 in Oklahoma, nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of vehicle occupants killed in traffic crashes were unrestrained (OHSO 1999). The study by the University of Oklahoma found that in Oklahoma seatbelt and child restraint usage among African Americans to be comparable to that of Caucasian Americans. The rate for African Americans was only 2 percentage points lower (Morgan 1999). Nationally, the average use of seatbelts among individuals between 15 and 25 years of age is very low (NHTSA 1999a). In 1999, 41,611 people were killed in automobile accidents in the U.S.; only 67 percent were using seatbelts. The percentage use of seatbelts increased to 71 percent in 2000. In Oklahoma, 68 percent of those killed were neither wearing a seatbelt nor a child restraint seat (NHTSA 1999; National Safety Council 2000). The use of seatbelts and child restraints is important because in 1998, 50,249 people were injured in Oklahoma due to automobile accidents, 73 percent of them were wearing either a seatbelt or were in a child restraint (OHSO 1998).

The stretch of SH-33 between Langston and Guthrie has been rated as the sixth most dangerous road in the State of Oklahoma (Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT 1999). This stretch has experienced many accidents and fatalities involving Langston University students, faculty, and staff.

Methodology:

The study involved departments that were involved in incident management in five cities on SH-33 between I-35 and I-44. These cities were Drumright, Cushing, Coyle, Langston, and Guthrie. A self-administered questionnaire was sent to the city managers, city police departments, city fire departments, and local newspaper editors or managers (See Appendix A). These individuals were targeted because they represented the departments that responded to accidents. Particularly, the city managers, police department chiefs, fire marshals, and sheriffs were sent questionnaires. Because there were only five cities along SH-33, all the above representatives from each city were sent the questionnaires for completion.

The questionnaire covered questions on the length of service the respondent had in the agency, number of years in work related to traffic, number of accidents investigated in the last 12 months prior to the survey, ranking environmental and human causes of accidents, major causes of traffic accidents, major factors in traffic accidents by young people, and what the respondent felt was a useful practice to reduce accidents on SH-33. The questionnaire had both closed and open-ended questions.

Twenty-six were mailed with a self-addressed stamped envelope. After receiving the completed forms, data were coded and analyzed. Because of the smallness of the number of respondents, the data have not been transformed into percentages or other rates or ratios.

The Oklahoma Highway Safety Office (OHSO) provided a special tabulation concerning the fatalities and injuries on SH-33 between I-35 and State Highway 177 between 1980 and 2002.

Results:

Only 7 questionnaires were returned from representatives from Cushing, Cushing, and Guthrie who responded to the questionnaires. Efforts to elicit responses from Langston and Drumright did not produce positive results. Results were obtained from the police departments, fire department, sheriff's department, and two publishing companies. A police department lieutenant, police department sergeant, police department chief, fire marshal, major, and two publishers/managing editors answered the questionnaires. Four questionnaires came from Guthrie, two from Cushing, and one from Coyle.

Table 2 shows the length of service and years the respondents had in traffic control. Most (5) of the respondents had at least 6 years of service and at least 6 years in traffic control. The two who had no traffic control experience were the two publishers, but they had covered traffic accidents.

Table 2: Length of Service and Years in Traffic Control

Number of Years	Length of Service	Years in Traffic Control
0-2	1	1
3-5	1	1
6-8	2	1
9+	3	4
Total	7	7

Three respondents had not responded to traffic accidents in the past twelve months prior to the survey. The other four had responded to 49 accidents. That means on average each responded to 12 accidents. Actually only one responded to 7 accidents, two responded to 15 accidents and the other to 12 accidents.

Table 3 shows the ranked data of behavioral causes of traffic accidents. Respondents were asked to rank what they felt were the major causes, 1 being the most important reason. Not paying attention while driving was ranked the lowest, followed by driving above posted speed limits. Driving under the influence of drugs was ranked at the top of the list.

Table 3: Ranked Behavioral Causes of Traffic Accidents

Human Cause	Rank
Not paying attention while driving	1.6
Driving above speed limits	2.1
Driving under the influence of alcohol	3.1
Tiredness	3.4
Driving under the influence of drugs	4.7
Road rage	6

Table 4 shows the ranked data concerning the environmental causes of traffic accidents. Most of the answers were bunched together, meaning that the environmental factors were equally important for the respondents. One respondent gave impatient drivers in bad or inclement weather a score of 2. Curve in the roads (2.2), driving in bad/inclement weather conditions (2.7) and narrow roads (2.8) were the highest ranked factors. Small shoulders (4.6) and overall bad conditions (5) were the lowest ranked.

Table 4: Ranked Environmental Causes of Traffic Accidents

Environmental Cause	Rank
Other (Impatient drivers, especially in bad weather)	2.0
Curves in road	2.2
Driving in bad/inclement weather conditions	2.7
Narrow roads	2.8
Time of day	3.8
Number of vehicles on the road	4.2
Small shoulders	4.6
Bad road conditions	5.0

Three respondents mentioned that the number one cause of traffic accident fatalities was not wearing seatbelts or child restraints while driving or riding a vehicle. Another 3 felt the impact of the collision caused the fatalities. Only one mentioned the impact of speed.

Table 5 shows the ranked data with regard to factors that lead to traffic accidents by young people. Risky driving behavior, such as driving too fast, was ranked as the highest risk factor among young drivers. The next factors were not paying close attention to driving and inexperience on the road. Road conditions (4.4) and driving under the influence of either alcohol or other drugs (4.0) were ranked low.

Table 5: Leading Causes of Traffic Accidents among Young Drivers

Cause	Rank
Risky driving behavior, such as driving too fast	1.6
Not paying close attention to driving	2.0
Inexperience on the road	3.0
Driving under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol	4.0
Road conditions	4.4

Respondents were asked to state why they felt there were so many traffic accidents and fatalities on SH-33. Respondents could list more than one reason. The following factors were mentioned: not paying attention (2), driving above speed limits (2), impatience (2), narrow roads (1), not familiar with the road (1), bad road conditions (road not maintained) (1), and lots of traffic on the highway (1).

The question on the number of accidents revealed interesting results. By and large the data are suspect. They ranged from zero to over 100. Only one respondent stated that some of those (5) actually resulted in fatalities. Three respondents stated that the majority of the drivers or individuals involved were under 24 years of age. One respondent said they were between 27 and 30 years and another over 50. Two respondents did not answer this question.

Results concerning the percentage of accidents due to particular causes produced conflicting responses and have not been analyzed. But respondents mentioned that accidents could be reduced on SH-33 if the speed could be reduced, the seatbelt law was enforced, and stiffer penalties enforced for driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol (Table 6).

Table 6: Practices to Reduce Likelihood of Accident

Practice	Number of Respondents
Reduce speed limits	5
Enforce the seatbelt law	4
Impose stiffer penalties for driving under the influence of alcohol	1
Impose stiffer penalties for driving under the influence of drugs	1

The respondents recommended mentioned that to reduce the likelihood of accidents on SH-33 in their area would require the reduction of speed by working the traffic more. That is,

providing the presence of highway patrol officers and others on SH-33. Also, stiffer speed limit violation fines should be imposed so that the fines work as deterrents to others.

The special tabulation from OHSO shows that between 1980 and 2002, there were 932 accidents on SH-33 that had specific causes of death or injuries. The major causes of traffic accidents were unsafe speed (27.6%), failure to yield (13.7%), not paying attention while driving (10.5%), driving while intoxicated (8.0%), and improper turning (7.7%) (Table 7). These factors were responsible for over 96% of the traffic accidents. No improper action meant that generally the traffic accident was due to an animal.

Table 7: Major Causes of Traffic Accidents on SH-33, 1980-2002

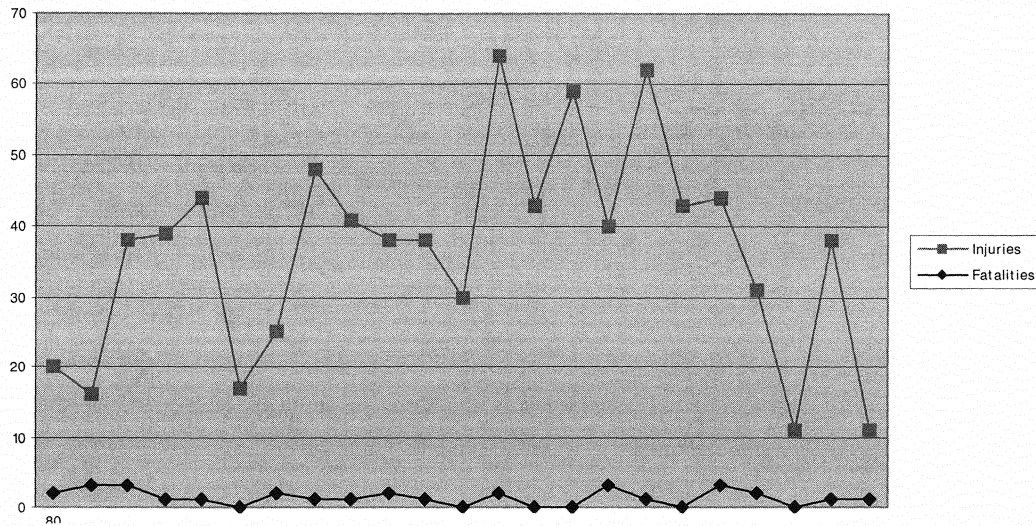
Cause	Number	Percent
Driving at unsafe speed	266	27.6
Failure to yield	132	13.7
No improper action	108	11.2
Being inattentive while driving	101	10.5
Driving while intoxicated	77	8.0
Improper turning	74	7.7
L. Center	54	5.6
Following too close	39	4.0
Improper passing	38	3.9
Defective vehicle	23	2.4
Failure to stop	20	2.1
Total	932	96.7

Most of the accidents (63.5%) occurred during the daytime. Additionally, most of the accidents occurred on dry days. Eighty percent of the traffic accidents occurred on dry land. That is, there was no rain or ice. Further analysis of the data indicates that most of the accidents involving driving while under the influence occurred during the night.

Figure 1 shows that although the number of fatalities on SH-33 has remained almost stable over the years (around 1 per year), there have been years where more than three deaths have occurred. The highest number of persons killed or injured was in 1992 when 2 people were

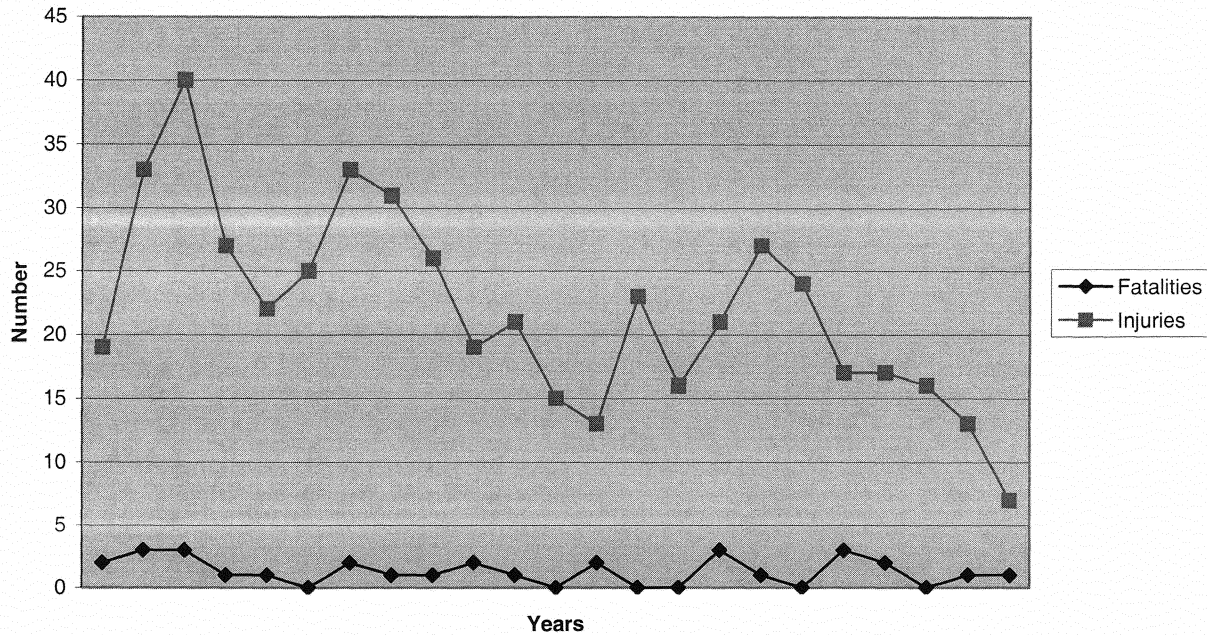
killed and 62 injured. Actually, the early 1990s were the years when most people were affected. Since then the number of people affected has declined.

Figure 1. Persons Killed and Injured, 1980-2002



The decline in the number of people injured could be attributed to several reasons. First, the number of collisions has declined from the mid-1990s. Actually, the highest peak for number of collisions happened in 1983. Since then the number of collisions has been declining and not as fluctuating as the number of people involved in the accidents (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Number of Collisions Leading to Deaths and Injuries, 1980-2002



Discussion:

The results show that SH-33 is a dangerous road. Environmental factors that lead to traffic accidents include several sharp curves that are difficult to negotiate especially when one is driving at high speeds. Also, the highway does not have wide shoulders making it difficult not to damage one's vehicle if it is involved in an accident. Langston University is located on SH-33 and students and staff use the highway to get to and from the University. The highway is also an important trade route for all types of vehicles, including tractor-trailers and farm equipment.

Experts who have considerable length of service and who have worked the traffic accidents have identified driving at high speeds and not paying particular attention to the road while driving as the major behavioral factors that lead to many accidents on SH-33. Close to this factor is driving while under the influence of alcohol. Although Langston University has some nontraditional students (that is, older or mature students), it is likely to spearhead a campaign

that would include messages on under age drinking and potential problems with the law. Impatience while driving, especially in inclement weather and road rage were also noted as factors leading to traffic accidents. Respondents mentioned these factors that were not requested specifically in the questionnaire.

Of course, most of the drivers involved in the accidents are young. Environmental factors, particularly driving fast in bad/inclement weather, curves, narrow road, and narrow or small shoulders were found to be important in causing traffic accidents. The road between Langston and Guthrie is currently being widened to include a divided four-lane highway. Some of the sharp corners have been eliminated and shoulders widened. These improvements should help in reducing the accidents.

Fatalities have been attributed to not wearing seatbelts or using child restraints as well as the impact of the collisions themselves. Travelers on this busy highway should be educated about the proper use of seatbelts and child restraints. These pieces of safety equipment not only help in preventing fatalities, they also lead to less serious injuries. Also, stiffer penalties, strict enforcement of the laws, and a constant presence of highway “patrol officers” on the highway have been suggested as the best and most effective strategies for reducing the likelihood of traffic accidents on SH-33.

Conclusion:

SH-33 is one of the busiest and most dangerous highways in the State. Those who have worked the accidents on the highway feel that the likelihood of accidents could be reduced with the increase of patrol officers, stricter enforcement of laws, and reduced speed limit. One

respondent even included safety education for Langston University students about the unforgiving nature of SH-33.

Given that the number of collisions has been declining in the most recent times is gratifying. It is hoped that the construction of the four-lane highway between Guthrie and Coyle will make travel along this dangerous highway safer. In more ways than one, the perceptions of experts are reflected in the data provided by the Oklahoma Highway Safety Office. Drivers need to pay attention when they are behind the wheels, they should not drink and drive, and they should drive within posted speed limits.

Desperately needed is a safety campaign for students, faculty, and staff of Langston University, a historically black university, about the dangers of driving, and especially driving on SH-33. Although the issue of seatbelts was not emphasized in this study, it appears that drivers and passengers who had seatbelts on escaped with injuries only.

PHASE I: THE PRE-TEST:

Review of the Literature:

This literature review focused on materials and guidelines that were used for Pretest, Post-Test, and campaign development. The literature review for the SH-33 Investigative Study was the primary source for this information. It provided the basis for much of the approach to the campaign development at the end of Phase One. It also provided the Project team with useful guidelines for the surveys designed for the Pretest and Post-Test Phases of this project.

The literature review also focused on the outlying causes of fatal accidents on rural roads in general, and Oklahoma SH-33 in particular. It pointed to driving at unsafe speeds, alcohol and/or drug related issues, roads not being a part of the interstate system, age of drivers, nonuse of seatbelts, head gear (in relation to motorcycles), and/or child restraints as the main causes.

Further research of the literature unveiled the need to focus on two other factors during the Campaign Phase: use of safety equipment while driving or riding on a motorcycle and cell phone usage while driving.

Motorcycles made up two percent of all registered vehicles in the United States in 2001 and accounted for only 0.3 percent of all vehicle miles traveled; however, per vehicle mile traveled, motorcyclists were almost 26 times as likely as passenger car occupants to die in a motor vehicle traffic crash and five times as likely to be injured. Per registered vehicle, the fatality rate for motorcyclists in 2001 was 4.1 times higher than passenger car occupants (NHTSA 2002:2).

Moreover, about one-half of all motorcycles involved in fatal crashes in 2002 collided with another motor vehicle and motorcycles are more likely to be involved in a fatal collision with a fixed object than any other vehicle (NHTSA 2002:2).

Motorcycle operators involved in fatal crashes in 2002 also had higher intoxication rates (32%) than any other type of motor vehicle driver, (NHTSA 2002:4). Also, motorcycle operators killed in crashes at night were four times more likely to be intoxicated than those killed during the day. (NHTSA 2002:5).

Another factor involving motorcycles is usage of safety equipment. The research revealed that helmets are estimated to be 29% effective in preventing fatal injuries and 67% effective in preventing brain injuries. At the time of this study, helmet use had declined from 72% in 2000 to 58% in 2002 and for intoxicated motorcyclists killed in vehicle crashes, helmet use was only 38% (NHTSA 2002:5).

Since data regarding cell phone usage was minimal in 2001, the Project team included questions in the survey that involved cell phone usage for future reference.

Methodology:

The assessment for seat belt usage and identity of driving behaviors in the Langston University community included all representative population groups at Langston University: freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, and graduate students, plus a separate random selection of individuals among the administration, faculty and staff. The Project team conducted two different types of evaluation for the assessment. The first was a survey questionnaire and the second was actual seatbelt and child restraint usage from collections of percentages through spot checks (See Appendix B and C).

Surveys were designed to gather demographic information, assess seat belt usage, and calculate percentages of the most common driving behaviors in the area. The initial section included demographic type questions, followed by 27 survey questions.

There were four main questions in the first section; however Question #1 had three categories: classification, gender and age. The remaining three questions focused on driving experience in the Langston area and self-perceived driving ability.

Following the demographic section, Questions 1-4 focused on seatbelt and child restraint usage; 5-14 focused on alcohol and drug use while driving; 15-20 involved driving behaviors such as road rage and inclement weather; Questions 21 and 22 asked about involvement in car crashes; Question 24 focused on the respondent's knowledge of the hazards of SH-33; and, 25-27 queried experiences in driving incidents involving cell phone usage.

The surveys were distributed to randomly selected classes simultaneously and mailed to randomly selected faculty, staff and administration through the campus mail. The response rate in both the Pre-Test and the Post-Test was well below 40%, so in order to get a response rate better than 40% the Project team mailed surveys twice, finally resulting in a desirable ratio .

A second instrument for assessment was Spot Checks. The reasoning behind the spot checks was to compare the counting of actual seat belt and child restraint usage (Spot Checks) with the numbers of those who claimed seatbelt and child restraint usage (Surveys).

Simultaneously with the distribution of the surveys, research teams stationed themselves at both entrances to Langston University from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. for one week (Monday through Saturday) at the beginning of the semester. Seat belt and child restraint usage in each vehicle was counted, and each vehicle was counted.

To assess actual seat belt usage percentages, the total number of persons wearing seat belts was divided by the total number of passengers. In child restraint percentages, totals of all children in child restraints were divided by the total number of children riding in the vehicles.

Results:

Survey Questionnaires:

There were 168 responses in all with 123 returned from students, 22 from staff, 16 from faculty and 7 from the administration. Of these, all responded to the “How Long at LU?” category, with 133 spending less than four years at Langston; 74 of them less than one year.

Demographics:

Important for the focus of the campaign was the demographic information on those who had lived, worked, or attended classes at Langston from 0 to 1 year. This is an indication that their experience with driving on SH-33 between Langston and Guthrie was either minimal or nil. There were 74 respondents in this category, which made up 44% of the entire sample population. Of the 74 respondents, 69 (or 93%) were students. The remaining six respondents included four faculty members, (or 5%), and one staff person, (or 1% of this category).

Among the category that had been at Langston from 2-4 years, there were a total of 59 respondents with 44 (or 74.6%) of them being students. There were four respondents (or 6.8%) in administration, two (or 3.4%) faculty members, and nine (or 15.3%) staff persons in this category. One respondent in this category did not specify a classification. This category made up 35% of the entire sample population.

Consequently, the two categories that had the lowest number of years living, working, or attending classes at Langston University (0-1 years and 2-4 years); and, had the least amount of experience driving on Oklahoma SH-33 between Guthrie and Langston University made up the greatest majority (44% and 35% respectively, or 79%) of the entire sample population. (Of the 168 responses, 166 responded to the “Average Age” in the demographic category.)

The category where the respondents had been at Langston from five to nine years, totaled 16 and made up 9.5% of the entire population; those who had been at Langston 10 to 15 years totaled 13 and made up 7.7% of the sample population; and finally, both of the categories that had been at Langston 16 to 20 years and over 20 years totaled four each and individually made up 2.4% of the entire sample.

Table 8: Percentage of Sample Population's Length of Time at Langston University

Years at Langston	No. of Responses	% of Sample Population	% of Students	% of Faculty	% of Staff	% of Admin	*N/R
0-1	74	44	93	5	1	0	
2-4	59	35	74.6	3.4	15.3	6.8	
5-9	16	9.5	56.2	6.2	37.5	0	
10-15	10	6	0	70	20	10	
16-20	2	1.2	0	0	100	0	
20 +	6	3.6	0	33.3	33.3	33.3	
*N/R	1						1

*N/R = No Response

When we compare the group of responders that lived, worked, or attended classes at Langston University the least amount of time (0-1 and 2-4 years), 58% of them were between the ages of 18 and 24. In the 18-24 years group 37.5% had been at Langston one year or less, where 21% had been at Langston between 2 to 4 years; two individuals had been here 5-9 years. All in all, 46% of the entire sample population had been working, living, or attending classes at Langston University only one year or less and 35% between two and four years. In other words, 137 respondents (or 81% of the entire sample population) had been at Langston less than four years, with 71.5% of this group between 18 and 24 years old.

Also, 78 respondents, or 57% of the entire sample population had been working, living, or attending classes at Langston less than one year with 63 respondents, or 80.8% of this group,

between the ages of 18 and 24 years old. These numbers emphasize the need to concentrate on the freshmen and sophomores when encouraging seatbelt usage, safe driving behaviors and warning them of the hazards of driving on Oklahoma SH-33 specifically and rural roads in general.

Table 9: Ages of Sample Population and Years at Langston University

Years at Langston	Age 18-24	Age 25-29	Age 30-39	Age 40-49	Age 50-65	Age 65 +	Age N/R
0-1	63	2	3	4	2		4
2-4	35	7	4	4	5	0	4
5-9	2	5		4	4	0	1
10-15	0	0	2	1	7	0	0
16-20				1	1	0	0
20 +				1	2		3
N/R				1			

Most individuals in the Langston University community in 2001 considered themselves safe drivers, whether they were among the student body, faculty, staff, or the administration. Of the total 168 respondents, 97 considered themselves a very safe driver, and 64 considered themselves a somewhat safe driver. There were two respondents who considered themselves a dangerous driver; two, somewhat careless; and one, an inattentive driver.

Table 10: Self-Perception of Driving Behavior

Classification	Very Safe	Somewhat Safe	Dangerous	Somewhat Careless	Inattentive	No Response	Total
Student	65	53	2	2	1	1	124
Administration	5	1	0	0	0	0	6
Faculty	12	3	0	0	0	1	16
Staff	15	7	0	0	0	0	22
Total	97	64	2	2	1	2	168

Regarding Question #24, which asked, “How Would You Rate SH-33 As Safe for Traveling on Over All?” there were varied responses. Out of 163 responses (five did not respond

to this question), 49 rated it as either “Safe”, “Very Safe”, “Safe Most of the Time”, or “Only Dangerous During Bad Weather”. Another 33 rated it as “Risky”, and another 22 rated it as “Unsafe”. Those who rated it as “Dangerous”, “Very Dangerous”, or “Most Dangerous Highway In The State”, totaled 59 with 22 rating it “Dangerous”, and 14 rating it “Very Dangerous”. Only 23 individuals, or 13.7% of the 168 respondents, rated it as “The Most Dangerous Highway in the State”.

Furthermore, almost one out of three persons (30.1%) in the entire sample population rated it in one of the safe categories; and, *over* one out of three (33.7%) rated it as either “Risky”, or “Unsafe”. Consequently, of the entire sample population at Langston University in 2001, 63.2% did not view Oklahoma SH-33 as dangerous in any sense.

Of the 133 respondents who had lived, worked or attended classes at Langston University from 0-1 year or 2-4 years, 16 out of 21 rated SH-33 as “Safe”, 9 out of 9 rated it as “Very Safe”, 13 out of 18 rated it as “Safe Most of the Time”, 29 out of 33 respondents rated it as “Risky”, and one out of one rated it as “Only Dangerous During Bad Weather”.

When we contrast these first two age groups to those who had lived, worked, or attended classes at Langston University in 2001 *longer* than four years, we find percentage wise that those who were at Langston less than four years made up 76.2% of the “Safe” category; 100% of the “Very Safe” category; 72% of the “Safe Most of the Time” category, and 100% of the “Dangerous Only During Bad Weather” category.

But these two categories (those who lived, worked, or attended classes either from 0-1 year or 2-4 years) *also* made up the large majority of those who responded to SH-33 as being “Very Dangerous” (78.6%); “Dangerous” (77.3%); or, “The Most Dangerous Highway in the State” (82.6%).

Table 11: Rating of SH-33 According to Years Spent at Langston

Time at Langston	S*	VS*	SM*	U*	R*	D*	VD*	OD*	MD*	NR*	Total
0-1 Years	16	8		9	16	10	5	0	9	1	74
2-4 Years	0	1	13	6	13	7	6	1	10	2	59
5-9 Years	0	0	1	5	3	3	2	0	2	0	16
10-15 Years	5	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	1	10
16-20 Years	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Over 20 Years	0	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	7
No Classification											
Total	21	9	18	22	33	22	14	1	23	5	168
Total % of Sample	1.3%	5%	11%	13.1%	20%	13.1%	7%	-	14%	3%	

- S* Safe
- VS* Very Safe
- SM* Safe Most of the Time
- U* Unsafe
- R* Risky
- D* Dangerous
- VD* Very Dangerous
- OD* Only Dangerous During Bad Weather
- MD* One of the Most Dangerous Highways in the State

Taking into consideration that the majority of the sample population consisted of individuals who had worked, lived, or attended classes at Langston University less than four years, we have included some interesting comparisons.

Looking at the respondents who had lived, worked, or attended classes less than four years in the table below, of the 74 respondents in the 0-1 Year category; the 59 respondents in the 2-4 Years category; and the total 133 respondents in the two categories; the following percentages in Table 12a resulted:

This table shows that 28.5% of the total respondents in these two categories rated SH-33 as either “Safe”, “Very Safe”, or “Safe Most of the Time”; however over 33% rated it as either “Risky”, or “Unsafe”, and 35.4% rated it as either “Dangerous”, “Very Dangerous”, or “The Most Dangerous Highway in the State”. On the other hand, of those in the category that had

lived, worked, or attended classes 0-1 year, 32.4% rated it in either the “Safe”, “Very Safe”, or “Safe Most of the Time”, categories as opposed to those in the 2-4 Years category, of whom 23.7% rated it in one of the “Safe” categories. This is significant, because it indicates that, in these first four years, as one spends more time at Langston, he or she may become more knowledgeable of the dangers of traveling SH-33. Of the 163 who responded to this question, only eight rated SH-33 as “Very Safe”, however four, or 50% of them were in the “0-1 Year at Langston” category.

Table 12a: Percentages of SH-33 Rankings According to 0-4 Years Spent at Langston University

Rankings	0-1 Year	2-4 Years	% of 0-4 Yrs
Safe	21.6%	0%	12%
Very Safe	10.8%	1.7%	6.7%
Safe Most of the Time	0%	22%	9.8%
Unsafe	12.2%	10.2%	11.3%
Risky	21.6%	22%	21.8%
Dangerous	13.5%	11.9%	12.8%
Very Dangerous	6.7%	10.2%	8.3%
Only Dangerous During Bad Weather	0%	1.7%	-1%
Most Dangerous Highway in the State	12.2%	16.9%	14.3%
No Response	1.4%	3.4%	2.3%

In comparison to those who had been at Langston four years or longer, Table 12b below shows the percentages of SH-33 rankings according to those respondents who had lived, worked, or attended classes at Langston University *longer* than four years.

Of those from 5-9 years at Langston 50.1% ranked it as “Unsafe” or “Risky”, and another 43.8% ranked it in one of the “Dangerous” categories. In the “Safe”, “Very Safe”, and “Safe Most of the Time”, categories only 6.3% of this group ranked SH-33 in any of these categories.

But then, something seems to happen with those who have been at Langston over ten years, because in these three categories, 10-16 Years, 16-20 Years, and Over 20 Years, higher

percentages of the respondents ranked SH-33 in the safe categories. For example, of the 10-15 Years and the 16-20 Years respondents, 50% and 75% respectively ranked SH-33 as “Safe”, and in the Over 20 Years category, 42.9% ranked it as “Safe Most of the Time”. In comparison, where 40% of the 10-15 Years ranked it in one of the dangerous categories, none of the 16-20 Years, and only 14.3% of the Over 20 Years respondents ranked it in one of the dangerous categories. Another aspect worth noting: of all of the respondents in the categories of ten years or over, none of them were students.

Table 12b: Percentages of SH-33 Rankings According to 5+ Years Spent at Langston University

Rankings	5-9 Yrs	10-15 Yrs	16-20Yrs	Over 20Yrs
Safe	0%	50%	0%	0%
Very Safe	0%	0%	0%	0%
Safe Most of the Time	6.3%	0%	75%	42.9%
Unsafe	31.3%	0%	25%	14.3%
Risky	18.8%	0%	0%	14.3%
Dangerous	18.8%	20%	0%	0%
Very Dangerous	12.5%	10%	0%	0%
Only Dangerous During Bad Weather	0%	0%	0%	0%
Most Dangerous Highway in the State	12.5%	10%	0%	14.3%
No Response	0%	10%	0%	14.3%

Another noteworthy assessment in ranking SH-33 is the comparison of the percentages of the student body with the administration, faculty, and staff. As shown in Table 12b, when we grouped the respondents by these categories, only 6.6% of the combined totals of the Administration, Faculty, and Staff categories (45) considered SH-33 as “One of the Most Dangerous Highways in the State”. Of the 123 students, 17% (23) ranked it as such.

On the other hand, among the Administration, Faculty, and Staff categories, one ranked SH-33 “Very Safe”, seven ranked it as “Safe” and nine ranked it “Safe Most of the Time”, this

was 37.7% of the entire number of individuals in these three categories. On the other hand, among the students, only 25.2% ranked it in one of the three safe categories.

Furthermore, the combined totals of the “Unsafe” and “Risky” rankings show that 34.1% of the students contrasted with 28.8% of the faculty, staff and administration ranked SH-33 in one of these two categories. And in the dangerous categories (“Dangerous”, “Very Dangerous”, or “Most Dangerous Highway in the State”), 37.3% of the students ranked it in one of these categories, where 28.8% of the faculty, staff and administration did.

Table 12c: Rankings of SH-33 According to Classification

Classification	S*	VS*	SM*	U*	R*	D*	VD*	OD*	MD*	NR*	Total
Student	14	8	9	16	26	16	9	1	21	3	123
Faculty	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	0	1	1	16
Staff	2	1	6	2	4	2	3	0	1	1	22
Administration	1	0	2	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	7
No Classification											
Total	21	9	18	22	33	22	13	1	24	5	168

Driving Behaviors:

The Pre-Test and Post-Test surveys also contained 18 questions relating to various topics such as drinking and driving, illegal drug use and driving, DUI history, speeding, and cell phone usage. For better organization and clarity, we have included a section on “Driving Behaviors” and grouped the main categories in this section.

Drinking and Drinking & Driving

In 2001, 11.3% of the sample population admitted to “driving while drinking” in the Pre-Test surveys.

Illegal Drug Use and Illegal Drug Use & Driving

According to the claimed usage of illegal drug use, only students answered in the affirmative with only 5.8% claiming that they used illegal drugs from time to time. Of those, 5.3% claimed driving under the influence of drugs.

DUI?

Only 3% of the respondents in the Pre-Test answered “yes” to the question, “Have you ever received a DUI?”

Speeding & Speeding While Angry

The Pre-Test surveys also reported that 62% of the respondents admitted to speeding to some degree and 21.8% claimed that they would speed while angry.

Cell Phone Usage

In 2001, 41.6% of the sample population answered that they use their cell phone while driving. Of those, 10.8% stated that they had encountered an unsafe driving situation while they were talking on a cell phone; and another 30.5% claimed that they had been involved in an unsafe driving incident while the driver of another vehicle was talking on a cell phone.

The results of all driving behaviors other than “*Seatbelt and Child Restraint Usage*” are listed in Table 13a.

Table 13a: Percentages of Seatbelt Behaviors in Pre-Test Surveys

Driving Behavior	%
Do you ever drink while driving?	11.3%
Do you use illegal drugs?	5/8%
Do you ever drive under influence of illegal drugs?	5.3%
Have you ever been convicted of a DUI?	3%
Do you speed?	62%
Do you speed while angry?	21.8%
Do you use a cell phone while driving?	41.6%
Have you ever experienced an unsafe situation while driving and talking on a cell phone?	10.8%
Have you ever experienced an unsafe situation while other driver was talking on a cell phone?	30.5%

Seat Belt and Child Restraint Usage:

Since the focus of the entire project was on assessment of seatbelt usage, a Safety Campaign to increase seatbelt usage at Langston University and a final evaluation to assess whether or not an actual increase occurred the survey questionnaires that focused on seatbelt usage are grouped together in this category.

On the survey questionnaire, the Project team asked the respondents how often they buckled up their seat belt while riding in a car. The results were divided into three responses: (1) Every time I ride in the car; (2) Sometimes; and (3) I never wear a seatbelt. According to the responses in the sample population, 70.8% stated they wear a seatbelt every time they ride in a car; 25.6% wear a seatbelt at least some of the time they ride in a car; and, 4.2% claimed to never wear a seatbelt.

Table 13b: Percentages of Claimed Types of Seat Belt Behaviors in Surveys:

How Often Do You Buckle-UP	Every Time	%	Sometimes	%	Never	%	Total
Response	119	70.5%	43	25.4%	5	4.1%	167

There were 58 respondents who stated that they had children of varying ages. Of those 55 respondents, 75.9% stated that they buckled their child in a child restraint every time they rode in the car with them, 15.5% claimed they buckled their child in a child restraint some of the time, 7% claimed they never buckled their child, and one stated that their child never rides in the car with them.

Table 14: Percentages of Claimed Child Restraint Practices in Surveys:

How Often Do You Buckle Your Child In A Child Restraint	Every Time	%	Sometimes	%	Never	%	Child Never Rides	%	Total
Response	44	75.9%	9	15.5%	4	7	1	1.7%	58

Spot Checks:

The Spot Checks results show that there was 2,595 adult passengers (including drivers) counted in the 1,807 vehicles passing through the university entrances. Of these, 1,650 passengers, or 64.8%, were wearing seat belts; consequently, 895, or 36%, were not.

Of the 55 children counted that could be seen riding in cars, 45 (82%), were sitting in car seats and ten children (18%) could be seen standing in the seat of the vehicle or standing on the floor of the vehicle.

Table 15: Percentages of Actual Seat Belt and Child Restraint Usage in the Spot Checks:

Seat Belt or Child Restraint Usage	Adult	%	Child	%	Total	%
Passengers Wearing Seatbelts	1650	64.8	45	82	1695	65.1
Passengers Not Wearing Seatbelts	895	35.2	10	18	905	34.8
Total	2545	100	55	82	1695	100

As stated above, there were 1807 vehicles counted that passed through the entrances of Langston University during the spot check. This may seem like a relatively small number of vehicles to pass through a University entrance during one week of classes. However, it is important to keep in mind that Langston University is located in an isolated, rural area. Most of the students live in dormitories and apartments within walking distance of the campus. This cuts down on much of the traffic compared to universities in urban areas.

Discussion:

The data results suggest that the freshmen at Langston University in 2001 were inexperienced at driving on both SH-33 and the rural areas of the Langston University communities. They were also unaware of the dangers involved in driving on this highway and its status as far as a safe roadway is concerned.

Of the above mentioned undergraduates, those who responded to the question, "How far is Langston from your permanent address?" most of the freshmen, and many of the sophomores, juniors, and seniors lived over 50 miles away before moving to Langston to attend classes.

On the other hand, most of the graduate students, administration, faculty, and staff lived closer. However, the data shows that similar to the undergraduates, very few of them were aware of the hazards and the dangerous status of SH-33 in 2001! Only one administrator, two staff persons, and *none* of the faculty rated it as "most dangerous". Moreover, there were only eight others from these three groups combined that rated it as "very dangerous", or "dangerous".

This may explain why seat belt usage at Langston University was assessed at only 64% and child restraints were only 82%. Both of these numbers were well below the national averages. In 2002, nationwide seat belt usage among African Americans hovered at 77 percent

(NHTSA, 2002). With the seat belt usage in the Langston University community assessed in this study at 64 percent, Langston's rate is 13% lower than the national average.

Statistics show that if a driver is wearing a safety belt; young children are also restrained 92% of the time. Child restraint assessment at Langston University was calculated at 82%; 10 percent lower than the national average (Survey, 2002).

Conclusion:

Awareness of the hazards of traveling on SH-33 between Guthrie and Langston was low, therefore, the project team decided to concentrate on raising this awareness. The strategy was to stress this danger by writing stories for the campus newspaper, *The Gazette*. Many of these stories were based on circumstances surrounding fatal crashes that had occurred on SH-33 in the past. Making sure to leave all individuals involved in the crashes anonymous, the stories were written in a "present tense" until the conclusions revealed they had happened in the past.

Another part of the strategy was to produce audio PSAs for the campus radio station (KALU-89.3), and producing video PSAs for the campus television station (KALU-TV3) to increase awareness.

The project team also planned to involve the freshman class at Langston University because the freshman class proved to be the most vulnerable. The project team planned to put heavy emphasis on reaching them as early in the academic year as possible.

This was done through the Personal Development Classes (PSD), which all freshmen were required to attend. The project team delivered a special presentation in Langston's G.W. Young Auditorium where the project team, (with the cooperation of the faculty and administration) had the entire PSD classes meet in an assembly. During this assembly the

project team discussed the hazards of SH-33 shared its crash statistics with them. The project team also handed out packets that consisted of plastic bags with a message about not littering on them and filled them with flyers, brochures and pamphlets with safety messages in them. Other practical items such as a state map of Oklahoma, “Send Help” signs, pencils and pens with safety messages, and rulers were also put in the bags.

Concentrating on the freshman class steered the Campaign Phase, however another area we saw the need for focus was with youth from 0-18 years. Many of the students as well as the faculty and staff had children; especially small children. The project team decided to focus on reminders for the parents to put their younger children in child restraint seats and make sure their older children used seat belts.

PHASE II: THE SAFETY FIRST CAMPAIGN

Introduction:

Beginning in August of 2002, the Project team was busy developing the Campaign Phase of the Project, which was scheduled for Kick-off at the beginning of the 2002 Fall Semester. The first activity involved conducting focus group sessions for input for the campaign. Members of the student body, faculty, staff and administration were invited to attend (See Appendix H).

During the summer of 2002, the Project team prepared news stories, a cartoon strip, six television Public Service Announcements (PSAs), and five radio PSAs for the campus radio and TV station at Langston. Langston's Chief of Security, two of Langston's star basketball players, and two star football players were used as narrators in the video PSAs (See Appendix D and E).

Additionally, PSAs contributed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety, and Langston's Personal Counseling Center were collected for airing on Langston's television and radio stations. We received 11 different tapes with as many as 4 different messages on each of them.

The Campaign:

All of the PSAs were ready for broadcast at the beginning of the Fall Semester, 2002 and were aired throughout both semesters. Some type of safety PSA, especially those designed by the Transportation Center's staff that dealt with warnings of SH-33, was aired at least once every hour during the day.

Likewise, the news stories were prepared and ready for print in *The Gazette* (the campus newspaper) at the first of the semester. Some of the news stories on the dangers of SH-33 were developed with the most likely occurrences and causes of past fatal accidents highlighted. To

approach it from this angle, the Project team acquired police reports through the Langston Security and the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety. These reports dated from 1984 to 2000. Using these real-life situations, the cause and the results of the accidents were described, keeping all personal information anonymous. These stories were written in present-time format to get the message across that these types of crashes can happen at any time.

Other stories were based on state car crash statistics or other causes of crashes likely to happen on SH-33 that did not occur in the traffic reports. Campaign activities and safety tips were also subjects for these stories. All in all, there were stories on SH-33 safe driving issues in *The Gazette* almost every week during the campaign (See Appendix D for examples).

At the beginning of the fall semester, 2002, a presentation was prepared for the freshman class at Langston University, informing them of the hazards of driving on SH-33 and encouraging them to use safe driving behaviors and seat belt usage. Our reasoning on making every effort to share this information with the freshman class as soon as the fall semester began was based on the rationale of the following situation.

Langston University is in a rural area, with SH-33 the only major highway connecting Langston to the Oklahoma City area and the surrounding bigger towns such as Guthrie and Stillwater. Additionally, Langston University is Oklahoma's only HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities). Many parents of Langston University's students graduated at Langston themselves and want their children to attend there. This is an important part of the African American culture. Many of these parents remained in Oklahoma, but a large number of them have moved to other states throughout the nation. Yet they are still very loyal to their Alma Mater.

What this means is that a large percentage of Langston's students are either from Oklahoma but from areas that are a considerable distance from Langston; or, are from other states entirely. Additionally, most of these students have learned to drive in urban areas. So they are not only unfamiliar with the hazards of SH-33, but also unfamiliar with hazards associated with driving in rural areas altogether. Moreover, most of these students are provided with automobiles to drive while attending college at Langston.

Consequently, when they arrive at Langston University as freshmen, they are at a serious disadvantage concerning these many hazards associated with driving on SH-33 and in rural areas. With the knowledge we possess of the imminent danger Langston students face traveling on this highway, and in other surrounding rural and unfamiliar terrain, we felt that it was imperative to reach as many of them as possible, and as soon after the semester began as humanly possible, and inform them of this vital information.

The project team made arrangements with the organizers of Langston's Personal Social Development classes, which are mandatory for all incoming freshmen. They agreed to allow us to present this material to the entire freshman class, which makes up over 500 students, at one time. During this presentation, we informed them of the knowledge we gained through the investigative study of SH-33, and the deadly numbers of students and others killed on this highway. Additionally, the project team developed and printed over 500 copies of a special brochure (see Appendix E). This brochure focused on the hazards of driving on SH-33. The project team passed out copies of this brochure to all of the freshmen, along with approximately 2000 trinkets, fact sheets, flyers and brochures that encourage good driving behaviors and seat belt and child restraint usage (many of these students are parents of very small children).

Safety First Week:

In late March of 2003 the project team reasoned that a special safety program would be advantageous, considering students get excited about the end of the school year approaching and the upcoming graduation. It was a strategic time, when reminders of the dangers of SH-33, safe driving behaviors, and seat belt and child restraint usage would be of great benefit for the entire Langston University community.

As a result, organization and preparation for Langston's first Safety First Week began the first week of April 2003. This was held between April 27 and May 2, 2003. This event was a major undertaking, which required tremendous collaboration between the Transportation Center staff, University administration, private businesses, and numerous state and federal government agencies.

Everyday between the hours of 9am and 3 pm we scheduled different safety presentations delivered by these various governmental and private organizations during the entire week. The Project team developed a scheduled Agenda, produced a flyer from it, and distributed over 100 copies to Langston administration, faculty, staff, the Langston Security, and all agencies and businesses who participated in Safety First Week with a copy (See Appendix E). The organizations involved included:

1. Federal Highway Administration
2. Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration
3. National Highway Safety Traffic Administration
4. Oklahoma Department of Transportation
5. Safe Kids Coalition
6. Department of Public Safety
7. Langston University Security
8. Langston Police Department
9. Logan County Sheriff's Office
10. Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office
11. Dean's Wrecker Service in Guthrie, OK
12. Logan County Transportation Department
13. Mothers Against Drunk Driving
14. Operation Lifesaver

15. Oklahoma Truckers Association
16. Homeland Stores
17. Walmart
18. Coyle Police Department
19. Oklahoma Highway Patrol
20. Langston University Personal Counseling Center
21. Langston University Early Childhood Development Lab

All of this activity resulted in distribution of literally thousands of safety materials among students, faculty and staff on campus. Child restraint usage was highlighted and four child seats were given away in drawings. Additionally, public awareness of the increasing dangers of driving due to the time of the year was raised and many recognized the seriousness of the situation due to displays such as crashed vehicles, a roll-over machine, demonstrations using goggles simulating driving while intoxicated, and graphic tapes regarding crashes due to unsafe driving behaviors.

During Safety First Week, Transportation Center staff collected *Buckle Up America*, *There's Just Too Much to Lose* signs from the Federal Highway Administration. Thirteen metal signs were acquired at first and Langston's president, Dr. Ernest L. Holloway, gave his endorsement that they be installed at strategic locations throughout the campus. Langston's Physical Plant employees installed all of them and then requested more. Twelve more were acquired from FHWA by the Transportation Center and delivered to the Physical Plant. As a result, at all of the entrances and exits and in the parking lots, Langston University now has these signs up for reminders to buckle up.

A direct result of the Safety First Week was the beginning of a relationship between Langston's Early Childhood Development Center and the Transportation Center. Since many of the parents of these small children were Langston students, LUTCE's Project team could reach many of them through the Development Center. This has gone a long way in sharing safety

information and materials that specifically encourage child seat usage. The management at the Child Development Center also requested that we search for any programs or materials that cover safety issues connected with younger children. In early July 2003, the Transportation Center staff went to work locating such materials and made forty packets, each with no less than 20 separate items of printed materials and delivered them for distribution. There was approximately 800 pieces of information distributed by way of these packets. They were delivered to Langston University's Early Childhood Development Lab during the week of July 7th through 11th, 2003; timed for distribution early in the fall semester. Materials were collected from the Oklahoma Highway Safety Office, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation.

Conclusion of the Campaign:

At the end of the fall semester of 2003, LUTCE's Project team concluded the Safety First Campaign. At the beginning of the fall semester, the Project team produced and distributed *The Hazards of Travel on SH-33 – Langston to Guthrie*. This brochure was designed to draw attention to the hazards of traveling on SH-33 in particular, and to rural driving challenges in general (See Appendix B). This brochure was initially distributed to all of Langston's freshman class at Freshman Orientation. Afterward, it was made available to the Langston University community in general.

Later in the semester on October 21, 2003, the Transportation Center staff conducted a Safety First presentation to the entire body of the freshman class during a Personal Social Development Class session. Using the G. Lamar Harrison Auditorium, with the assistance of the

PSD faculty and administration, the Project team presented practical information about driving hazards in the Langston University vicinity (particularly on SH-33) and unsafe driving behaviors. The Project team invited representatives from the Emergency Management Services and police officials in the surrounding communities and from transportation government agencies to share their knowledge of the safety issues that will be of concern to the students during their stay at Langston University.

During the week of October 21, Langston University's Personal Counseling Center sponsored Red Ribbon Week. This activity stressed the importance of not drinking or abusing drugs while driving. LUTCE's Project team assisted the Personal Counseling Center staff and student participants in this endeavor by scheduling presentations by representatives from various safety agencies such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), the Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office, and the Safe Kid's Coalition.

PHASE III: THE POST-TEST

Results:

Survey Questionnaires:

In the 2003 Post-Test surveys there were 188 responses in all with 147 returned from students, 26 from staff, eight from faculty; five from the administration and two who did not respond to the classification question. Of these, 186 responded to the question “How Long at LU?”. Of those, 95 claimed they had spent from less than one year up to four years at Langston; 54 of these 95 had been at Langston University less than one year.

Demographics:

There were 55 Post-Test respondents who had lived, worked, or attended classes at Langston from 0 to 1 year, which made up 29.3% of the entire sample population. Of these 55 respondents, 51 (or 92.7%) were students. The remaining four respondents included one faculty member (1.8%) and three staff persons (5.5%).

In the category that had been at Langston from 2-4 years, there were 95 respondents; 86 (or 90.5%) of them were students. There were two respondents (or 2.1%) in administration, 1 faculty member (or 1.1%), and 5 (or 5.3%) staff persons in this category. One respondent in this category did not specify a classification. This category made up 50.5% of the entire sample population.

Just as in the Pre-Test, the two categories that had the lowest number of years living, working, or attending classes at Langston University (0-1 and 2-4 years), and had the least amount of experience driving on Oklahoma SH-33 between Guthrie and Langston University, made up the greatest majority of the entire sample population (29.6% and 50.5% respectively). Of the 188 responses, 186 responded to the “Average Age” in the demographic category.

The category where the respondents had been at Langston University from five to nine years, totaled 18 and made up 9.5% of the entire population; those who had been at Langston 10 to 15 years totaled 6 and made up 3.2% of the sample population; and finally, the category that had been at Langston 16 to 20 years totaled 12 and made up 6.4% of the sample and those over 20 years totaled one and made up 0.05% of the sample.

Table 16a: Percentage of Sample Population's Length of Time at Langston University

Years at Langston	No. of Responses	% of Sample Population	% of Students	% of Faculty	% of Staff	% of Admin	*N/R
0-1	55	29.6	92.7	1.8	5.5	0	0
2-4	95	50.3	90.5	1	5.3	2.1	1
5-9	18	9.5	50	22	27.7	0	0
10-15	6	3.2	0	33.3	33.3	16.6	16.6
16-20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20 +	12	6.4	0	0	91.7	8.3	0
*N/R	1	0.5	1	0	1	0	0

*N/R = No Response

In the Post-Test, when we look at the group of responders that lived, worked, or attended classes at Langston University the least amount of time (from 0-4 years), 77.3% of them were between the ages of 18 and 24. In the 18-24 years group 37% had been at Langston one year or less, where 63% had been at Langston between 2-4 years. And when we look at the entire sample population, 55 (or 29.3%) of them had been working, living, or attending classes at Langston only one year or less and 95 (or 50.5%) between two and four years. Consequently, 150 respondents (or 79.8% of the entire sample population) had been at Langston less than four years, with 122 or 81.3% of this group between the ages of 18 and 24 years old.

These numbers emphasize there is still a need to concentrate on the freshmen and sophomores when encouraging seatbelt usage and safe driving behaviors; warning them of the hazards of driving on Oklahoma SH-33 specifically, and rural roads in general.

Table 16b: Ages of Sample Population and Years at Langston University

Yrs at LU	Age 18-24	% at LU	Age 25-29	Age 30-39	Age 40-49	Age 50-65	Age 65 +	Age N/R	Total Resp.	% 18-24
0-1	43	37%	4	3	2	1		2	55	29%
2-4	73	63%	7	4	6	2		3	95	48%
0-4 Yrs	116	100%	11	7	8	3		5	150	77%
5-9	6		2	2	3	1		3	17	4%
10-15					1	3		2	6	
16-20									0	
20 +					3	4	2	3	12	
N/R					1		1	1	3	
Total	122		13	9	16	11	3	13	188	

As in 2001, according to the survey responses, most individuals in the Langston University community in 2003 considered themselves safe drivers, whether they were among the student body, faculty, staff, or the administration. Of the total 188 respondents, 105 (or 56%) considered themselves a very safe driver, and 77 (or 41%) considered themselves a somewhat safe driver. This was almost 97% of the entire population. There were two respondents who considered themselves a dangerous driver; two, somewhat careless; and one, an inattentive driver.

Table 17: Self-Perception of Driving Behavior

Classification	Very Safe	Somewhat Safe	Dangerous	Somewhat Careless	Inattentive	No Response	Total
Student	78	63	3	1	105	1	146
Administration	3	2					5
Faculty	5	5					10
Staff	18	7				1	26
No Response	1						1
Total	105	77	3	1		2	188

Comparing the Post-Test responses on Question #24, which asked, “How Would You Rate SH-33 As Safe for Traveling on Over All?”, with the Pre-Test responses, there were some very interesting differences. In the Pre-Test, *out of 163 responses* (five did not respond to this question), 48 rated it as either “Safe” , “Very Safe” , “Safe Most of the Time” , or “Only Dangerous During Bad Weather”. This was 26.4% of the entire sample population. Contrasting that with the Post-Test respondents, (with seven respondents who did not responds to this question) 79 or almost 44% rated SH-33 as either “Safe”, “Very Safe” , “Safe Most of the Time” , or “Only Dangerous During Bad Weather”. So, the rating in the safe categories actually increased from 26.4% in 2001 to 44% in 2003.

And, where 33 respondents rated it as “Risky”, and another 22 rated it as “Unsafe” in the Pre-Test, in the Post-Test 43 rated it as risky and eight rated it as “unsafe”. Percentage-wise the numbers went down from 33.7% for the Pre-Test to 28.3% for the Post-Test.

Moreover, those who rated SH-33 as “Dangerous”, “Very Dangerous”, or “The Most Dangerous Highway in the State” in the Pre-Test totaled 59. Twenty-two rated it “Dangerous”, and 14 rated it “Very Dangerous”. These two categories (Dangerous and Very Dangerous) made up 22.9% of the sample population. In the Post-Test, we had 20 respondents rating SH-33 as

“Dangerous”, and 16 rating it as “Very Dangerous”, or 20% of the entire sample population. This shows that the percentage in these two combined groups dropped in the Pre-Test from 22.9% to 20% in the Post-Test, or by almost 3%.

Furthermore, in the Pre-Test only 23 individuals, or 14.1% of the 163 respondents, rated it as “The Most Dangerous Highway in the State”, whereas 15 (or 8.3%) of the 180 respondents rated it as such. So this category’s rating dropped from the Pre-Test to the Post-Test by over 6%.

As already concluded in the Pre-Test results, almost one out of three persons, or 30.1% of the entire sample population, rated it in one of the safe categories; and, over one out of three persons (33.7%) rated it as either “Risky”, or “Unsafe”. Consequently, of the entire sample population at Langston University in 2001, 63.2% did not view Oklahoma SH-33 as dangerous in any sense. Contrasting that with the respondents in the Post-Test in 2003, 42.8% rated it in one of the “safe” categories, and 28.3% rated it “Risky” or “Unsafe”. So, in the Post-Test, 71% of the entire population did not view SH-33 as dangerous in any sense. Thus the “safe” ratings was up from 2001 to 2003 by almost 8%.

Another comparison of the Pre-Test with the Post-Test in the SH-33 rating was length of time at Langston University. In the Pre-Test, those who were at Langston less than four years made up 76.2% of the “Safe” category; 100% of the “Very Safe” category; 72% of the “Safe Most of the Time” category, and 100% of the “Dangerous Only During Bad Weather” category. In the Post-Test 100% made up the “Safe” category, 68.7 made up the “Very Safe” category, 71.2 percent made up the “Safe Most of the Time” category and 50% made up “Only Dangerous During Bad Weather”.

On the other hand, in the Pre-Test they also made up the large majority of those who responded to SH-33 as being “Very Dangerous” (78.6%); “Dangerous” (77.3%); or, “The Most

Dangerous Highway in the State” (82.6%). In the Post-Test this group made up 87.5% of the “Very Dangerous” category, 75% of the “Dangerous” category, and 86.7% of “The Most Dangerous Highway in the State”.

Table 18: Rating of SH-33 According to Years Spent at Langston

Time at Langston	S*	VS*	SM*	U*	R*	D*	VD*	OD*	MD*	NR*	Total
0-1 Years	2	5	14	3	12	6	7	0	4	2	55
2-4 Years	0	6	28	3	26	10	7	1	9	5	95
5-9 Years	0	2	6	2	4	2	1	1	0	0	18
10-15 Years	0	0	4	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	6
16-20 Years											0
Over 20 Years	0	3	5	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	12
No Classification			2								2
Total	2	16	59	8	43	20	16	2	15	7	188
Total % of Sample	1	8.5%	31.4%	4.3%	22.9%	10.6%	8.5%	1%	8%	3.7%	100%

- S* Safe
- VS* Very Safe
- SM* Safe Most of the Time
- U* Unsafe
- R* Risky
- D* Dangerous
- VD* Very Dangerous
- OD* Only Dangerous During Bad Weather
- MD* One of the Most Dangerous Highways in the State

In the Pre-Test, the results indicated that as individuals spend more time at Langston University, they appear to become more knowledgeable of the dangers of traveling SH-33. Findings in the Post-Test survey indicate that of those who had lived, worked, or attended classes at Langston University less than one year 39.6% rated SH-33 in one of the “safe” categories, 28.3% rated it as either “risky” or “unsafe”, and 32% rated it in one of the dangerous categories.

Of those in the Post-Test that had lived, worked, or attended classes at Langston University from 2-4 years, 37.8% rated SH-33 in one of the “safe” categories; 32.2% rated it as either “risky” or “unsafe”; and, 30% rated it in one of the “dangerous” categories.

Table 19a: Percentages of SH-33 Rankings According to Time Spent at Langston University

Rankings	0-1 Year	%	2-4 Years	%	N/R	% of 0-4 Yrs
Safe	2	3.8		0		1.3
Very Safe	5	9.4	6	6.7		7.3
Safe Most of the Time	14	26.4	28	31	1	28
Unsafe	3	5.7	3	3		4
Risky	12	22.6	26	28.9		25.3
Dangerous	6	11.3	10	11		10.7
Very Dangerous	7	13.2	7	7.8		9.3
Only Dangerous During Bad Weather	0	0	1	1		0.7
Most Dangerous Highway in the State	4	7.5	9	10		8.7
No Response	2	3.8	5	5.6		4.7
Total	55		95			100

Table 19b below shows the percentages of SH-33 rankings according to those respondents who had lived, worked, or attended classes at Langston University *longer* than four years in 2003.

Of those from 5-9 years at Langston 33.2% ranked it as “Unsafe” or “Risky” compared to 50.1% in 2001, and another 22% ranked it in one of the “Dangerous” categories compared to 43.8% of those in 2001. In the “Safe”, “Very Safe”, and “Safe Most of the Time”, categories 49.8% of this group ranked SH-33 in one of these categories where only 6.3% did in 2001 (see table 12b).

In the Post-Test, of the 10-15 Years category, 66.6% ranked SH-33 in one of the “Safe” categories, where 50% did so in 2001; in the Over 20 Years category, 41.7% ranked it in one of

the “safe” categories; 42.9% in 2001. (There were no respondents in the 16-20 year group in the Post-Test, therefore no comparisons were made in this category)

In the “unsafe” and “risky” categories combined 33.2% of those who had been at Langston from 5-9 years in 2003 ranked it in one of these; (50.1% did so in the Pre-Test in 2001), as well as 33.2% in the 10-15 Year group in 2003 (0% in 2001). In the 16-20 Years group, there was 0% (25% ranked it in one of these categories in 2001). No respondents in the 20+ group ranked it in either of these categories in 2003, however 28.6% did so in 2001.

In comparison, 16.5% of the 5-9 Years ranked it in one of the dangerous categories (compared to 43.8% in 2001); 16.6% in the 10-15 Year group did so (compared to 40% in 2001) and 33.2% of the 20+ group ranked it in one of the dangerous categories (14.3% in 2001).

Table 19b: Percentages of SH-33 Rankings According to Time Spent at Langston University

Rankings	5-9 Yrs	10-15 Yrs	16-20Yrs	+20Yrs	% of 5-+20
Safe	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Very Safe	11	0%	0%	25%	13.9
Safe Most of the Time	33.3	66.6%	0%	41.7	41.7
Unsafe	11	0%	0%	0%	5.6
Risky	22.2	16.6	0%	0%	13.9
Dangerous	11	16.6	0%	8.3%	11.1
Very Dangerous	5.5	0%	0%	8.3%	5.6
Only Dangerous During Bad Weather	5.5	0%	0%	0%	2.8
Most Dangerous Highway in the State	0%	0%	0%	16.6%	5.6
No Response	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

In comparing the rankings of SH-33 in the percentages of the student body to those of the administration, faculty, and staff, Table 12b in the Pre-Test shows that 6.6% of the combined totals of the Administration, Faculty, and Staff categories (45) considered SH-33 as “One of the Most Dangerous Highways in the State”; whereas 17% (23) of the students ranked it as such.

On the other hand, among the Administration, Faculty, and Staff, 37.7% ranked SH-33 in one of the “safe” categories, compared to 25.2% of the students.

Furthermore, the combined totals of the “Unsafe” and “Risky” rankings shows that 34.1% of the students contrasted with 28.8% of the faculty, staff and administration ranked SH-33 in one of these two categories. And when we combine the three “Dangerous” categories, 37.3% of the students ranked it in one of these categories, where 28.8% of the faculty, staff and administration did.

Table 19c shows that two years later in the Post-Test 7.7% of the combined totals (41) of the Administration, Faculty, and Staff categories ranked SH-33 as “One of the Most Dangerous Highways in the State”; of the 142 students who responded, 7.5% ranked it as such.

On the other hand, among the Administration, Faculty, and Staff seven ranked SH-33 “Very Safe”, none ranked it as “Safe” and 16 ranked it “Safe Most of the Time”. This was 57.5% of the entire number of individuals who responded to this question (40) in these three categories. But among the students, 39.4% (or 55) ranked it in one of the three “safe” categories.

The Post-Test combined totals of the “Unsafe” and “Risky” rankings show that 30.3% of the students, contrasted with 17.5% of the faculty, staff and administration, ranked SH-33 in one of these two categories. And in the “dangerous” categories, 28.9% of the students ranked it in one of these categories, where 20% of the faculty, staff and administration did.

Table 19c: Rankings of SH-33 According to Classification

Classification	S*	VS*	SM*	U*	R*	D*	VD*	OD*	MD*	NR*	Total
Student	2	9	45	7	36	17	13	1	11	6	147
Faculty		1	5		1		1				8
Staff		5	9	1	3	2	1	1	3	1	26
Administration		1	1		2				1		5
No Classification			1			1					2
Total											188

Driving Behaviors:

Following are the Post-Test assessments and comparisons with the 2001 Pre-Test responses of drinking and driving, illegal drug use and driving, DUI history, speeding, and cell phone usage with the . For better organization and clarity, we have included a section on “Driving Behaviors” and grouped the main categories in this section.

Drinking & Driving

In 2003, 13.8% of the sample population claimed that they drank, or were under the influence of alcohol while driving compared to 11.3% in 2001

Illegal Drug Use and Illegal Drug Use & Driving

In 2003, according to the claimed usage of illegal drug use, again only students answered in the affirmative, but this time 9% claimed that they used illegal drugs from time to time compare to 5.8% in 2001. Of those, 14.4% claimed driving under the influence of drugs in 2003 compared to 5.3% in 2001 .

DUI?

In 2003 2.6% of the respondents in the Pre-Test answered “yes” to the question, “Have you ever received a DUI, where 3% claimed such in 2001.

Speeding & Speeding While Angry

The Pre-Test surveys also reported that 62% of the respondents admitted to speeding in some degree and 21.8% claimed that they would speed while angry. The Post-Tests showed that 70.2% would speed to some degree, and 23% sped while angry.

Cell Phone Usage

In 2001, 41.6% of the sample population answered that they used their cell phone while driving. In 2003, 50.8% claimed they used a cell phone while driving. In 2001 10.8% stated that they had encountered an unsafe driving situation while they were talking on a cell phone; in 2003 14% did. In 2001 another 30.5% claimed that they had been involved in an unsafe driving incident while the driver of another vehicle was talking on a cell phone; in 2003 33.9% claimed this.

Table 20a: Comparison of Claimed Driving Behaviors in Pre-Test and Post-Test Surveys

Driving Behavior	% in 2001	% in 2003
Do you ever drink while driving?	11.3%	13.8%
Do you use illegal drugs?	5.8%	9%
Do you ever drive under influence of illegal drugs?	5.3%	14.4%
Have you ever been convicted of a DUI?	3%	2.6%
Do you speed?	62%	70.2%
Do you speed while angry?	21.8%	23%
Do you use a cell phone while driving?	41.6%	50.8%
Have you ever experienced an unsafe situation while driving and talking on a cell phone?	10.8%	14%
Have you ever experienced an unsafe situation while other driver was talking on a cell phone?	30.5%	33.9%

Seat Belt and Child Restraint Usage:

Since the focus of the entire project was on assessment of seatbelt usage, a Safety Campaign to increase seatbelt usage at Langston University and a final evaluation to assess

whether or there was an actual increase, the survey questionnaires that focused on seatbelt usage are grouped together in this category.

On the survey questionnaire, the Project team asked the respondents how often they buckled up their seat belt while riding in a car. The results were divided into three responses: (1) Every time I ride in the car; (2) Sometimes; and (3) I never wear a seatbelt. According to the responses in the sample population, 70.8% stated they wear a seatbelt every time they ride in a car; 25.6% wear a seatbelt at least some of the time they ride in a car; and, 4.2% claimed to never wear a seatbelt.

Seat Belt and Child Restraint Usage:

One of the most significant categories of measurement in this entire project is the percentages of seatbelt and child restraint usage. These comparisons should indicate the impacts of the Campaign Phase. Given that the Seatbelt and Safe Driving Campaign was effective, the Project team looked for significant *increases* in seatbelt and child restraint usage and safe driving behaviors.

But according to the Post-Test surveys, percentages for seatbelt usage were actually *higher* in 2001 than in 2003. Claimed seatbelt usage “Every time I ride in a car” was down by almost 5% from 70.8% in 2001 to 66% in 2003; up for “Sometimes when I ride”, from 25.6% in 2001 to 33.5% in 2003; and down for “I never wear a seatbelt”, from 4.2% in 2001 to 0.5% in 2003.

Table 20b: Percentages of Claimed Seat Belt Usage in Post-Test Surveys

How Often Do You Buckle-UP	Every Time	%	Sometimes	%	Never	%	Total
Response	124	66	63	33.5	1	0.5	187

Again with child restraint usage; percentages for parents insuring that their child was buckled or in a car seat for “Every Time My Child Rides in the Car with Me”, was down from 75.9% in 2001 to 73.6% in 2003.

But when it came to claiming that their child was in a restraint “Sometimes”, the percentage rose from 15.5% in 2001 to 22.6% in 2003; and “I Never Put My Child in a Child Restraint,” went down from 7% to 2%.

Table 21: Percentages of Claimed Child Restraint Practices in Post-Test Surveys:

How Often Do You Put Child In Child Restraint	Every Time	%	Sometimes	%	Never	%	Child Never Rides	%	Total
Response	39	73.6	12	22.6	2			3.8	53

Spot Checks:

The results in the Post-Test indicate that the Spot Checks ran parallel to the claimed seatbelt and child restraint usage in the surveys. There were 2,237 adult passengers (including drivers) in the 2,210 vehicles that passed through the university entrances during the spot check. Of these, 1119 passengers, (or 50.6%) were wearing seat belts; on the other hand 1,091 (or 49.4%) were not. This was down from 64% of the passengers who were counted wearing seatbelts in the 2001 spot checks.

Of the 17 children counted in child restraints, ten (or 58.8%) were sitting in car seats for children and seven (or 41.2%) could be seen standing in the seat of the vehicle or standing on the floor of the vehicle. This was down from 82% of the children riding in cars in 2001 that were counted in a child restraint.

Table 22: Results of Actual Seat Belt and Child Restraint Usage in Spot Checks:

Seat Belt or Child Restraint Usage	Adult	%	Child	%	Total	%
Passengers Wearing Seatbelts	1119	50.6	10	58.8	1129	50.6
Passengers Not Wearing Seatbelts	1091	49.4	7	41.2	1098	49.4
Total	2210	100	17	100	2227	100

Discussion:

The results suggest in both the Pre-Test and the Post-Test that the freshmen and sophomores at Langston University are the most inexperienced at driving on both SH-33 and the rural areas of the Langston University communities. This is due to the fact that most of those who had attended Langston for less than two years were students with permanent addresses that were 50 miles or more away from the Langston University community. Both in 2001 and in 2003 less than one-third of this group rated SH-33 in a “safe” category, so many were also unaware of the dangers involved on this highway and its status as far as a dangerous roadway is concerned.

On the other hand, most of the graduate students, administration, faculty, and staff lived closer. Still, the data shows that similar to the undergraduates, very few of them were aware of the hazards and the dangerous status of SH-33 in 2001! Only one administrator, two staff persons, and *none* of the faculty rated it as “the most dangerous highway in the state”. Moreover, there were only eight others from these three groups combined that rated it as “very dangerous”, or “dangerous”. Similarly in 2003, one administrator, three staff persons, and zero faculty members rated it as “most dangerous in state”, and only three others rated it as “very dangerous”, or “dangerous”.

Another significant difference was in the numbers of the overall sample population's change in rating of the safety of SH-33 from 2001 to 2003. The overall ratings in the "safe" categories increased from 26.4% in 2001 to 44% in 2003; in the "Risky" and "Unsafe" categories decreased from 33.7% to 28.3%; and from 22.9% in the "dangerous" categories in 2001 to 20% in 2003.

Unfortunately, parallel to the safer highway rating drinking and driving, illegal drug use and driving, speeding, speeding while angry, and all three aspects of cell phone usage and driving increased from 2001 to 2003.

Finally and most importantly, both in the surveys and in the Spot Checks, seat belt and child restraint usage percentages *decreased* several points from 2001 to 2003.

Table 23: Comparison of Percentages of Seatbelt and Child Restraint Usage from 2001 to 2003:

Seatbelt or Child Restraint Usage	2001 Survey	2003 Survey	2001 Spot Check	2003 Spot Check
Uses Seatbelt Every Time	70.8%	66%	50.6	64
Uses Seatbelt Sometimes	25.5%	33.5%	N/A	N/A
Uses Child Restraint	75.9%	73.6%	82	58.8
Uses Child Restraint Sometimes	15.5%	22.6%	N/A	N/A

Conclusion:

In the Langston University community from 2001 to 2003, both seatbelt and child restraint usage went down while all of the negative driving behavioral factors that involved drinking and/or illegal drug use and driving, speeding, road rage, cell phone usage increased. This was despite all of the warnings and messages to wear seatbelts and put children in a car seat and avoid risky driving behaviors that were distributed during the Safety First Campaign.

Moreover, all categories of individuals that lived, worked or attended classes in the Langston University community had an increased perception of SH-33 as being a “safe” road and a decreased perception of it being “dangerous”.

This certainly is a curious phenomenon; however, one external, uncontrolled variable that occurred at the time of the study and campaign was the fact that the Oklahoma Department of Transportation began and virtually completed converting SH-33 between Guthrie and Langston from a two-lane highway to a divided, four-lane highway.

This may explain why the seat belt and child restraint usage at Langston University decreased, the negative driving behaviors increased, and the “safe” perceptions of the highway also increased during this time. With this changed perception of the safety of the highway, individuals may be relaxing their resolve to drive safely, defensively, buckle up, and refrain from alcohol and drug abuse while driving. This conclusion points to the necessity of continuing the campaign, bringing out these facts and the necessity to continue to drive cautiously and carefully; buckling up and avoiding negative driving behaviors.

There were a very small number of children counted in the spot check both in the Pre-Test and the Post-Test. The project team suspected one reason may be due to children’s smaller stature. Logically, if a child is not in a car seat or a booster seat it is difficult to see them. On the other hand, the small number of children counted could be attributed to the fact that Langston being a university, it is less likely that children of the students would be going there with their parents; unless of course the parents leave them at the Early Childhood Development Lab on campus.

On the other hand, there were some very constructive “lessons learned” as a result of the assessment, campaign efforts and the evaluation of all of these driving behaviors.

Most importantly, the Transportation Center staff recognized first hand the importance of the Safety First Campaign and the need to conduct it on an ongoing basis. Langston's Transportation Center plans to do this continuously, pointing out initially the overall relaxed safety precautions revealed in the evaluation phase of the project.

They also recognized the need to make concentrated efforts to reach the freshman and sophomore classes, warning them of the dangers of driving in rural areas, and drinking and drug use and driving. Also the staff recognized the need to remind them that they are inexperienced at driving in general and at driving in rural areas in particular.

Conducting Safety First Week brought many benefits. Its initial success helped the staff discover its value as an annual event. The first year it was implemented (2002) was so successful, the Transportation Center has repeated it every year since.

Safety First Week was also the catalyst that provided the Transportation Center with new contacts from government agencies both local and federal. It also brought the Transportation Center staff in to a closer relationship with various offices, departments, and student organizations at the University. We have developed and continue to develop many positive relationships; and the list grows with each passing year. We have also learned new ways to present materials and lectures, and these activities become broader every year (See Appendix B).

Also, new ways to reach Langston's students, faculty, staff and administration with seatbelt usage and safe driving behavior materials and presentations have been discovered with each passing year and we also learned the importance of expanding our efforts to include the surrounding communities, especially the elementary, middle, junior high and high schools.

The Transportation Center staff is now seeking funding to support its effort in this endeavor.

And finally, in 2002, nationwide seat belt usage among African Americans hovered at 77 percent (NHTSA, 2002). With the seat belt usage in the Langston University community assessed in this study at 63 percent, Langston's rate is almost 15% lower than the national average. Statistics show that if a driver is wearing a safety belt; young children are also restrained 92% of the time. Child restraint assessment at Langston University was calculated at 82%; 10 percent lower than the national average (Survey, 2002). Since there are many young parents who attend classes at Langston University, it is vital that we make concerted efforts to reach them with messages that encourage buckling up, conduct child seat installation presentations on campus, and assist parents in acquiring federally approved child and booster seats.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INVESTIGATIVE STUDY

SAFETY FIRST: A SAFETY CAMPAIGN ON A RURAL ROAD

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION:

Name: _____ Rank: _____

Agency: _____ City: _____

SECTION I: SAFETY PROBLEMS

1. How long have you worked for your agency?

- 0 – 2 years
- 3 – 5 years
- 6 – 8 years
- 9+ years

2. How many years have you been involved in traffic control or traffic-related work?

- 0 – 2 years
- 3 – 5 years
- 6 – 8 years
- 9+ years

3. In the past 12 months, how many traffic accidents did you investigate? _____

4. Please rank the following behavioral causes of traffic accidents (1 means the most important reason, 2 the next important reason, etc.)

- ___ Driving above posted speed limits
- ___ Driving under the influence of alcohol
- ___ Driving under the influence of drugs
- ___ Not paying attention while driving
- ___ Tiredness
- ___ Other (Please specify) _____

5. Please rank the following environmental causes of traffic accidents (1 means the most important reason, 2 the next important reason, etc.)

- ___ Driving in bad/inclement weather conditions
- ___ Bad road conditions
- ___ Curves in road
- ___ Narrow roads
- ___ Small shoulders
- ___ Time of day
- ___ Number of vehicles on the road
- ___ Other (Please specify) _____

6. In your opinion, what is the number one cause of traffic accident fatalities?

- Not wearing seatbelts or child restraints
- Impact of high speed
- Average emergency response time
- Impact of weather conditions
- Impact of collision
- Internal bleeding
- Other. (Please specify) _____

7. Please rank the following factors that lead to traffic accidents by young people:

- Inexperience on the road
- Risky driving behavior, i.e. driving too fast
- Driving under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol
- Not paying close attention to driving
- Road conditions (e.g., too narrow or winding)
- Other. (Please specify)

8. In your opinion, why are there so many traffic accidents and fatalities on State Highway #33?

SECTION II: Accident Data

1. How many accidents have occurred on State Highway #33 in your jurisdiction since you have been assigned here? _____

2. How many of those accidents have resulted in fatalities? _____

3. What was the prevalent age group of the drivers in each accident

- 18-20
- 21-23
- 23-27
- 27-30
- 30-35
- 35-40
- 40-50
- 50+

4. In your opinion, what percentage of accidents:

- a. Was due to alcohol? _____
- b. Was due to the use of drugs? _____
- c. Happened on a curve? _____
- d. Involved head-on collisions? _____
- e. Was due to speeding? _____
- f. Was the result of an inexperienced driver? _____
- g. Involved an out-of-state driver? _____
- h. Involved a Langston University student? _____

SECTION III: Develop Guidelines to Mitigate Common Safety Deficiency

1. Which of the following practices would you consider useful in reducing the likelihood of accidents on State Highway #33? (Please rank by number)

- Reduce speed limit
- Enforcement of seatbelt law
- Stiffer penalties for DUI
- Stiffer penalties for DUD

2. What would you suggest as a strategy for reducing the likelihood of accidents on State Highway #33 in your area? (Please list all ideas)

Although we are aware that you may have not been working in your designated area at the times these accidents occurred, we appreciate your efforts in answering the questions to the best of your acquired knowledge of them, and your ability. Thank you for your kind assistance and prompt response to this questionnaire. We value your cooperation and look forward to meeting you and working with you in the near future.

APPENDIX B

SEAT BELT QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRETEST AND POST-TEST

SAFETY FIRST – A SEATBELT QUESTIONNAIRE

DEMOGRAPHICS:

Classification:	Gender:	Age:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Student	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 40-49
<input type="checkbox"/> Faculty	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> 25-29	<input type="checkbox"/> 50-65
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff		<input type="checkbox"/> 30-39	<input type="checkbox"/> Above 65
<input type="checkbox"/> Administration			

How long have you been at Langston University?

<input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 year	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-9 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 16-20 years
<input type="checkbox"/> 2-4 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 10-15 years	<input type="checkbox"/> over 20 years

How far is your permanent home/residence from Langston University?

Do you consider yourself

A very safe driver
 A somewhat safe driver
 An inattentive driver
 A somewhat careless driver
 A dangerous driver

1. I wear a seat belt:

Every time I ride in a car
 Every time I ride in the front seat of the car
 Only during inclement weather
 Only when I drive the car
 Only on short or long trips (10 miles or less)
 Only on long trips (11 miles or more)
 On short or long trips only when I drive
 Only on long trips and only when I drive
 When I see a law enforcement vehicle
 I do not wear seat belts

2. Are you a parent?

Yes No (Go to question five)

3. How often to you buckle your child in a seat belt or a car seat?

- Every time my child rides in a car with me
- 50 to 75 percent of the time my child rides in a car with me
- 25-50 percent of the time my child rides in a car with me
- Less than 25 percent of the time my child rides in a car with me
- Never
- My child/children never rides in a car with me
- Other (Please specify)

4. How old are your children? (Please give the number of children for each age group)

- 0-4 Years
- 5-8 years
- 9-11 years
- 12 years and over

5. Do you drink alcohol?

- Yes
- No (Go to question 11)

6. How often do you drink?

- Everyday
- 3-4 days/ week
- 1-2 days/week
- 1 day per week
- Two days out of the month
- One day out of the month

Please remember before answering the following section that the answers to these questions will be used strictly for research purposes to aid in assessing the driving conditions of Highway #33 and the upcoming Safety Campaign only. All answers will be kept completely confidential.

7. Do you ever drive while drinking?

- Yes
- No (Go to question 11)

8. How often do you drive while drinking?

- Every time I drink
- Only if I can't find a non-drinking driver
- Every week
- Once a month
- 1-3 times every 6 months
- 1-3 times in a year

9. Do you ever drive while under the influence of alcohol?

- Yes
- No

20. In bad weather, do you reduce your speed while driving?

Yes No Sometimes

21. Have you ever been in a traffic accident when you were driving?

Yes No

22. What was the main cause of the accident?

- Driving above the posted speed limit
- Driving under the influence of alcohol
- Driving under the influence of drugs
- Bad weather
- Hit from behind
- Inattention
- Other (Please specify) _____

23. Have you ever been charged with a DUI?

Yes No

24. How would you rate State Highway #33 as safe for traveling on over all?

- Very safe
- Safe most of the time
- Unsafe
- Risky
- Dangerous
- Very dangerous
- Only dangerous during bad weather
- One of the most dangerous highways in the state

25. Do you use a hand-held cell phone while driving?

Yes No

26. Have you ever had an unsafe experience as a result of talking on a hand-held cell phone while you were driving?

Yes No

27. Have you ever had an unsafe experience as a result of a driver of the other vehicle talking on a hand-held cellular phone?

Yes No

APPENDIX C

SPOT CHECK FORM

**Langston University
Transportation Center
Safety First Project**

SEATBELT USE SPOT SURVEY

Directions: Please record your observations on this form. All you need to do is write down the type of vehicle (e.g., car, minivan, truck, van, etc.) number of passengers (adults, children), whether or not the driver and passengers are wearing seatbelts or if the children or infants are in restraints. Record the time and date.

Time:

Date:

Location

Type of automobile

_____ Car

_____ Minivan/Van

_____ Truck

_____ SUV

Number of Passengers

_____ Adults

_____ Children

Seatbelt Use

Adults wearing seatbelts

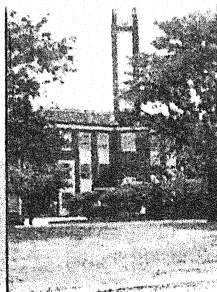
Children and infants wearing seatbelts and in proper restraints

Team members: _____ **and** _____

APPENDIX D

NEWS STORIES

Langston University
Langston, OK 73050



Herald

Volume 65, No 2

Sept. 19, 2003

Dangers of Highway Driving Still Persist in LU Community

By Kay Wachtstetter

It would seem since State Highway 33 is now a brand new four-lane highway from Langston to Guthrie, fatal crashes would fall in the "remote occurrence" class, and all at Langston could breathe a sigh of relief.

But this may not always be the case, when one considers the

driving behaviors prevalent in the Langston University area. According to a recent survey, there is still cause for concern, regardless of how safe they make the highway.

During the winter of 2002, Langston University's Transportation Center of Excellence conducted the Seatbelt Usage and

Safe Driving Survey, sponsored by Langston University and the Federal Highway Administration.

The measurement tool for the survey was a questionnaire with questions that covered demographics, drinking and/or drug use and driving, speeding, seatbelt usage, cell phone usage, and
(continued on page 5)



Victor Gray and Carla Dodd, employees with the Safety First Campaign, conduct checks on seat

Some Continue To Display Unsafe Driving Practices

(continued from page 1)
driving behaviors caused by unrestrained anger.

There were 196 responses to the questionnaire from freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, graduate students, administration, faculty and staff.

These responses reveal the

following possible tendencies toward driving attitudes and behaviors around campus.

Of the respondents, 43 percent said they had been at Langston less than one year, and another 34 percent between two and four years. Additionally, 63 percent of the respondents' permanent

residences were 25 miles or more away from Langston, with 85 percent of this group being students. Also, 42 percent of these students were freshmen.

What this means is there are a large number of individuals who live, work—and drive in the Langston vicinity and are unfamiliar

with the area, and with rural driving.

A spot check was also conducted simultaneously. Drivers and passengers were monitored at the entrances of the University, and listed according to whether or not they were using a seatbelt.

Both the spot check and the questionnaire indicated low seatbelt usage by the respondents at Langston compared to the national average, which is 77 percent. The spot check found that only 64 percent of the individuals checked actually used their seatbelts. The questionnaire shows only 51 percent of the respondents claiming to use seatbelts all the time.

Also, in the survey, 75 percent of the respondents reported that they drank alcohol; with 25 percent of them claiming that they drink while driving. Also, 25 percent of them said they only drink while driving when they cannot find a non-drinking person to drive the car.

One more thing to watch out for is speeding. According to the survey, many of those who answered the questions do speed, around 91 percent. What is disturbing about this is that according to the *Oklahoma*

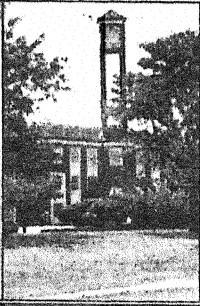
Highway Safety Office's 2001 Crash Facts, 27.6 percent of car crashes in Oklahoma were rural crashes with 27.7 percent of these crashes claiming, "driving at an unsafe speed" as the primary cause.

Another thing to keep in mind is to watch out for animals along the highway and drive very carefully at night. In 2002, 1,754 crashes in Oklahoma involved an animal, and 481 (or 27.4 percent) occurred on rural state highways. Plus, 1,292 (or 73.7 percent) of them occurred at night.

Finally, in 2001 there were 4,824 rural crashes caused by either an improper act or movement on the road, or failure to yield.

Several drivers and/or their passengers in the Langston University area have lost their lives in crashes on Highway 33 involving these two causes, including Syretha Penn, one of Langston's Lady Lions, just last summer.

Driving may be safer now that Highway 33 is completed, but there is still cause for concern according to the numbers. So Langston, please, "Drive Safe and Buckle Up!"



Unexpected Road Situations Pose Major Highway Hazards

By Kay Wachtstetter

He was a 61-year-old man from Kansas, traveling alone on Highway 33. It was approximately 7:10 p.m. on a Friday evening in July. It was still daylight, the weather was clear and the road was dry.

There were no foreseeable problems. The driver had not drunk any alcoholic beverages, taken any drugs; nor was he ill. It was early in the evening, so drowsiness was not a probability.

But there was one major unforeseeable problem. A curve.

He was driving west bound from Langston University in a small 1993 pickup truck. He approached the intersection of Post Road and Highway 33, just three miles northeast of Guthrie.

Probably due to inattention or unfamiliarity with the road, less than one-fourth mile west of the intersection he failed to negotiate a curve and the truck veered to the right.

There was no shoulder, so as the truck veered, it ran off the road and the driver lost control.

He jerked the steering wheel to the left, got the truck back on the highway, but it was still out of control and it swerved into the left lane. So, he jerked the wheel to the right, but too much.

post, ricocheted another 33 feet, and finally stopped.

The driver was not ejected, neither was he pinned inside the truck.

But he was not wearing a seat belt either.

He died from a head injury.

This is a true story and it highlights three major problems associated with traveling on Highway 33 from Langston University to Guthrie; drivers unfamiliar with a rural road and sudden curves, inattention while driving, and most importantly, nonuse of seatbelts.

The fact that the truck was intact, and the driver was neither ejected nor pinned inside says volumes. Had he been wearing a seat belt he may still be alive today.

According to the Oklahoma Highway Safety Office, the most current records show there were

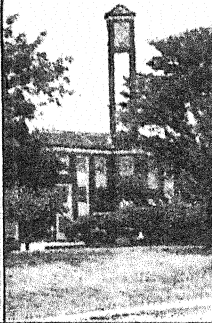
682 persons killed and 45,275 injured in car crashes in Oklahoma in 2001. Almost 65 percent of those killed were not using a safety belt.

Also, 28 percent of all crashes in 2001 happened on a rural road, with an improper act or movement as the main cause of 12 percent (or 2,547) of them.

Langston University is located in a rural area with a large number of its drivers both inexperienced with rural driving hazards and unfamiliar with the local roadways. These present unforeseeable problems.

Nonuse of a seat belt is a foreseeable problem. But fortunately, the best protection against serious or fatal injuries in car crashes is seat belt usage.

No one wants to become one of the above-mentioned statistics. The solution is simple, always BUCKLE UP!



Victims of Car Crash Unbuckle Seat Belts And Walk Away Safely

By Kay Wachtstetter

What follows is a first class case of what to do and what not to do to avoid severe and/or fatal injuries in a car crash.

It is 12:45 a.m. on a Sunday morning. Two cars are traveling eastbound on State Highway 33 approaching Henny Road, less than one-half mile west of Langston.

It is mid-November, cold and dark, but the road is dry and the weather is clear.

Both vehicles carry young adults ranging in age from 17 to 22 years.

There are two young males in the first car. The driver is 17 and driving under the influence of alcohol. The passenger is 19.

Neither is wearing a seat belt nor shoulder harness.

The second car carries a 22 year-old male driver and a 19-year-old female passenger, both apparently in normal condition (no drugs or alcohol), wearing seat belts with shoulder harnesses.

The first car approaches the second car from the rear speeding down the road around 80 miles per hour (mph). The second car's speed is approximately 60 mph.

The first car passes the second in a no-passing zone approaching a curve. Centrifugal force pushes it off the road.

It travels another 144 feet before the driver manages to get it back on the highway.

But it crosses the centerline in the pathway of the second car and hits it broadside.

It spins around clockwise and hits the south guardrail approaching the Fitzgerald Creek Bridge, travels another 46 feet, hits a tree, and is airborne another 18 feet.

It hits another tree, travels 60 more feet and lands upside-down on the east bank of the creek.

In the mean time, the second car skids another 64 feet and stops just east of the bridge.

The driver of the first car is pinned inside with head, arm and internal injuries. Once the emergency team gets him out,

Med-Flight flies him to a nearby hospital.

His passenger, also pinned inside the car, has a fatal head injury.

The driver and passenger in the second car, who are both wearing seat belts and shoulder harnesses, walk away from the crash, the driver with minor injuries and the passenger with none.

This is a true story, and it occurred on State Highway 33 exactly where it is stated in the story.

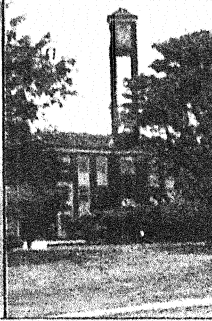
For the people in the second car, it was an unexpected but frequent driving hazard on the 11-mile stretch of Highway 33 from Langston to Guthrie.

Many times, people in a hurry give no consideration to the possible dangers involved in passing a vehicle. They not only put their lives in jeopardy, but also the lives of the persons in the other vehicle.

Clearly, seat belt and shoulder harness usage, nonuse of

(continued on page 7)

Langston University
Langston, OK 73050



Gazette

Volume 65, No. 7

Oct. 24, 2003

Failure To Pay Attention Leads To Motorcycle Fatality on Highway 33

By Kay Wachtstetter

Road conditions on Highway 33 immediately in front of the Langston University Campus give the false impression that this is one of the safest traffic areas around.

The speed limit is 30 miles per hour (mph), most of the time drivers are slowing down to turn into the campus entrance, and the visibility is good.

Still, it can be, and has been an extremely dangerous intersection.

A case in point happened when a 24-year-old male student on a motorcycle drove west on Highway 33 from the town of Langston toward the University.

It was 1 p.m., the road was dry, the weather was clear, and nobody involved was drinking, or taking drugs and driving.

But there was also the speed limit sign, which was not heeded.

As the driver of the motorcycle sped westward toward the east entrance of the campus at 60 miles per hour (mph), an 18 year-old male student in a white Nissan Sentra was traveling east (the opposite direction) on Highway 33.

The driver in the Sentra was about to turn left into the campus at the same entrance.

There was a car in front of the motorcycle. The driver of the Sentra waited for the car to pass, but did not see the faster approaching motorcycle.

The young driver of the Sentra then turned left into the campus and hit the motorcycle head on.

The man on the motorcycle hit the windshield headfirst and died instantly.

Although in this particular crash, it probably would not have helped, he was not wearing a

helmet.

The man in the Sentra did use his seat belt with a shoulder harness and so did his passenger. Neither of them suffered any injuries.

It was a typical Wednesday afternoon on campus. Students walked back and forth to class and many were there to witness the gruesome sight.

It was truly a sad day for the University.

Speed limit signs are there for a reason, no matter how safe it looks.

If only this driver had heeded the same sign that is in front of the campus today, he may still be alive, a Langston graduate with a future.

Drive safely; obey speed limits, and always use the required safety equipment.



Gazette

Reckless Driver Cause Death of An Unsuspecting, Careful Victim

By Kay Wachtstetter

One of the most tragic of crash fatalities on State Highway 33 resulted in the death of an innocent young female student.

She was only 20 years old. She was not speeding, drinking, taking drugs or driving unsafely.

It was, once again, a clear day, good weather, a dry roadway, and daylight, the safest of driving conditions.

Her speed upon impact was estimated at 10 miles below the speed limit. There was no evidence of chemicals or alcohol in her blood tests.

She was even wearing a seat belt.

This crash was one of those types of crashes where the victim had absolutely no control of the trail of events that occurred. She did everything the way she was supposed to do it.

Unfortunately, she still died a horrific death.

She was merely driving to Guthrie from Langston, probably after classes, on a Friday afternoon around 5 p.m.

She was traveling in a line of cars about two miles east of Guthrie when an unidentified man driving a blue car passed her and the car in front of her in a no-passing zone.

He was traveling about 60 miles per hour himself, what was at that time considered as an "unsafe speed".

After he passed her and the car in front of her, he nearly hit a car approaching him from the west head on.

The lady in the car heading east ran off the road to avoid him and traveled approximately 143 feet, got back on the highway, went another 32 feet, hit the young lady head on, traveled another 21 feet and came to rest.

The young lady traveled another 44 feet after the point of impact and finally came to rest.

She had everything in her favor. She was not going too fast, was in good mental condition, had a seat belt on and she was not knocked unconscious.

But upon impact, the engine of her car was knocked into her lap

and she was pinned in. It was impossible for her to get out.

Her car then caught fire and she burned to death.

The lady in the car that hit her used her seat belt and suffered incapacitating head and leg injuries.

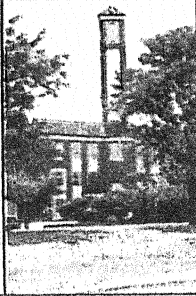
And the guy in the blue car that caused the wreck? He drove on and never looked back.

The only, and the most brutal lesson learned here is to pay attention. Watch what the cars are doing in front and behind. Do not follow too closely.

Look ahead, down the road. Pay attention to what is approaching if at all possible, especially when about to enter a no passing zone.

There are people out there who are in too much of a hurry and just do not care, or do not think about the dangers they are posing for others. Don't be their victim.

And don't let an innocent young student like this die in vain. Heed the lesson learned.



Homecomers Encouraged To Practice Sensible Behavior While Celebrating

By Kay Wachtstetter

This week marks Langston University's annual homecoming event, one of the major highlights of the academic year. It also spurs fear into the minds and hearts of parents, faculty and law enforcement agencies such as members of campus security.

It is the "best of times," but it can also be the "worst of times."

Homecoming is a time when Langston graduates come back to their "Alma Mater" to see old friends and family members, enjoy each other's company, talk about "the good old days," and admire the many changes and additions to the campus.

But on the other hand, it is a time when younger graduates and current students are in a "party mood" and take greater risks with their lives.

And they are also more inclined to party, drink alcohol or take illegal drugs and then DRIVE.

When it comes to the rise of alcohol consumption during homecoming festivities, Lang-

ston Chief of Police Algray Pettus said, "It's obvious it goes up because alcohol is just a part of the way we choose to celebrate."

But Pettus went on to add that although it is legal to consume alcohol if one is of the legal age, it is still illegal to drink and drive.

Plus, he pointed out that Langston University is a dry campus. That means that nobody can legally drink on campus grounds.

"Even I can't. Even the president can't. Nobody can legally," Pettus said.

If a student is caught drinking on the Langston campus he or she can be expelled or suspended plus suffer the penalties under city and state ordinances.

It is also a week when there are naturally more vehicles on the road—that is Highway 33 from Guthrie to Langston and back.

Alumni are coming and going to see the campus and visit, and students' parents are coming to visit with their sons and daughters.

In other words, it is a time to

use extreme caution when traveling this highway.

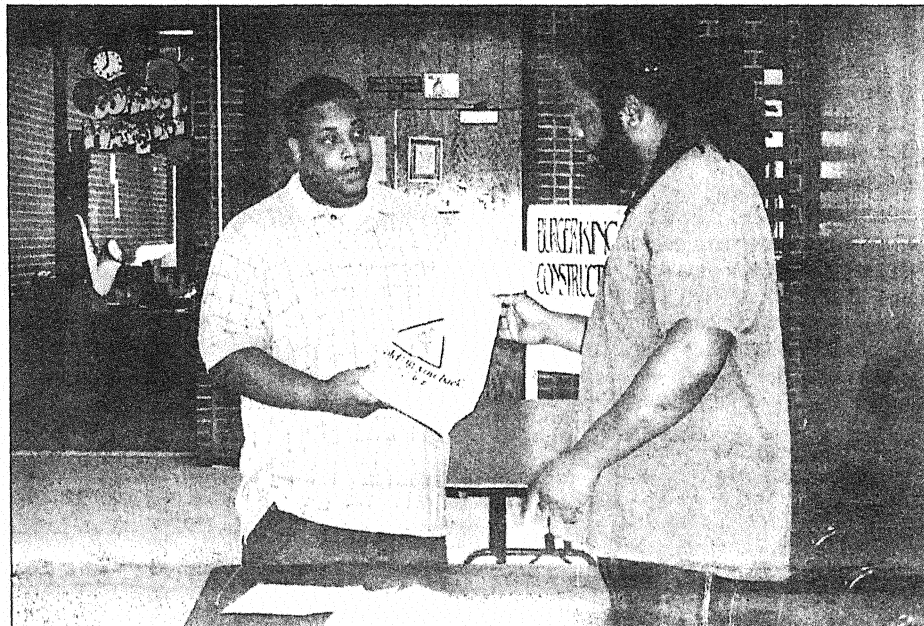
It is also a time to use caution on campus when interacting with each other. Many times, when individuals are under the influence of alcohol or drugs, they have a tendency to want to start a fight.

Pettus said, "Alcohol consumption leads to poor judgment which makes a person less tolerant of situations than in normal circumstances. This is one of the reasons for the dry campus policy."

Young people especially can get caught up in the festivities

and wind up in a bad situation such as driving when they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. But there are some precautions they can take.

For one, plan on taking along a "designated driver." This would be a person who ahead of time
(continued on page 10)



Victor Gray, member of the Safety First Campaign, distributes information to encourage safe driving by students, friends and alumni during their visits to the campus for the homecoming celebrations.

Designating A Drivers Can Make Homecoming Safer

(continued from page 6)

agrees to not drink any alcoholic beverages so he or she can drive everyone home safely after the party.

This person should be selected or volunteer far in advance so there will be no question that he or she will be drinking sodas or tea or coffee all evening, and will do *all* the driving.

Another precaution is to carry enough money for cab fare.

Also, don't be embarrassed to ask for a ride. It is better to get home safely than to wind up in a terrible crash.

And drink responsibly. Space drinks and wait at least a half hour after the last drink before driving. It is good to know one's limit because when a person feels drunk he or she is already past the point of being driving impaired.

But whatever the situation, do not drink and drive.

And for those on the road who don't drink? Wear seatbelts, watch the road ahead, strictly obey speed limits, and if a friend is obviously "high," be insistent in offering them a ride home.

Motorcycle Accidents More Likely To Be Fatal Than Auto Crashes

By Kay Wachtstetter

Motorcycle riding is often viewed as a relaxing pastime.

Many people own a motorcycle and consider driving it a pleasurable hobby and may even be a member of a motorcycle club.

However, motorcycles like any vehicle, can be deadly and have been deadly on Highway 33.

Although statistics show that younger drivers of motorcycles, like their younger automobile counterparts, are more likely to speed, drink and drive, not wear protective gear and take more risks than older drivers. Nevertheless, sometimes older drivers are guilty of taking these same risks.

And for crash victims of any age, motorcycles are still more deadly than automobiles.

A case in point happened to an older couple on Highway 33.

He was 51, and she was 48. He was driving and she was a passenger. They were traveling at the

posted speed limit.

It was a clear, sunny Saturday afternoon. They were probably enjoying the weekend, the weather and the opportunity for a motorcycle ride.

But one bad choice turned a pleasurable ride into a tragedy.

He was driving while under the influence of alcohol.

One mile east of Coyle near XXX Road on Highway 33 he ran off the roadway on the right, over corrected, traveled back across the highway and hit a guardrail.

His passenger was ejected from the bike at that point.

The bike traveled on another 108 feet before lying down on its left side.

Then it traveled another 346 feet, came to rest and ejected the driver.

The driver had non-incapacitating injuries to the head, arm and leg, but his female passenger suffered a fatal head injury, even though she was wearing a helmet.

According to the National

Highway Traffic Safety Administration's following statistics, motorcycles are the most deadly of all vehicles.

In 2001, motorcycles made up just two percent of registered vehicles in the United States and accounted for only 0.3 percent of all vehicle miles traveled.

However, motorcyclists were 26 times more likely to die in a motor vehicle crash than passenger car occupants, and five times more likely to be injured.

In 2002, motorcyclists made up eight percent of total traffic fatalities, and nine percent of occupant fatalities.

Also, 28 percent of motorcycles involved in fatal crashes collided with a fixed object, compared to 19 percent for passenger cars, 12 percent for light trucks, and four percent for large trucks.

Speeding, alcohol and motorcycles really do not mix!

In 2002, 38 percent of all motorcyclists involved in fatal crashes were speeding, almost

twice the rate for drivers of cars and light trucks.

Alcohol involvement was 39 percent higher for motorcyclists than for drivers of cars and light trucks.

And another thing about alcohol—motorcyclists involved in fatal crashes in 2002 had higher blood alcohol concentrations than any other driver on the road, and almost half (44 percent) of the motorcycle drivers who died in 2002 in single-vehicle crashes were intoxicated.

Some people may think that a helmet is not going to make much of a difference in a motorcycle crash.

After all, the lady mentioned above was wearing a helmet, yet she still died.

But, NHTSA says that helmets

saved the lives of 692 motorcyclists in 2002 and that if all motorcyclists had been wearing one, another 449 lives could have been saved.

NHTSA estimates helmets to be 29 percent effective in preventing fatal injuries.

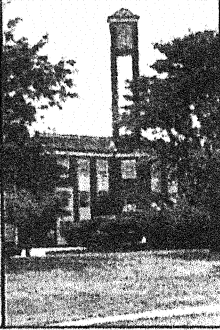
Granted, they cannot protect a person from most bodily injuries, however a recent NHTSA study showed helmets are 67 percent effective in preventing brain injuries.

Motorcycle riding can be a highly pleasurable experience, or a deadly tragedy. It's all up to the choices the drivers and the passengers make.

So, while driving or riding one, drive safe, don't drink or use drugs; and save your brain, wear a helmet.

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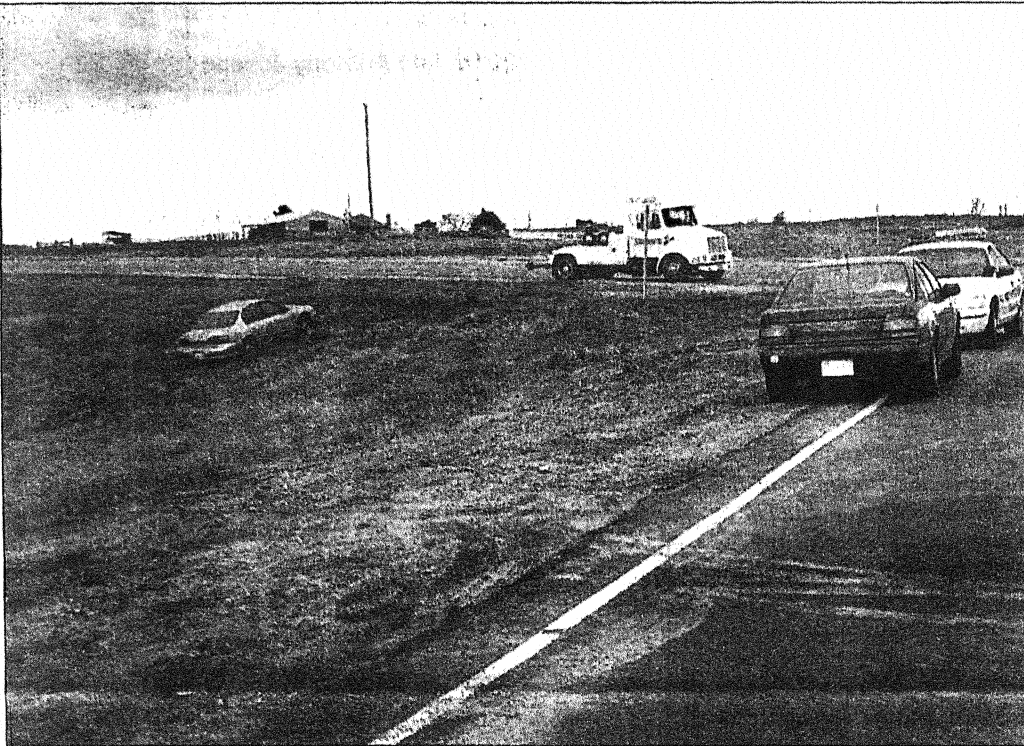
Langston University
Langston, OK 73050



Gazette

Volume 65, No 12

Dec. 5, 2003



Even though Highway 33 has been upgraded, A driver failed to obey the posted traffic speed of 35 miles per hour and ended up in the ditch needing a wrecker to pull him out when he found it impossible to negotiate the sharp turn where the old highway joins the new one west of the campus.

APPENDIX E

RADIO PSA SCRIPTS

PSAs

PSA #1

Did you know that Highway 33, the only pathway for Langston students to travel, began as a road used for cattle? Since then, it has come a long way and is now under new construction. But in the meantime there are many hazards, especially on the old part of the road. The number of accidents and fatalities are great among the Langston University communities. So please . . . drive safe while traveling to and fro. Remember. . . the only way to assure graduation is to live – and to live means you must buckle up and drive with extreme caution. This message is brought to you in collaboration with Langston University's Transportation Center of Excellence and the Federal Highway Administration.

PSA #2

An automobile accident can happen to anyone – anytime. Most accidents are caused by the driver's poor judgment. With the advancement of technology, more and more people are on the go. Consequently, more people are still preparing their day while driving. We at the Safety First Campaign are asking students to try planning ahead before you get in the

car to travel – or your travel may be your last ride. Please Buckle Up and Drive Safe! This is a message from Langston's Transportation Center of Excellence's and the Federal Highway Administration's Safety First Campaign.

PSA #3

Parties away from school are one of the activities most students enjoy. But many involve drinking and other social activities where students need to take precautions. Remember, Highway 33 is very dangerous at night with little or no lighting in most areas. So if you want to drink at a party, please plan ahead. Select a non-drinking designated driver before you leave for the party, or do not overindulge. That means one drink !!! Because traveling Highway 33 can be deadly and if you drive it while under the influence, you can easily become a statistic. Please Drive Safe! And buckle up – just in case the person in the other car is a drunk driver.

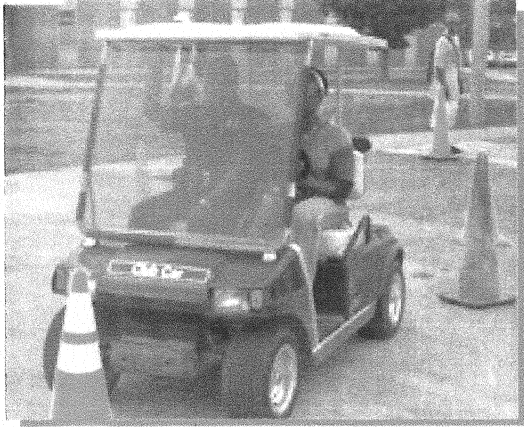
This is a message from Langston University's Transportation Center of Excellence and the Federal Highway Administration.

PSA #4

Have you noticed the blue and orange crosses that dot the roadside on Highway 33? These are memorial sites – areas where a fatal accident occurred, most of them involving someone from the Langston University community. Some fatalities were students leaving parties, some traveling to and from school, some just going to the store in Guthrie. Some were professors, others students and staff members at LU. Please pay respect to them, by buckling up and driving safely while traveling. It is so easy to make a tragic mistake and become another fatality. We want you to complete your mission here at the university and graduate. So please, buckle up and drive safe! This is a message from the Langston University Transportation Center of Excellence and the Federal Highway Administration.

APPENDIX F

SH-33 BROCHURE



Students learn effects of driving under alcohol influence with the use of simulated goggles.

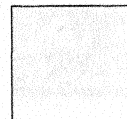
Leading Causes of Fatal Crashes Among Young Drivers Are:

- ❖ Risky driving behaviors, such as driving too fast;
- ❖ Not paying close attention to driving;
- ❖ Inexperience on the road;
- ❖ Driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs;
- ❖ Road conditions



“I have been concerned for many years about the loss of so many of our students in fatal car crashes that have occurred on Oklahoma State Highway 33 between Langston and Guthrie. Consequently, Langston University partnered with the Federal Highway Administration to promote the “Safety First” campaign, which urges our students to practice safe driving behaviors. This is because, we not only do want our students to come to Langston University to enroll and attend college, we want them to live safely while here, and to graduate. . .”

*Dr. Ernest L. Holloway
President of Langston University*



LU

**Buckle Up
&
Drive Safe**

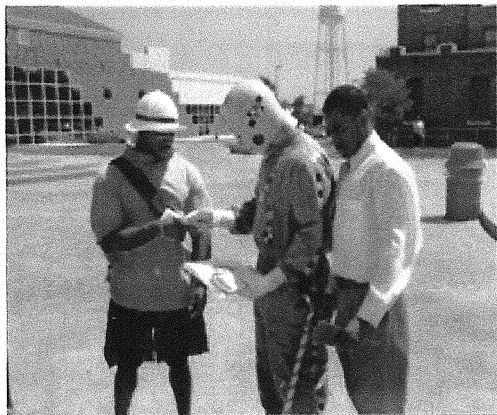
Langston University
Transportation Center of Excellence

Safety First Quick Facts Pack

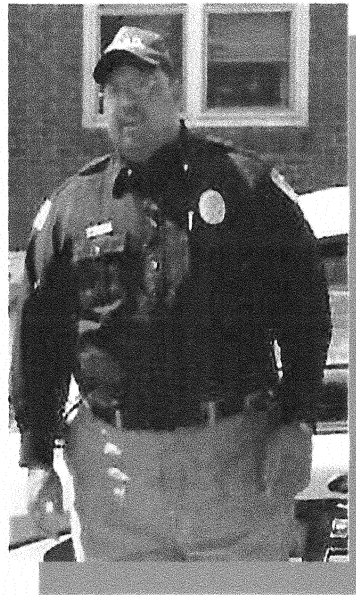
***Oklahoma State Highway 33 from Guthrie to Langston has been labeled as the most deadly road in the state.**

The Safety First Campaign, sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration and Langston University began Oct. 1, 2001.

Langston's own Transportation Center of Excellence implemented the Investigative Study for Highway 33 and the Seat Belt Usage and Safe Driving Surveys for Langston's campus to identify percentages of seat belt usage and safe driving behaviors among the Langston University community. This information was used in the Safety First Campaign, an effort to help reduce fatal crashes that occur on this highway.



Crash Dummies Promoting Safety First Week



"The main excuse students use when I pull them over for speeding is that they are late for class. But ask yourselves one question, wouldn't you rather be late for class than lose your life, or possibly injure or kill someone else in the process? Please, drive safe & buckle up"

... Chief of Langston University Security, Algray Pettus.

****Since 1980, 32 individuals have been killed in crashes on Oklahoma State Highway 33 from Langston to Guthrie.**

The Major Causes of Fatal Crashes on Highway 33

Driving at an unsafe speed

Failure to yield

Inattentiveness while driving

Driving while intoxicated

Improper Turns

Driving left of the center line

Following too close

Improper turning



Wrecked car of student trying to avoid animal

APPENDIX G

SAFETY FIRST WEEK AGENDA

AGENDA: SAFETY FIRST WEEK: APRIL 28- MAY 2, 2003

Sunday, April 27th 3:00 pm

Deliver wrecked vehicle to campus - Set up Displays

Monday, April 28th 11:00 am – 3:00 pm

11 a.m. Kick-Off! Welcome and Opening Comments: President Holloway
Crash Dummies; Setup & handout materials in Student Union Lobby (Under 21-Omega Phi Psi)
Show videos in Lobby
No-Zone Truck and Trailer (FMCSA)* – University Women's Building
11:30: Rollover Machine in front of the Student Union (OCSO)*
12 p.m. & 1p.m. Student Union Ballroom
Road Construction Safety (ODOT)*
Oklahoma Beautiful (ODOT)*

Tuesday, April 29th 11 am – 3:00 pm

11:00 a.m.: Crash Dummies; Setup & handout materials in Student Union (Homeland – Phi Beta Sigma)
Show videos in Lobby
No-Zone Truck and Trailer (FMCSA)* – University Women's Building
Operation ID (OCSO)*
Interactive Safe Driving CD & Related Material (FHWA)

Wednesday, April 30th 11 am – 3:00 pm

11:00 a.m.: Crash Dummies; Setup and handout materials in Student Union Lobby (Kappa Alpha Psi)
Show videos in Lobby
No-Zone Truck and Trailer (FMCSA)* – University Women's Building
2 pm: Student Union Ballroom
Under 21 Meeting with SGA, Fraternities, and Sororities

Thursday, May 1st 11:00 am – 3:00pm

11:00 a.m. Crash Dummies; Setup and handout materials in Student Union Lobby
Show videos in Lobby.
No-Zone Truck & Trailer (FMCSA)* - University Women's Building
11 am & 12 pm: Student Union Ballroom
Top Ten Mistakes Parents Make with Child Safety Seats (OSKC)*
Drawing for Child Safety Seat (OSKC)*
Presentation on Drinking & Driving (Intro to Simulated Goggle Demo & Crashed Car) (MADD)*

Friday, May 2nd 11 am – 3:00 pm

11:00 a.m. Setup and handout brochure and trinkets in Student Union Lobby
Show videos in Lobby
No-Zone Truck & Trailer (FMCSA)* - University Women's Building
Guthrie Fire Department
11 am: Student Union Ballroom
Presentation on Drinking and Driving (Intro to Simulated Goggle Demonstration) (MADD)*
Simulated Goggle Demonstration (MADD)* – Student Union Plaza

FHWA – Federal Highway Administration
FMCSA – Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration
MADD – Mothers Against Drunk Driving
OCSO – Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office

ODOT – Oklahoma Department of Transportation
OHSO – Oklahoma Highway Safety Office
OSKC – Oklahoma SAFE KIDS Coalition

APPENDIX H

FOCUS GROUP FLYER

Participate in
Focus Groups
For the
Safety First

Seat Belt Usage and Safe Driving Campaign

Focus Groups will consist of students interested in Creative/Technical Writing, Marketing, Public Relations, Acting, and Video/Audio Productions.

Focus Group Selections will be Friday, April 5, 2002
at Langston University

To Sign-up:

Sign list on the door of room 106 W in Sanford Hall in the Telecommunication Center, or contact Kay Wachtstetter @ (405) 962-1679, or Victor Gray @ (405) 962-1664.

Participants will receive credit for approved contributions.

Don't hesitate! Act Now and Sign-up!!!



