



SAVING LIVES
THROUGH RESEARCH
AND EDUCATION



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President's Message

L O O K I N G A H E A D

Friends,

As a longtime safety professional and AAA member, I was proud to join the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety in 2002. The Foundation's mission statement describes what matters most in our work: "Saving lives through research and education." There can be no higher mission for an organization. And the Foundation has a rich tradition of initiating ground-breaking research on important safety issues and translating the results into practical programs with real-world consequences.

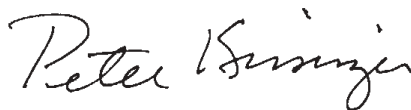
To extend that tradition, I've set two goals for the Foundation during the coming years—increased collaboration with AAA and CAA clubs, and increased impact for the Foundation's work. I'm pleased to report that we've made substantial progress on both goals in 2002.

This year, for example, AAA clubs became much more involved in developing our 2003 research agenda. They now have much more input in selecting proposed projects. As outlined in this report, much of the research that the Foundation will pursue in the coming years supports AAA priority issues, such as targeting impaired drivers, improving senior safety, and providing better preparation for teens behind the wheel.

Closer collaboration with AAA and CAA also gives the Foundation's efforts a more powerful impact. Evidence of this impact shows up throughout this report—in the joint AAA-AAA Foundation press conference announcing the results of the research on high-risk drivers, for example, and in hosting the new clearinghouse in support of AAA's senior safety and mobility priority issue. Ultimately, such cooperation extends the reach of Foundation's research and contributes to real-world changes.

I'm also pleased to report that the clubs supporting the Foundation through "roll-on" programs continue to grow. These programs, in which AAA members are given the opportunity to support the Foundation with a voluntary contribution, benefit both the Foundation and the clubs that participate. They provide the Foundation with its major source of funding, and statistics suggest that clubs with roll-on programs enjoy a higher renewal rate. Such support directly links AAA members with the Foundation's work to promote safety.

Although the Foundation has made great progress in 2002, much more work lies ahead. With a dedicated staff, exciting new projects, and clear direction, we at the Foundation expect an even more productive year to come. We remain committed to what matters most: preventing motor vehicle crashes and reducing injuries in the event of a crash.



J. Peter Kissinger
President and CEO
AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

In the time

it took you to drink a cup of coffee and look over the newspaper this morning, someone died on our nation's roads. In fact, traffic crashes claim a life every 13 minutes on average. By the time you go to sleep tonight, the total will have climbed to more than 75. Each of those lives is precious, and every one of those losses is preventable.



The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety aims to reduce that grim toll through research and education. We believe that there are no "accidents." Every crash that claims a life or causes an injury could have been avoided with better roadway design, better vehicle design, or—most importantly—safer behavior by the people who use the roads.



As a non-profit 501 (c)(3) charity, the Foundation receives its support from AAA and CAA clubs, club members, and other benefactors. Support through "roll-on" programs—in which AAA members earmark a portion of their dues to support the Foundation—provides the major source of funding. The growth of such support indicates the confidence that drivers place in the Foundation's pioneering research and education.

But the true measure of the Foundation's success lies in the real-world impact of its work. Despite its relatively small size, the Foundation is seen as an authoritative voice on traffic safety. Print and electronic media seek out its expertise. Lawmakers, policy makers, and educators rely on its research for informed guidance, both in the United States and abroad. For example, the Foundation's interactive, computer-based CD-Rom—driver-ZED—has helped to change the very nature of driver education.



To that end, it is worth noting that Australia, New Zealand, and most recently Great Britain have made ZED-like computer-based simulations a mandatory part of the new driver licensing process. And the Foundation's efforts reach right down to "grassroots level." Last year, we distributed more than 750,000 pamphlets, videos, and other safety products to AAA and CAA clubs, schools, community groups, and individual drivers.



In a review of the Foundation's plans for the future, three themes emerge: defining and solving problems posed by high-risk drivers, expanding knowledge and education for specific demographic and cultural groups, and making the driving environment safer.

Targeting High-Risk Drivers

Foundation-sponsored research has recently spotlighted drunk, invalidly licensed, and other high-risk drivers, revealing startling new findings and proposing effective new solutions.

■ Jump-Starting Progress Against DWI.

In 1995, after more than a decade of year-by-year decreases, drunk driving fatalities began increasing. The number of alcohol-related fatalities, DWI arrests and convictions, and percentage of alcohol-related crashes reached record lows in 1994 and hovered there through the turn of the century. Not content to accept “merely” 16,000 deaths in alcohol-related traffic deaths annually, the Foundation funded research to answer the question, “How can we rekindle the effort against drunk driving?” In *Drunk Driving: Seeking Additional Solutions*, the Preusser Research Group provides answers. Among its many recommendations, the study suggested strengthening laws; beefing up enforcement and closing legal loopholes at the state and local level; reinforcing public perception of drunk driving as a national problem; and simplifying and enhancing Federal grants to support effective state and local programs. Congress incorporated many of those recommendations in re-authorizing the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century.

■ Identifying Hard-Core Drunk Drivers.

Because repeat offenders account for a big proportion of the drunk-driving problem, nearly all states attempt to identify problem drinkers among first-time DWI arrests and direct them to appropriate treatment. Sponsored by the Foundation, investigators at the Behavioral Research Center of the Southwest took a hard look at these screening tests. Their report, *Review of Screening Instruments and Procedures for Evaluating DWI Offenders* (November 2002), concluded that even the best tests are not good predictors of future drunk driving arrests or alcohol use disorders—which is their primary purpose. As a result, problem drinkers return to the road to drive drunk, again and again.

■ Cracking Down on License Violators.

In 2000, a Foundation study reported that 20 percent of all drivers involved in fatal crashes did not have a valid license. A new report from Data Nexus, Inc., *Unlicensed to Kill: The Sequel* (January 2003), updated and extended those findings. It also examined which states had the most success in keeping improperly licensed drivers off the road and how they did it.

■ Evaluating On-the-Spot Suspensions.

Some Canadian provinces permit police to suspend the licenses of DWI offenders for 24 hours at the roadside. This on-the-spot suspension contrasts with the more time-consuming administrative suspension now practiced in many states. A two-year study funded by the AAA Foundation and conducted by the Traffic Injury Research Foundation will evaluate the short- and long-term effects of on-the-spot suspension in Canada.

Safety at Every Age

Because traffic safety affects people of all ages, the AAA Foundation has initiated research and education focusing on specific groups across a broad demographic spectrum.

■ Training Teens Better.

The Foundation's interactive multi-media educational software, driver-ZED, continues to win recognition as a training tool for new drivers. In independent test after independent test, it has proved effective in helping teens scan for potential hazards and manage risks. With the Foundation's funding and guidance, Global Learning Systems of Bethesda, Md., is now updating and enhancing this popular product to keep pace with advancing technology. Among other changes, the latest version will include improved navigation and new content focusing on hazards in work zones.



The AAA Foundation is also undertaking a comprehensive look at graduated driver's licensing (GDL). In a multi-year study scheduled for completion in 2005, the Traffic Injury Research Foundation in Ottawa, Canada, will focus on one state and one Canadian province, each with substantially different GDL provisions, asking whether crash data reflect the differences in the laws. Further, the study will examine the role of parents and driver education in teens' learning process—all with the goal of recommending how jurisdictions can fine-tune their GDL laws to further reduce crashes among new drivers.

■ Keeping Seniors Safely Mobile.

In September 2002, the Foundation and AAA brought together representatives of several organizations for a strategic planning session on senior safety and mobility. The meeting identified the need for a clearinghouse for ongoing research and other activities—a need that the Foundation will meet with **seniordrivers.org**, its Web site devoted to safety resources for older drivers.

Last year, the Foundation also produced and distributed *Blinded by the Light?* — a 15-page brochure about coping with nighttime glare, a problem that particularly affects seniors. The brochure responded to AAA club reports of a deluge of member letters about increased glare from high-intensity discharge headlights.

Looking ahead to 2030, when the population of Americans age 65 or older will have doubled, the Foundation is currently collaborating with the California-based Beverly Foundation to develop and subsidize a model supplemental transportation program for seniors. The project will examine large- and small-scale systems and create a pattern for successful programs to serve seniors who have stopped driving. Also, the Texas Transportation Institute is doing a Foundation study that analyzes data from 7 million crash records over 25 years focusing on age-related factors in general and senior drivers in particular.

In September 2003, the Foundation will co-sponsor a two-day national symposium on senior safety and mobility at the Transportation Research Board. Safety experts will identify the most effective current programs and opportunities for future research.

“We need to be sure that child passenger safety information is current, clear, and as understandable as possible.”

— Scott Osberg
Research Director,
AAA Foundation

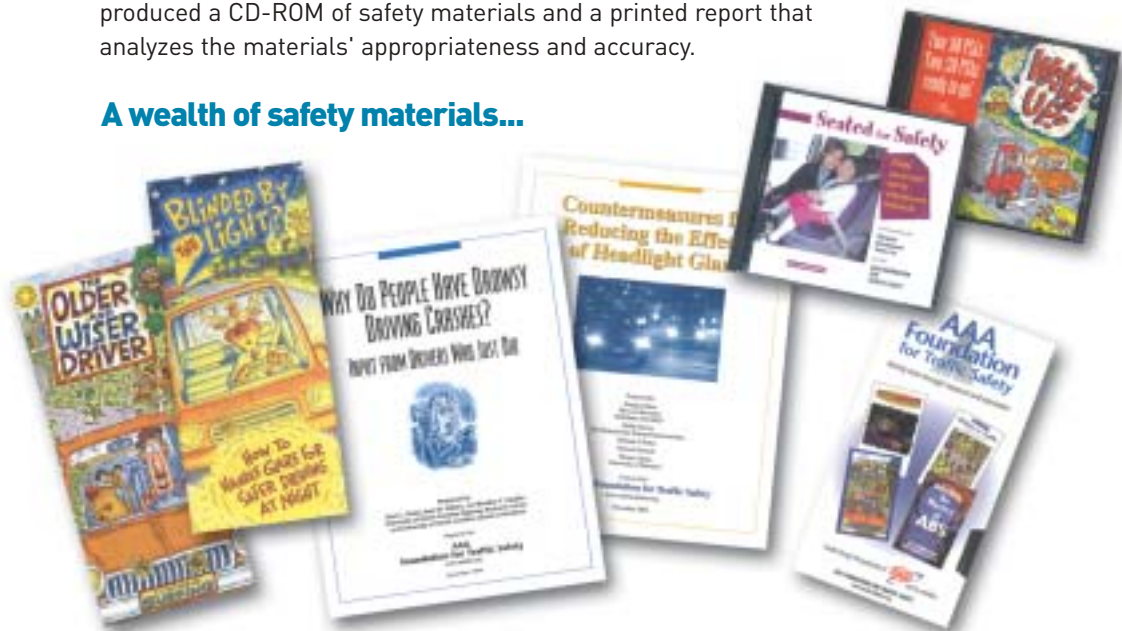


■ Teaching Parents Safety

Children are precious, and AAA Foundation materials help kids stay out of danger. The Foundation's best-selling video, "Children in Traffic," shows children's unique perceptions and behaviors, and explains what drivers can do to avoid harming a child. The Foundation also has produced numerous videos aimed at children themselves. "At Your Post" educates safety patrols about their responsibilities, including recognizing when it is safe to have younger kids cross and knowing what to do in emergencies. "Biking—Get the Big Picture" offers tips on bicycle safety and shows how cyclists should share the road. Finally, since many children ride school buses and may need to evacuate in an emergency, the AAA Foundation made three versions of "The Safest Way Out" video—one for children, one for school bus drivers, and one for drivers of special-needs students.

The AAA Foundation's Seated for Safety project identified child passenger safety educational materials that covered a broad range of topics, including child safety seats, safety belts, seating position, air bags, and child weight issues. The results produced a CD-ROM of safety materials and a printed report that analyzes the materials' appropriateness and accuracy.

A wealth of safety materials...



A Safer Driving Environment

Foundation-sponsored research examines how the environment affects driver behavior. Specifically, how can all users share the road more safely? How do factors inside and outside the vehicle influence safety?

■ **Highlighting the deadliest mistakes in car-truck crashes.**

In April 2002, the Foundation released a report it funded at the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute on driver errors that lead to fatal car-truck crashes. The study identified not only the most common mistakes (failure to stay in one's lane, failure to yield, and excessive speed), but also the best educational strategies to correct them. With more trucks expected to log more miles in the coming years, this research provides valuable insight and focus for safety education.

In further research on interactions between cars and trucks, the Texas Transportation Institute has completed evaluations of devices that purport to reduce splash and spray from big trucks on wet roads. And Intus Road Safety Engineering, Inc., of Ontario, Canada, is examining for the Foundation the relationship between crashes and road debris, such as fallen cargo and detached tire treads, and is examining how public agencies manage programs to deal with road debris.



■ **Delving deeper into distractions.**

The University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center has completed Phase II of the Foundation's long-term study of driver distractions. The work involves videotaping drivers and evaluating the relative importance of various actions and incidents that divert their attention from the driving task.

■ **Improving Spanish-language education.**

Recognizing that Hispanics are over-represented in many crash categories, Foundation-sponsored research will evaluate educational materials available in Spanish for cultural appropriateness, with an eye toward developing guidelines for future traffic safety education materials.



The Foundation Online— A “Hit” With Road Users



aaafoundation.org
Well over 15 million hits last year!



seniordrivers.org
*1.5 million hits last year—
Up 500 percent from 2001!*

■ Reaching Road Users on the Web

Interest in the Foundation’s Web sites—**aaafoundation.org**, **seniordrivers.org**, and **driverzed.org**—continues to grow dramatically. Last year, **aaafoundation.org** logged well over 15 million hits, 90 percent more than it did in 2001. Not only did the site attract more visitors, but those visitors also viewed more pages. As one indication of the depth and breadth of the site’s appeal, page views approached 2 million in 2002, a growth rate of 62 percent compared with 2001. Visitors to the site can find a variety of valuable information, including the complete text of research reports, current and archived press releases, traffic safety news, practical safety tips, and engaging quizzes for all road users.

In addition, Web surfers can browse the Foundation’s catalog of traffic safety materials. Recent enhancements include the addition of an on-line “shopping cart” to make ordering by credit card more convenient. The educational CD-ROM driver-ZED remains the Foundation’s number one seller.

The Foundation’s on-line resource for older drivers, **seniordrivers.org**, has also shown remarkable year-by-year growth since its launch in 2000. Last year, the site recorded nearly 1.5 million hits, over 190,000 page views, and more than 73,000 visitor sessions. The last yardstick represents an increase of more than 500 percent compared with 2001. The site offers fitness tips to help older drivers maintain strength and flexibility, behind-the-wheel safety skills, long-distance travel advice, and other information especially useful to seniors.

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Recently Released Foundation Research

- **Drunk Driving: Seeking Additional Solutions** (July 2001), James H. Hedlund and Anne T. McCartt, Preusser Research Group
- **Unsafe Driver Actions That Lead to Fatal Car-Truck Crashes** (April 2002), Lidia P. Kostyniuk, Frederick M. Streff, and Jennifer Zakrajsek, University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute
- **Seated for Safety** (May 2002), Julie B. Ross, Susan S. Gallagher, Jeannette Hudson, and Christine Miara, Educational Development Center, Inc.
- **Review of Screening Instruments and Procedures for Evaluating DWI Offenders** (November 2002), Iyjin Chang, Cindy Gregory, and Sandra C. Lapham, Behavioral Research Center of the Southwest
- **Unlicensed to Kill: The Sequel** (January 2003), Robert A. Scopatz, Clayton E. Hatch, Barbara Hilger DeLucia, and Kelley A. Tays, Data Nexus, Inc.
- **Distractions in Everyday Driving** (June 2003) Jane Stutts, Ph.D., John Feaganes, Eric Rodgman, Charles Hamlett, Thomas Meadows, and Donald Reinfurt, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Highway Safety Research Center; Kenneth Gish, Michael Mercadante, and Loren Staplin, TransAnalytics, LLC
- **Evaluation of Splash and Spray Suppression Devices on Large Trucks During Wet Weather** (July 2003), Michael P. Manser, Ph.D, University of Minnesota; Rodger Koppa, Texas A&M; and Peter Mousley, Royal Institute of Technology

Research in Progress

Foundation-funded research is currently investigating the following topics:

- Supplemental Transportation Programs for Seniors
- Role of Driver Age in Injury Crashes
- Speed-Reducing Pavement Markings
- Reducing Crash Risk for Young Drivers
- Short-term Licence Suspensions for Drinking-Driving
- Vehicle-related Road Debris
- Traffic Safety Education Materials for Hispanics



Founded in 1947, the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety is a not-for-profit, publicly supported charitable research and education organization dedicated to saving lives and reducing injuries by preventing or minimizing traffic crashes. It is supported by voluntary contributions from AAA, CAA, and their affiliated motor clubs, individual AAA members, AAA-affiliated insurance companies, and others.



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