

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety PROGRESS REPORT

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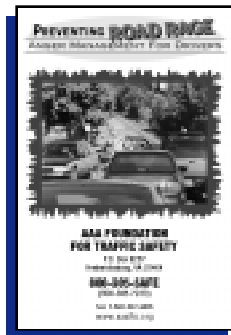
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PREVENTING ROAD RAGE: NEW VIDEO SHOWS HOW

When drivers get stressed out, they can harm other people, or even harm themselves. The Foundation's new video, *Preventing Road Rage — Anger Management for Drivers*, teaches angry motorists to be calmer, more polite, and safer drivers. Designed to be used either by individuals or in classrooms, the video relates the story of Bill and Carl, two people with very different driving styles. Bill gets angry when things don't go his way, honking his horn and competing for space with other drivers. Carl, in contrast, remains calm and takes traffic stress in stride.

Using the two drivers as examples, the video helps viewers look at stress in their own lives. It urges them to think about how they manage stress while driving and explains that drivers often get angry because their belief system is challenged. By changing their basic assumptions about how driving ought to be, drivers can reduce stress and make driving more pleasant for themselves and their passengers.

The video also offers personal stories from reformed drivers, who talk about their own histories of angry driving and explain why they changed their behavior and how the change helped them. The video urges drivers to forget about "making good time," and concentrate on "making time good" — to make the time spent in the car as pleasant as possible.



Copies of the video are available to individuals for a tax-deductible donation of at least \$36 to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, 1440 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

Donations for *Preventing Road Rage* are fully tax-deductible under US law. Schools, government agencies, and other non-profits pay \$40.00



for each video plus \$7.50 shipping and handling per order, regardless of quantity. Commercial businesses pay \$60.00 per video plus \$7.50 shipping and handling per order.

TEST SHOWS TEENS LEARN FROM DRIVER-ZED

For many years, novice driver education has been under attack for being ineffective in producing safer drivers. **driver-ZED** addresses this problem by developing the visual and decision-making skills needed to manage driving risks.

driver-ZED has now been evaluated under real driving conditions and has been shown to produce statistically significant improvements in the risk management skills of young teen drivers.

A test at Windsor High School, Windsor, Vermont, involved 38 students, aged 15 to 18, who were enrolled in the final phase of a high school driver education course. The students were divided into two groups. One group completed the driver-ZED program and the other did not. Both groups then drove the same route over city streets with the same instructor, who did

— continued on page 2

INSIDE:

<i>What Keeps Drivers Awake?</i>	2
<i>Safety Fair Features driver-ZED</i>	2
<i>RU OK 4 Y2K?</i>	3
<i>driver-ZED Wins Golden Eagle</i>	4

DRIVER-ZED—from page 1

not know which students had used the program. (The second group later completed driver-ZED so as not to miss out on its benefits.)

In Vermont, driver educators assess their students by using "commentary driving." Students are trained to say what they are doing when they do it, and to search the driving environ-

ment by breaking it into a series of zones. These zones define specific areas in the driver's field of view, including side and rear-view mirrors. The instructor gives the students "visual demerits" by adding points for missed targets. The higher the number of visual demerits, the poorer the student's performance.

Students who completed driver-ZED scored far fewer visual demerits than those who did not take the program. The average (mean) number of demerits for driver-ZED-trained students was 5.73, while untrained students averaged 18.26. This is a dramatic difference: Odds are less than 1 in 1,000 that this result was due to chance. (That's $p < .001$, for those of you who took statistics.)

Students also liked driver-ZED, rating it 7.9 on a scale of 1 to 10. Nearly three out of four (74%) of the students who completed driver-ZED said they would recommend it to their friends. Only 11 percent said they would not.

The evaluation of driver-ZED was conducted for the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety by InterScience America, Inc., Leesburg, VA, and was completed in July of 1998.

WHAT KEEPS DRIVERS AWAKE? HINT: JOHN Q. PUBLIC IS WRONG

What helps keep drowsy drivers awake?

While the public is aware of how dangerous drowsy driving can be, a new study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety suggests that they don't know what to do about it.

"It's good that people know drowsy driving is dangerous," says Foundation president David K.

Willis, "but their favorite ways of solving the problem don't work." Survey respondents who were not sleep professionals favored such ineffective measures as rolling down the window, looking at scenery, and listening to the radio or a tape. "A lot of people think taking your shoes off wakes you up," Willis says. "But it doesn't do anything about your driving. Some strategies, like rolling down the window, make you feel more alert but don't actually improve your driving performance."

Sleep researchers ranked napping as the single most important strategy for regaining alertness. The best way to cure sleepiness is by sleeping. Caffeine and exercise also help. "Drivers who feel sleepy should nap for half an hour, get some exercise to avoid grogginess, and then use caffeine for maximum alertness," Willis says.

SAFETY FAIR FEATURES DRIVER-ZED

More than 1,500 high school seniors from 11 high schools gathered for the third annual Niagara Legislature Traffic Fair. The week-long program on traffic safety issues took place from May 11-15 at the Niagara Falls Air Force Base in Niagara Falls, New York.

Participants were able to view a New York State Police skill-driving course, hear from a victim impact panel about DWI, and witness a

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simulated automobile crash and emergency response. They were also introduced to the driver-ZED program — a chance to test and improve their awareness of traffic hazards on a realistic computer program.

AAA Western and Central New York exhibited the interactive risk management CD ROM during the fair, along with MADD, the Niagara County Sheriff's Department, the New York State Police, and STOP DWI. Each day students from different high schools were split up and allowed to work through driver-ZED. Three stations were set up where groups of 10 students could practice, using computers generously donated by the Air Force base.

"The AAA driver-ZED simulated driving experience made many students stop and think about their own skills and abilities," said Carol Harding, public relations assistant for AAA Western and Central New York. "Student participants challenged their decisionmaking skills on the roadway and realized that mistakes happen." Fortunately, those mistakes were on a computer screen, not on the roadways.

Administrators were very interested in purchasing the program for school libraries and driver education programs. "The kids loved it. We were very pleased," Harding said. For an informational brochure about the program, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to driver-ZED at the Foundation, or order the program from 1-800-305-SAFE.

—Joshua Poole

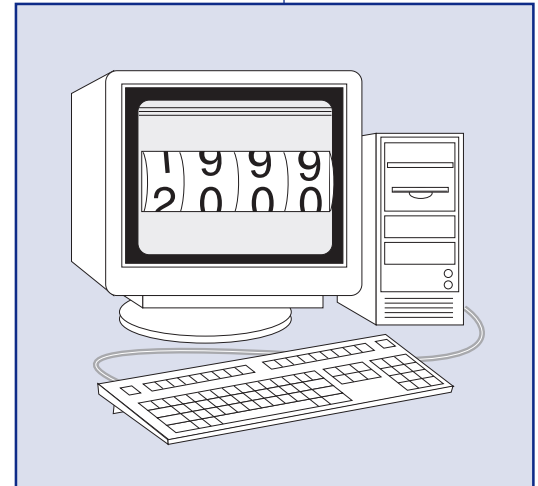
RU OK 4 Y2K?

Will New Year's Eve two years from now affect traffic safety more than usual? The U.S. Department of Transportation thinks it may. On July 27, 1998, they hosted a summit on possible traffic safety hazards caused by computers and other devices that can't cope with dates after December 31, 1999 — the so-called "Year 2000" or "Y2K" problem. Hence the headline question: "Are You OK for Y2K?"

Apparently the answer in many municipalities is "No." At this meeting it was asserted that over 50 percent of municipalities had yet to address Y2K issues, even though the millennium is less than 500 days away.

Why could this failure to act pose traffic safety hazards?

- Computers run many modern traffic control systems. Computers time traffic signals, ramp metering signals, reversible lane and HOV signs, etc. If these devices aren't Y2K-ready, they could malfunction at 12:00.00 a.m. on January 1, 2000, snarling traffic nationwide and possibly causing a myriad of crashes.
- Y2K-related problems may occur even before then. The dates of April 9, 1999 and September 9, 1999 pose particular problems, since both could be coded as "9999." (April 9 is the 99th day in 1999.) The sequence "9999" is treated as an error code by some software and could cause applications to shut down.
- Date and time processing routines may be embedded in computer chips in traffic controllers and other devices, and thus be impossible to fix through software changes. Repairing the problem would require replacing either the chip or the entire device before January 1, 2000.



What should state and local officials be doing?

Here are six questions to ask:

1. Has the agency completed an assessment of Year 2000 compliance for all its information processing, data communications, and operational transportation systems?
2. Has the assessment included "embedded processors" such as computer chips in traffic signal controllers, bridges with moveable spans, 911 call centers, automobile identification systems such as toll tags and readers, and other transportation-related systems?
3. Does the agency have a comprehensive Year 2000 problem correction program underway that assigns specific responsibility for corrective action, along with a timetable for testing, fixing, and evaluating critical systems — all well before January 1, 2000?
4. Has the agency allocated financial and personnel resources for its Y2K program, and

– continued on page 4

RU OK 4 Y2K?—from page 3

are its efforts to evaluate, renovate, validate, and implement Year 2000 fixes on schedule?

5. What reporting procedures are in place to ensure timely progress towards compliance?
6. On what date will all critical systems be "Y2K compliant," for certain?

These questions are adapted from the Federal Highway Administration's "Year 2000 Questions to Ask," as listed at FHWA's web site: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/y2k/9801qstn.htm>

DRIVER-ZED WINS GOLDEN EAGLE

The Foundation's popular CD-ROM, driver-ZED, has won a prestigious CINE Golden Eagle award.

The driver-ZED program placed first in the category for "public health - prevention." "This

award verifies our hunch that we broke new ground within our industry," says Deborah Blank. Blank is director of interactive multimedia for Electronic Learning Facilitators, the company that developed and integrated the driver-ZED video and software. "The ELF team feels privileged to be part of a major contribution to safe teen driving," Blank says. "I have a 16-year-old and a 13-year-old, so I personally thank the Foundation for this program."

CINE (The Council for International Non-Theatric Events) is a "nonprofit organization that recognizes excellence in documentary, instructional, informational, and short feature films, videos, and interactive productions." CINE Golden Eagle winners are entered into international film and video festivals.

The organization was founded in 1957 to help introduce U.S. informational films to European film festivals and competitions. In its first year it sent selections to only three festivals; now it submits films and videos to over 100 festivals in 30 countries worldwide.

