



NAWHSL 2026 Spring Newsletter



Join Us!

It's time to register for the 2026 NAWHSL Conference

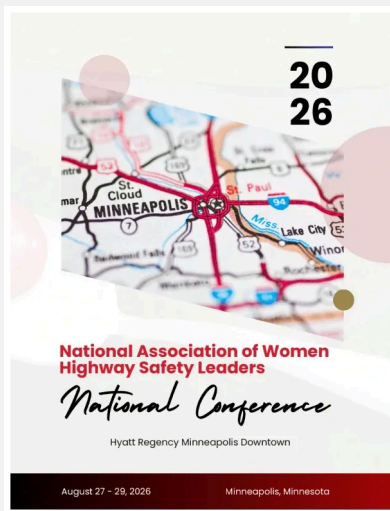
Minneapolis, Minnesota

August 27 - 29, 2026

Hyatt Regency Minneapolis Downtown

Navigating Our Roadways with Responsibility
Check out the speaker line up and the tentative agenda!

[Click Here for the Conference Registration Packet and details](#)



Get to Know NAWHSL! Information Forum

Please join us on Monday, April 27th, from 3:00 – 4:00 PM Central for our NAWHSL Information Forum.

This virtual meeting is open to all traffic safety advocates interested in learning more about the organization and engaging with members of the current Executive Committee.



Full Details: NAWHSL Information Forum

Time: Apr 27, 2026 03:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting <https://tntech.zoom.us/j/89459911777?pwd=iqkud752ofeRl0g0gCcbKP4NRD55uk.1>

Meeting ID: 894 5991 1777 Passcode: 146870

Spotlight on Alaska - Mandi Seethaler NAWHSL State Representative



Mandi Seethaler is the Deputy Director of the Center for Safe Alaskans, where she oversees organizational operations and financial management and supports the Child Passenger Safety program.

A longtime child passenger safety advocate, Mandi became a certified Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Instructor in 2012. She serves as the Statewide CPS Coordinator for the Alaska Highway Safety Office, supporting occupant protection efforts and partnerships across Alaska.

Mandi is a past Chair of the National Child Passenger Safety Board, contributing to curriculum updates, hybrid training development, and technical resources. She remains actively engaged in the field through service on the Alaska Highway Safety Office Strategic Highway Safety Plan Steering Committee, the International KIDZ IN MOTION Conference planning committee, and as Treasurer of the Anchorage Montessori School Board.

Above all, Mandi is committed to making sure every child travels safely. One of her most memorable car seat checks took place during a fall cattle roundup with her horse patiently waiting nearby.



Become a NAWHSL Sponsor

NAWHSL members are enthusiastically preparing for our 2026 Annual Meeting and we invite you to join us! This year our theme is Navigating Our Roadways with

Responsibility, and the meeting will be held August 27-29 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

For decades, NAWHSL has stood as a unique and influential voice in the traffic safety community. As a non-profit organization comprised of dedicated leaders committed to roadway safety, we represent a powerful demographic of influencers, policymakers, and community advocates committed to reducing traffic-related fatalities and injuries.

This year we are privileged to host a number of speakers who will lead vital dialogue about eliminating impaired driving, responding to crash investigations, supporting indigenous populations, and fostering a culture of accountability on our roads.

Why Your Support Matters

The landscape of highway safety is changing rapidly, with new challenges in distracted driving, pedestrian safety, and evolving vehicle technology. NAWHSL provides a platform for education and advocacy that reaches directly into a variety of audiences

and communities. By participating as a contributing sponsor, newly recognized as a NAWHSL Safety Champion for our upcoming 2026 Annual Meeting, you are not only supporting an organization, you are also investing in a safer future for every driver, passenger, pedestrian, and all roadway users.

Partnership Opportunities

Your financial gift as a NAWHSL Safety Champion supports a variety of opportunities to facilitate the professional development of injury prevention professionals, as well as public health projects. Some examples include:

- *The Agnes Beaton Memorial Fund*: \$1,000 grants to support local projects
- *NAWHSL Traffic Injury Prevention Scholarship*: \$1,500 value per scholar
- Sponsoring a meal during the NAWHSL Annual Meeting
 - Networking Breakfast: \$3,000
 - Lunch Reception: \$4,000
- Sponsoring a Keynote Speaker for the NAWHSL Annual Meeting: \$5,000

Monetary sponsorship gifts of any amount are appreciated and each gift provides Sponsors with significant visibility among our members. This includes:

- Title recognition during the three-day Annual Meeting
 - Logo or name placement on all digital and print materials
- Logo placement with link to your website on *nawhsl.org* for 12 months
- Logo inclusion in the NAWHSL quarterly newsletter and official event programs for 12 months
- Featured recognition during educational webinars
- NAWHSL Safety Champion sponsor recognition social media posts

The Value of Alignment

Aligning with NAWHSL demonstrates our shared mission and commitment to social responsibility and public health.

If you would like to make a sponsoring contribution for 2026, please email Mandie Dell, NAWHSL Treasurer, at treasurer@nawhsl.org. Mandie can provide more information regarding payment options, as well as confirm if your gift is designated for a specific purpose.



2026 Young Women's

This Scholarship in Traffic Injury Prevention is funded by donations to the National Association of Women Highway Safety Leaders, Inc (NAWHSL) from private individuals, organizations, and governmental organizations to support young women who aspire to a career saving lives and preventing injuries on the road.

Dr. David A. Sleet, former Associate Director for Science in the Division of Unintentional Injury Prevention at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and a plenary speaker at the 50th anniversary NAWHSL conference, initiated the scholarship to attract more young women into leadership positions in traffic safety.

Scholarship in Traffic Injury Prevention

The scholarship recognizes, assists, and trains women working on practice-based projects or research in traffic injury prevention. The applicant can be studying at an accredited university, serving in an internship role, or as an employee in governmental or non-governmental organizations that support traffic safety initiatives.

Note: Application Deadline extended to June 1, 2026.

[Click Here for 2026 Scholarship Information](#)

The Agnes Beaton Memorial Fund is dedicated to the memory of Agnes Beaton, founder of the National Association of Women Highway Safety Leaders. She was a pioneer of community based traffic safety programs who was adept at reaching out to diverse groups of individuals and uniting them in the mission of saving lives and preventing injuries on the roadways throughout our country.

This funding will be available for programs that are provided at the local level; will promote involvement of volunteers in the provision of services; and develop knowledgeable advocates of traffic safety. Grants are available to this organization's State Representatives and members of the Board of Directors.

GUIDELINES FOR PROPOSALS Programs selected will be those that can be easily replicated in other communities. Services must be provided at the local level in one community or multiple communities. This fund is administered by the National Association of Women Highway Safety Leaders, Inc., a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization under IRS guidelines.

Grants may not be used for lobbying purposes.

TIME PERIOD Upon approval, grants may be used for up to two years, giving adequate time for implementation, impact and evaluation.



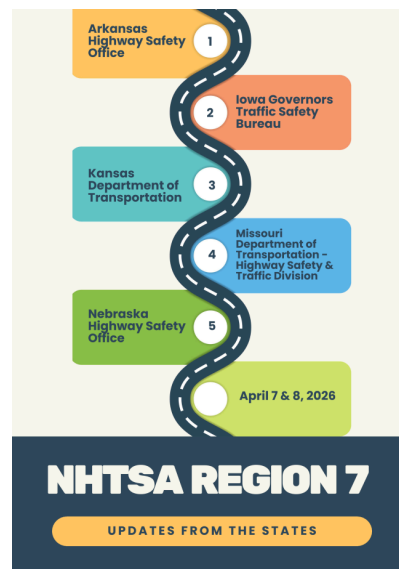
Agnes Beaton Memorial Fund Information

[Click Here for
More
Information on
the Agnes
Beaton
Memorial
Fund](#)

Region 7 Update

NAWHSL President, Joanne Kurt-Hilditch, is also the Region 7 Rep. She had the privilege of being invited to present to the NHTSA Region 7 State Partners meeting about the Missouri Law Enforcement Phlebotomy Program and stay for the entire meeting. With the permission of each of the states, she created an update for everyone to see related to each of the State Program Highlights of Best Practices.

Click the picture below to see the highlights from each state.



Spotlight on SOAR

Safe on All Roads - Montana Department of Transportation

American Indians comprise 6.2% of Montana's population but represent approximately 17% of the state's motor vehicle crash fatalities each year. To help address this disparity and strengthen safety messaging in Tribal communities, the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) developed the Safe On All Roads (SOAR) program. SOAR is a traffic safety education initiative that provides strong, culturally relevant messages tailored to each community. Local coordinators—who live and work in the communities they serve—manage their programs and assist in developing appropriate educational materials.



Montana has coordinated the SOAR Tribal Traffic Safety Program for nearly 15 years. Through this program, each reservation employs a local coordinator who partners with Tribal traffic safety stakeholders to promote safe driving practices. Coordinators are required to have, or obtain upon hire, Child Passenger Safety Technician certification. The program focuses on outreach and education related to occupant protection, impaired driving, and child passenger safety.

As a supplement to SOAR, MDT also coordinates the Montana Tribes DUI Task Force. The task force includes members from all of Montana's Tribal communities and represents a diverse group of traffic safety stakeholders, including Tribal transportation planners, health departments, law enforcement agencies, community colleges, and Tribal council members.

The task force has adopted bylaws, created a strategic plan, and elected officers. The funding provided through MDT supports quarterly meetings and training. Recently, the group secured 501(c)(3) nonprofit status to pursue additional funding that will enhance and expand education and outreach efforts.

MDT's goal is for the SOAR program to be driven by Tribal partners across the state. All campaign materials are developed and approved by participants to ensure that messaging, materials, and advertisements are effective and culturally relevant.

At the local level, Tribal stakeholders design and implement campaigns specific to their communities. When support is needed for local events, MDT provides supplemental media, materials, or radio advertising upon request.

In addition to local campaigns, three statewide campaigns are conducted collaboratively each year: the Back-to-School Campaign (child passenger safety), the Winter Sports Campaign (occupant protection), and the Summer Campaign (impaired driving). During these efforts, Tribal stakeholders work together to determine a unified statewide message. After reaching consensus, local SOAR coordinators identify well-known Tribal members to serve as "local celebrities" who appear on posters, billboards, and radio spots promoting traffic safety.

Because younger drivers are a high-risk group, the program's messaging is intentionally centered on that demographic.

Some noteworthy local efforts from this year's campaigns include:



Fort Belknap Cross Country Champions



Crow Nation - Traditions



Confederated Salish and Kootenai - Sports Message

More recently, MDT added a new focus to the SOAR program: Drivers' Education and teen driver training. Tribal communities face unique challenges in providing driver education, including limited resources and, in some cases, the absence of a formal traffic code. Through this new initiative, MDT helps fund training for local Tribal teachers to become certified driver education instructors. The grant covers tuition, travel, and per diem. Since the project began, seven new instructors have been certified across four of Montana's seven Tribal communities—an important contribution to long-term traffic safety.

In partnership with the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI), MDT also supports Tribal Youth Drivers' Training through the Montana Drive program.

OPI has designated three days specifically for Tribal youth driver training. Each one-day workshop includes two hours of classroom instruction and six hours of behind-the-wheel practice on a closed raceway track. MDT covers registration fees and all travel expenses for participating teens and their caregivers. To date, more than 70 Tribal teens have completed the training.



The Safe On All Roads program has been nationally recognized for its accomplishments, particularly its culturally relevant campaigns. In 2022, SOAR received one of only ten National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Public Service Awards, which honor outstanding contributions to highway safety, including efforts to reduce impaired driving, improve seat belt use, and protect vulnerable road users.

Improving traffic safety is a challenging undertaking, but Native American fatalities in Montana have decreased in recent years—from 45 in 2020 to 36 in 2023 (the most recent data available). MDT credits this progress to the dedication of local traffic safety champions across Tribal communities.

Contact: Sheila Cozzie, Cultural Liaison
 Montana Department of Transportation
 (406) 444-7335
scozzie@mt.gov
<https://www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/soar.aspx>



Are you interested in submitting a spotlight on your programs for the NAWHSL Newsletter? Submit an article to us at nawhslcommunications@gmail.com. Help us spread the word about the distinguished programs going on in your communities!

nawhslcommunications@gmail.com

Visit us at <https://nawhsl.org/>

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