

Oklahoma Tribal Transportation

Safety Summit

Summit Report



April 27-28, 2010

Reed Conference Center Midwest City, Oklahoma

Prepared by Cambridge Systematics, Inc.



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16. Abstract This report documents the Oklahoma Tribal Transportation Safety Summit held April 27-28, 2010 in Midwest City, Oklahoma. The Summit brought together the full range of interested parties to begin communication and cooperation toward the ultimate goal of reducing crash-related injuries and deaths within tribal communities. The Summit pursued that goal by identifying key tribal safety challenges and the resources (human, technical, material, and financial) available to address them, and by stimulating multidisciplinary collaboration among safety stakeholders. Specifically, the objectives of the Summit were: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review Oklahoma's tribal road and transportation safety issues and challenges; 2. Share experiences and safety resources available to address issues and challenges; 3. Begin developing a list of action items to improve tribal transportation safety; and 4. Develop and endorse a process for collaboration among tribal, local, state, and Federal stakeholders for solving safety issues. <p>The following report includes background information, themes discussed by Summit speakers and participants, Summit results, and next steps for moving forward.</p>			
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Table of Contents

Background.....	1
Purpose of the Summit.....	2
Summit Participants	3
Themes.....	4
Problem Identification.....	4
Action.....	5
Collaboration	6
Summit Results.....	8
Engineering.....	8
Education	8
Emergency Response.....	9
Enforcement.....	9
Multidisciplinary Summit Recommendations.....	9
Moving Forward	10
Appendix A: Agenda.....	A-1
Appendix B: Participants	B-1

Background

38 Federally Recognized Tribes

- Absentee Shawnee Tribe
- Alabama Quassarte Tribal Town
- Apache Tribe
- Caddo Tribe
- Cherokee Nation
- Cheyenne – Arapaho Tribes
- Chickasaw Nation
- Choctaw Nation
- Citizen Potawatomi Tribe
- Comanche Nation
- Delaware Nation
- Delaware Tribe of Indians
- Eastern Shawnee Tribe
- Ft. Sill Apache
- Iowa Tribe
- Kaw Nation
- Kialegee Tribal Town
- Kickapoo Tribe
- Kiowa Tribe
- Miami Nation
- Modoc Tribe
- Muscogee (Creek) Nation
- Osage Nation
- Otoe – Missouri Tribe
- Ottawa Tribe
- Pawnee Nation
- Peoria Tribe
- Ponca Nation
- Quapaw Tribe
- Sac and Fox Nation
- Seminole Nation
- Seneca – Cayuga Tribe
- Shawnee Tribe
- Thlopthlocco Tribal Town
- Tonkawa Tribe
- United Keetoowah Band of Cherokees
- Wichita & Affiliated Tribe
- Wyandotte Nation

Every year, more than 30,000 motorists die and almost 3,000,000 are injured on our Nation's roadways. For ages 4 to 34, motor vehicle-related injuries are the leading cause of death in the United States, and Native Americans are at particularly high risk.¹ Among the Native American population, motor vehicle-related injuries are the leading cause of death up to age 44.² Between 1975 and 2002, the number of fatal crashes on Indian reservations increased more than 50 percent; while nationally, the number of fatal crashes declined two percent.³

Oklahoma is no exception to the trend. Although the number of traffic fatalities have decreased since 2005, more than 700 people die annually on Oklahoma roadways. Over 10 percent of those fatalities are Native Americans. The real figure is likely worse given that researchers and traffic safety experts agree tribal roadway crash data is under reported.

The Oklahoma Tribal Transportation Safety Summit held April 27-28, 2010 was an important step toward reducing traffic fatalities and injuries among tribal members. This document describes the Summit, focusing on the insights gained, lessons learned, and ideas for moving forward.

The Summit was carried out through the collaborative efforts of the Oklahoma Tribal Transportation Council (OTTC), Tribal Advisory Board, Tribal Technical Assistance Program (TTAP) at Oklahoma State University, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Federal Lands Highway and Oklahoma Division Offices, Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

¹Subramanian R., Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes as a Leading Cause of Death in the United States, 2005, DOT HS 810 936. April 2008. U.S. DOT, National Center for Statistics and Analysis.

²Hilton J., Race and Ethnicity in Fatal Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes 1999-2004, DOT HS 809 956. May 2006. U.S. DOT, NHTSA.

³Poindexter K., Fatal Motor Vehicle Crashes on Indian Reservations 1975-2002, DOT HS 809 727. U.S. DOT, NHTSA, May 2004.

■ Purpose of the Summit

The Oklahoma Tribal Transportation Safety Summit brought together the full range of interested parties to begin communication and cooperation toward the ultimate goal of reducing crash-related injuries and deaths within tribal communities. The Summit pursued that goal by identifying key tribal safety challenges and the resources (human, technical, material, and financial) available to address them, and by stimulating multidisciplinary collaboration among safety stakeholders. A detailed Summit agenda, listing all speakers and activities, is included in Appendix A.

Specifically, the objectives of the Summit were:

1. Review Oklahoma's tribal road and transportation safety issues and challenges;
2. Share experiences and safety resources available to address issues and challenges;
3. Begin developing a list of action items to improve tribal transportation safety; and
4. Develop and endorse a process for collaboration among tribal, local, state, and Federal stakeholders for solving safety issues.

The Summit began with an overview of transportation safety issues and challenges facing the Nation, Oklahoma, and specifically Oklahoma's tribes. A plenary panel included presentations from the 4Es of safety - engineering, enforcement, education, and emergency response. These presentations offered participants examples of effective safety solutions to learn from and consider for implementation within their own communities.

Breakout group discussions provided participants the opportunity to share their own experiences, to identify challenges and available resources, and to begin developing recommended actions for improving tribal transportation safety. A panel-led discussion, including participant polling, reviewed breakout group results and developed a consolidated list of Summit recommendations.

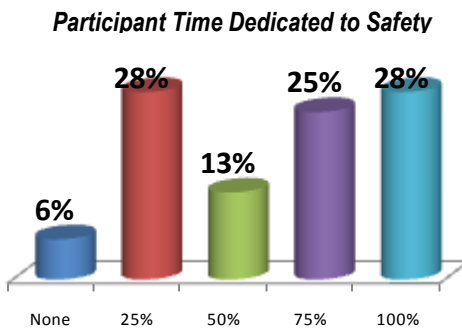
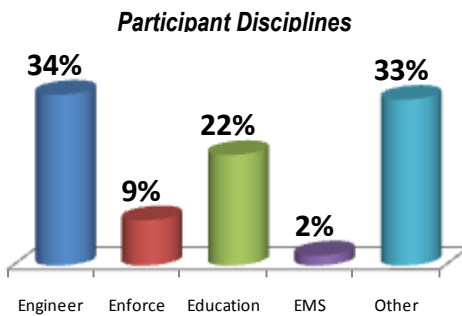
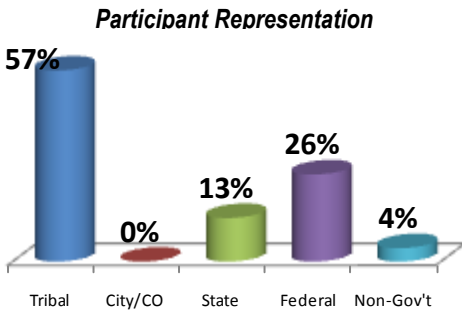
The Summit is a first step. Follow-up within and among Oklahoma's tribes in collaboration with state and Federal partners, as well as other tribal safety stakeholders, is required for further progress.

■ Summit Participants

An initial polling activity revealed several notable details about the roughly 69 Summit participants (a list of individual participants is included in Appendix B):

- Over one-half represent tribal communities. The rest represent Federal and state agencies, with a few additional nongovernment participants.
- One-third of participants did not identify with any of the 4Es of safety. Another one-third represent engineering, one-quarter represent education, and the rest identified with enforcement or emergency response.
- Almost one-half indicated less than 50 percent of their time is dedicated to safety (six percent indicated none). Only one-quarter of participants are focused on safety full-time.

These results reflect the complex nature of tribal transportation safety. A range of stakeholders recognize and are committed to the importance of safety. However, limited availability of focused safety personnel with the necessary skills and experience complicate efforts to implement effective safety initiatives.



Themes

Gary Corino, FHWA Division Administrator for Oklahoma, kicked off the Summit applauding the good work of safety stakeholders and recognizing the lives saved every day through effective safety initiatives. Declaring it our number one priority, he acknowledged there is still a lot of work to be done to improve transportation safety. Toward that end, several key themes emerged from the Summit as recurring emphasis areas in presentations and discussion groups: *problem identification, action, and collaboration.*

■ Problem Identification

Gary Ridley, Oklahoma Secretary of Transportation, pointed to the range of factors associated with fatal and serious injury crashes, ranging from roadway design to driver error, while emphasizing such crashes are preventable.

Rob Endicott, Transportation Planner from the Cherokee Nation, stressed the importance of advance planning and analysis to ensure projects adequately address safety. He suggested efforts should start by counting the crash and identified the contributing crash factors, e.g., sharp curves, narrow lanes, etc. An effective safety management system requires data on crashes, roadway geometrics, etc., to allow one to query the system and determine types of facilities by contributing crash factors. Project scoring criteria also should include explicit consideration of safety.

Major George Jesse of the Chickasaw Nation Lighthorse Department highlighted motor vehicles injuries as a leading cause of death among Native Americans ages 1 to 44 years of age, and the overrepresentation of Native Americans in total transportation fatalities as the reasons “why we are here.” He pointed to alcohol and low safety belt usage as major contributing factors and the role of enforcement to “educate and preserve.”

The Kiowa Tribe Injury Prevention Program began in 2005. Although the original grant focused on numerous goals and objectives, a revision was made after data and communities assessments were collected in the grants first year to identify

Examples of Geometric Issues on Rural Roadways:

- Sharp Curves
- Narrow Lanes
- Lack of Shoulders
- Poor Sight Distances
- Gravel Surfaces
- No Signing or Striping
- Others

areas of high injury and death in the State of Oklahoma. Amy Cozad, Injury Prevention Program Director, stressed the importance of the community assessments, not just for their own people, but for all members of the communities so as not to neglect brothers and sisters right next door. One-on-one interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in the area, including law enforcement; school staff; E.R. personnel; fire/EMS responders; and state and county officials in public health, medical, and mental/behavioral health areas. Most tribes do not collect vital statistics, only enrollment issues, so interviews with tribal-based programs, social services, and higher education departments were essential. Data analysis pointed to motor vehicle crashes, and specifically restraint use, as one of the priority issues for the Kiowa Tribe Injury Prevention Program.

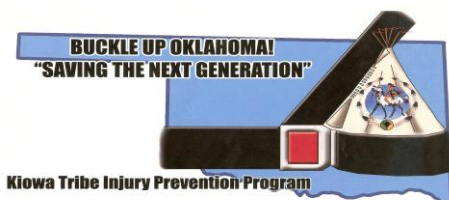
Participants commented how a lot of disparate data related to tribal transportation fatalities and serious injuries are not necessarily getting into the state database. Recommendations included better coordination of data collection efforts and raising awareness of about available of data access and analysis tools.

■ Action

During his opening remarks, Neal McCaleb (Former DOI Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs; President, T.R.U.S.T.) emphasized when a problem manifests itself resulting in death and injury, appropriate action is necessary to mitigate the circumstance. He pointed to Lake Hefner Parkway, which was designed according to Greenbook standards but by 2000 people were dying on the roadway at an unconscionable rate. Following studies in England demonstrating the effectiveness of high tension cable barrier systems, Oklahoma took initiative to install the barriers on Lake Hefner Parkway and significantly reduced cross-median fatalities. Now that concept is a national standard for median crossover crashes.

With a similar forward-looking mentality, the Lighthorse Police Department was the first Tribal Police Department to sign a Cross Commission Agreement with the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics (OBN), offering unprecedented authority on state, county, and tribal roadways to promote safety for all citizens, native and nonnative.

Recognizing low safety belt usage as a leading contributing factor to motor vehicle fatalities and serious injuries, the Kiowa Tribe Injury Prevention Program determined a good education



campaign was essential. They looked at existing examples from other agencies around the country but did not find examples adequately relating to Native Americans. Therefore, they designed their own safety belt campaign and developed new campaign materials. Amy Cozad encouraged participants not to stay with “the same old methods” and provided examples of eye-catching media campaigns. The Kiowa Tribe campaign ended up growing from one location to spread across the State of Oklahoma, receiving a number of accolades, including recognition at NHTSA’s annual Lifesavers Conference.



Effective emergency management requires the ability to immediately take action. Jolene Schonchin, the Public Information Officer for the Comanche Nation, presented on the tribe’s handling of the January 2010 ice storm in southwestern Oklahoma from an emergency management perspective. She stressed the five Ps for emergency preparedness: Prior Planning Prevents Poor Preparation. Following the five Ps, the Comanche Nation Emergency Management, with the volunteered help from tribal employees, was able to serve over 8,034 meals; hand out 50 pallets of water (19,200 bottles of water); provide medical checks to 640 homes; assist 395 people through Social Services food assistance; provide propane to 54 tribal members who requested it; and provide other services to anyone in need during the ice storm (i.e., shelters, fuel, water, medical needs, food vouchers).

The five Ps can be applied to the broader transportation safety context highlighting the importance of having a structured program in place to address transportation safety problems both proactively and reactively with the appropriate approaches, tools, and resources.

Limited resources and sovereignty issues were raised as major obstacles to implementing effective safety initiatives. Participants were encouraged to explore the range of direct and creative funding sources from Federal grants to working with casinos and other nongovernment entities to leverage resources.

■ Collaboration

FHWA’s Office of Federal Lands Highway Associate Administrator, John Baxter, applauded the multidisciplinary representation of Summit participants demonstrating safety is not about just one idea. He was encouraged by the commitment to come together to discuss safety initiatives and what can be achieved through collaboration.

Chuck Tsoodle, Director of Transportation, Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma, echoed the emphasis on multidisciplinary collaboration and presented on collaborative efforts on a national scale by the Safety Management System (SMS) Steering Committee toward a comprehensive tribal safety program.⁴

Rob Endicott emphasized that developing an effective safety management system to address tribal transportation safety in Oklahoma requires coordination among planning, engineering, enforcement, education, emergency response, and others.



With approximately 2,550 miles of roadway in 13 counties, and usually only five officers on duty at a time, Lighthorse patrolmen average 325 miles per day. The situation is further complicated by the checkerboard (land mass is not contiguous) nature of Indian land in Oklahoma. Recognizing the importance of coordination with other enforcement programs, the Lighthorse Police Department has entered in 39 Cross Commission Agreements across the State. These agreements grant them authority on state, county, and tribal roadways to promote safety for all types of citizens.

The success of the Comanche Nation's response to the January ice storm is largely attributed to the collaboration with the tribe's Environmental Programs, Home Improvement Program, Housing Authority, Transportation Department, Transit Department, Firefighters, and others all of whom pitched in to tackle various clean-up and support efforts.

In closing, Pat Tucker from NHTSA Region 6 reemphasized the importance of communication and coordination. She noted comments throughout the summit indicating the right information may not be reaching the right people and, while many are implementing noteworthy practices, others may not necessarily know about them. Communication to raise awareness and coordination to increase reach and effectiveness are critical to ongoing safety efforts.

⁴The SMS Steering Committee includes representatives from Tribes, FHWA, BIA, NHTSA, and Indian Health Service (IHS). The Committee meets semiannually, coordinates efforts among agencies, and oversees implementation of the SMS Implementation Plan, which identifies items to address over the next three to five years through implementation at national and tribal levels.

Summit Results



The Summit goal was to develop and endorse a process for collaboration among tribal, local, state, and Federal stakeholders for solving transportation safety issues. To achieve this, Summit participants were first divided into four breakout groups: engineering, education, emergency response, and enforcement. Each group discussed ways to more effectively meet the needs of tribes in an effort to reduce fatalities and disabling injuries. Recommendations developed during the 4E breakout sessions and reported out to the larger group are recorded below.

■ Engineering

- Maximize data collection.
- Develop a data sharing system (tribal, BIA, state, county).
- Inform users of on-line crash data.
- Develop a process for the public to notify on safety issues.
- Include County Commissioners in future safety meetings.
- Educate/partner with counties on IRR programs.
- Develop a road safety audit program.

■ Education

- Educate children ages 7 to 9, together with parents, on the risks associated with impaired driving.
- Raise awareness for children ages 12 to 13 about the risks and laws regarding using cell phones while driving.
- Integrate “what to do in an emergency” messages into safety lessons for children under the age of 7 to address remote locations.

■ Emergency Response

- Inform/educate tribal council of safety needs (i.e., database, response times).
- Education the public – recruit volunteers.
- Involve other tribes and entities (i.e., EPA, National Guard, Red Cross) in training and assistance efforts.
- Network with connecting tribes, EMS, and other entities.

■ Enforcement

- Work with the Attorney General, tribal leaders, and other state safety agency leaders to draft an overall agreement that would address safety issues.
- Have an annual statewide enforcement conference with enforcement agencies, both tribal and state.
- Find an organization like OTTC to have a safety type subcommittee or start a tribal safety council/steering committee.

■ Multidisciplinary Summit Recommendations

Participants were divided again, this time into multidisciplinary groups to review all the 4E recommendations and develop recommendations on next steps for improving tribal transportation safety in Oklahoma. Recommendations developed during breakout sessions were reported out to the larger group, refined through a panel, and prioritized through a participant polling exercise. The final, prioritized list of Summit recommendations include:

- Engage tribal leaders, all levels of enforcement, and other safety stakeholders; i.e., reach out to educate and inform, invite to next summit, etc.
- Open lines of communication between all tribal safety stakeholders.
- High-level agreement covering tribal safety issues; i.e., data, law enforcement, etc.
- Create safety councils in each tribe and nation.
- Support the creation and activities of an OTTC safety subcommittee.



Moving Forward

Oklahoma is committed to take the next steps in the pursuit of safer tribal transportation. As emphasized at the beginning of the Summit and throughout, an important component of any future direction should be to continue to foster partnerships and multidisciplinary collaboration.

Tribes are encouraged to begin implementing applicable recommendations immediately. Participants will inform the tribal elders, leaders, and other safety stakeholders in their communities about the Summit results and recommendations for future directions in transportation safety engineering, education, enforcement, emergency response, and multidisciplinary collaboration. The Oklahoma Tribal Transportation Council (OTTC) and Tribal Advisory Board, with support from state and Federal partners, provide ideal forums for exploring methods for pursuing recommendations developed and adopted during the Tribal Transportation Safety Summit.

Initial polling indicated one-third of participants never participated in a transportation safety summit before. All respondents to the exit poll indicated they would attend similar events in the future, with three quarters suggesting such a summit should be held annually. Asked what would be most helpful in implementing the recommendations from the summit, the leading responses were training and funding, followed by facilitation to help continue coordination and collaboration, and technical assistance.

More information about resources available from state, regional, and Federal partners involved in the Summit can be found at:

TTAP: <http://ttap.okstate.edu>;

ODOT: <http://www.okladot.state.ok.us>;

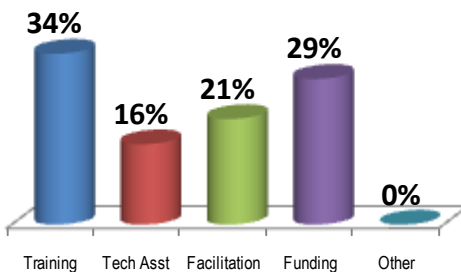
FHWA Office of Federal Lands Highway:
<http://flh.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/irr/safety>;

FHWA Office of Safety: <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov>;

BIA: <http://www.doi.gov/bia>; and

NHTSA: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>.

What would be most helpful in implementing the recommendations from the summit?



Appendix A: Agenda

Oklahoma Tribal Transportation Safety Summit

April 27-28, 2010

Reed Conference Center ♦ Midwest City, Oklahoma

Purpose

1. Review Oklahoma's tribal road and transportation safety issues and challenges.
2. Share experiences and safety resources available to address issues and challenges.
3. Begin developing a list of action items to improve tribal transportation safety.
4. Develop and endorse a process for collaboration among Federal, state, local, and tribal communities for solving safety issues.

Tuesday, April 27

Tribal Transportation Safety Summit Session I

11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Registration

12:30 p.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Gary Corino, Oklahoma Division Administrator,
FHWA

Jeff Lieb, President, Oklahoma Tribal
Transportation Council

Jim Self, Oklahoma State University TTAP

12:45 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Opening Session

Setting the Stage

Neal McCaleb, Former DOI Assistant Secretary for
Indian Affairs; President, T.R.U.S.T.

U.S. Transportation Safety Issues

John Baxter, Associate Administrator, Federal
Lands Highway, FHWA

Oklahoma Transportation
Safety Issues

Gary Ridley, Secretary of Transportation, ODOT

Tribal Transportation Safety Issues

Chuck Tsoodle, Director of Transportation,
Kiowa Tribe

1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Plenary Panel: The 4 E's of Safety

Moderator

Jim Self, OSU TTAP

Engineering

Robert Endicott - Planner, Cherokee Nation

Enforcement

Maj. George Jesse, Asst. Chief, Chickasaw Light
Horse

Education

Amy Cozad, Kiowa Nation Injury Prevention
Office

Emergency Response	Jolene Schonchin, Public Info. Officer, Comanche Nation
2:30 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.	Break
2:45 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.	4 E Breakout Groups - <i>Sharing Experiences, Identifying Challenges and Resources</i>
3:45 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Break
4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.	4 E Breakout Groups - <i>Prioritizing Issues</i>
5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.	Reception, Networking, and Resource Tables
Wednesday, April 28	Tribal Transportation Safety Summit Session II
7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.	Registration
8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.	Plenary: 4 E Breakout Group Reports
8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.	Multidisciplinary Breakout Sessions - <i>Developing Action Items and Solutions</i>
10:00 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.	Break
10:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.	Plenary: Breakout Group Reports and Panel Led Discussion - <i>Developing Consensus.</i>
Moderator	Susan Herbel, Cambridge Systematics Pat Tucker, Regional Program Manager NHTSA Region 6 Huy Nguyen, FHWA Oklahoma Division Safety Engineer Harold Cully, Director, Division of Environmental Health Services, Indian Health Service, OKC Area Jay Adams, Tribal Liaison, ODOT Jeffrey Lieb, President, OTTC Jim Self, OSU TTAP
11:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.	Adopt Summit Recommendations
11:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.	Closing Session
“Where We Go From Here”	Pat Tucker, NHTSA Region 6
Thanks and	Jim Self, OSU TTAP
“Let’s be careful out there”	

Appendix B: Participants

Name	Affiliation	Title	E-mail
Alene Adams	Otoe-Missouria Tribe of Oklahoma	Transportation Director	aadams@omtribe.org
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Oklahoma Tribal Transportation Safety Summit

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