

# Traffic Safety News

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
TRAFFIC SAFETY BUREAU

<http://www.unm.edu/~dgrint/tsb.html>

July 2004

## Mark Your Calendars

### August 27 - September 12 You Drink & Drive. You Lose Crackdown

NHTSA, see information at: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/alcohol/StopImpairedydyllaboraday04.htm>.

### August 31 - September 1 DWI Prosecutor Training

NM State Bar, Albuquerque, for attorneys and law enforcement officers who act as prosecutors.

### September 22

#### Teaching Techniques

Albuquerque, for new driver education instructors who do not have a background in education. Includes powerpoint training.

Both trainings sponsored by the NMDOT Traffic Safety Bureau, conducted by UNM Institute of Public Law. For more information, contact Carolyn Johnson at 505-277-8790 or check the website at: <http://ipl.unm.edu/traf>.

### September 2 - 19

#### New Mexico State Fair

<http://www.nmstatefair.com/>

### September 3 - 6

#### Stop on Red Week

Nationwide, for information, see: [www.stopredlightrunning.com/index.htm](http://www.stopredlightrunning.com/index.htm)

### October 2 - 10

#### Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta

<http://www.aibf.org/>

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## Dr. Kerrigan Leaves SLD

Dr. Sarah Kerrigan, Bureau Chief of Toxicology at the Scientific Laboratory Division (SLD), resigned her position in April and left the lab in June. As Bureau Chief, she was responsible for 5000 to 6000 criminal and forensic toxicology investigations each year from law enforcement and the Office of the Medical Investigator.

Dr. Kerrigan received her training as a Forensic Toxicologist at the Scotland Yard Forensic Science Laboratory and has worked in a variety of government, academic and private sector laboratories, moving from the Justice Department in California to SLD in March 2001. Dr. Kerrigan contributes to many textbooks, publishes original research and serves on several editorial advisory boards. In recognition of her achievements in the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States, Dr. Kerrigan has received many awards, including the prestigious Irving Sunshine Toxicology Award from the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, while Bureau Chief for SLD in 2002. She currently serves as a faculty member at the National Judicial College in Reno, Nevada, and is President of the California Association of Toxicologists.

During her tenure at SLD, virtually every technical procedure in the laboratory was replaced with new procedures and instrumentation. The laboratory vastly expanded its repertoire of drugs to include newer substances including the new recreational drugs or "club drugs", designer amphetamines and "date rape drugs" such as flunitrazepam (Rohypnol®) and gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB). The new procedures and automated equipment allowed SLD to improve turnaround times. By September of 2002, turnaround times for drug-related DWI cases had decreased tenfold. In November 2001, the Toxicology Bureau became one of about a dozen laboratories nationwide to be accredited by the American Board of Forensic Toxicologists (ABFT). In October 2003, the laboratory was reinspected by ABFT and no mandatory corrective action was required - a reflection of how far the laboratory has come.

Dr. Kerrigan also implemented a vigorous outreach program. In the past three years, she conducted more than 60 seminars throughout the state on topics including drug and alcohol-related DWI and drug-facilitated sexual assault. During her tenure, SLD trained over 2,000 police officers, attorneys, judges, clinicians and sexual assault nurse examiners and drew special attention to drug-related issues in New



Dr. Sarah Kerrigan

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## A Message from NMDOT Secretary

*Rhonda Faught*

### Work Zone Safety Campaign Will Save Lives

Summertime is prime time for completing road construction and improvement projects. In addition to finishing the work on time and within budget, it is always a challenge to balance keeping roads open for and an excellent safety record. However, it's equally important to educate our motorists on work zone safety and I believe this public outreach campaign will accomplish that goal.



Martin Perea Photo

NMDOT Secretary Rhonda Faught moved her office into a construction zone on US 84/285 to kick off the "Let 'em Work. Let 'em Live."

motorists with the need to provide a safe work zone for the crews.

Across the nation, more than 40,000 people are injured each year as a result of motor vehicle crashes in work zones. Over the last five years, the number of persons killed in motor vehicle crashes in work zones has risen from 693 in 1997 to 1,079 in 2001 (an average of 888 fatalities a year.)

To kick off our new work zone safety campaign "Let 'em Work. Let 'em Live." and draw attention to the fact that work zone safety is a very serious issue that effects not only our highway and construction workers, but motorists traveling through the work zones, I've temporarily moved my office to the construction zone along US 84/285.

We have a very aggressive safety program for our NMDOT employees

There is a perception that only highway and construction workers are killed or injured in work zone crashes. The reality is that 85 percent of those killed in work zone crashes are drivers or their passengers, so it's important that we get this message to motorists.

As part of the "Let 'em Work. Let 'em Live." campaign, the NMDOT is running radio and television ads, passing out pamphlets on work zone safety and erecting signs in construction zones to get the message out to communities in and around construction zones.

Here are some common-sense tips from the NMDOT for traveling through work zones:

- Slow down and stay calm. Be patient. Remember work zones are necessary to improve roads and make them safer.

- Pay attention to the signs and obey road crew flaggers.
- Merge to avoid a lane closure as soon as possible. Motorists can help maintain traffic flow and posted speeds by moving to the appropriate lane at first notice of an approaching work zone.
- Try an alternate route.
- Expect delays, and plan for them by leaving early enough to reach your destination on time.
- Minimize distractions in vehicles. Avoid changing radio stations and using cell phones.
- Expect the unexpected.
- Some work zones such as those involving road striping, patching, or shoulder mowing have moving equipment and mobile crews. Just because you don't see the workers immediately after you see the warning signs doesn't mean they are not out there. Observe the posted signs until you see the one that says: "END ROAD WORK" and remember to "Let 'em Work. Let 'em Live."

For more information on New Mexico's road conditions and closures see: <http://www.nmshtd.state.nm.us/> or call the Road Advisory Hotline at 1-800-432-4269.

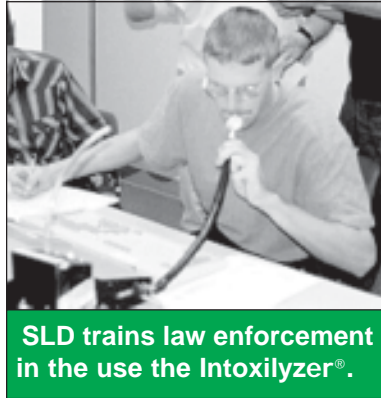


Traffic fines are doubled in work zones nationwide. Drivers should slow down for their own safety and that of workers, or they'll pay the consequences.

## Sarah Kerrigan Continued from page 1

Mexico. She also worked closely with the Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) Program to encourage more officers to become certified as DREs.

Dr. Kerrigan believes an educational investment in staff is very important to the Toxicology Bureau, as well as to its clients. Project agreements with the NMDOT Traffic Safety Bureau provided funding for toxicologists at SLD to attend scientific meetings, allowing them to stay up to date with new drugs, their effects, and new techniques to detect them. In September 2004, Toxicology Bureau staff will present six research papers at the FBI Forensic Symposium in Washington DC, at which attendance of 1,000 forensic scientists from around the globe is expected. SLD will present papers on narcotic analgesics, caffeine, GHB, alcohol analysis and the new Intoxilyzer 8000®. The Toxicology Bureau is now one of the most respected and progressive forensic toxicology labs



SLD trains law enforcement in the use the Intoxilyzer®.

in the country. Dr. Kerrigan attributes the success of the laboratory to the entire Toxicology Bureau staff: "I am so proud of the staff and their incredible efforts over the past three years. They are living proof that ordinary people can achieve extraordinary results". She hopes that the Toxicology Bureau will receive the support it needs to continue to be successful and meet the needs of law enforcement.

The New Mexico Department of Health began a nationwide search for a new Bureau Chief in June.

Dr. Kerrigan now works as a Forensic Toxicology Consultant in

Houston, Texas. The Traffic Safety Bureau thanks Dr. Kerrigan for her hard work and wishes her success.

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**October 4 - 8**  
**International Walk-To-School Week**  
[www.walktoschool-usa.org/](http://www.walktoschool-usa.org/)

**November 8 - 21**  
**Superblitz - Statewide**  
Sponsored by the NMDOT Traffic Safety Bureau & conducted by Safer New Mexico Now. Contact: Eileen Rios at 1-800-231-6145 or 505-471-3965, for info see: [www.safernm.org](http://www.safernm.org).

**December 8 - 10**  
**"Policing in the 21st Century" 2004 New Mexico Law Enforcement Conference**

Albuquerque, Contact: Diane Lang, New Mexico Municipal League, 1-800-432-2036

**March 13 - 15, 2005**  
**Lifesavers Conference**  
Charlotte Convention Center  
Charlotte, North Carolina  
If you have an idea for a workshop for the 2005 Conference, submit it before October 18, 2004. For a form and more information, see [www.lifesaversconference.org/](http://www.lifesaversconference.org/)

See <http://ipl.unm.edu/traf/> for the latest calendar information.

Any individual with a disability who is in need of an auxiliary aid or service to attend or participate in a Traffic Safety Bureau meeting, or who needs copies of meeting materials in an accessible form, may contact the Traffic Safety Bureau at 1-800-541-7952 at least ten days before the meeting for assistance.

## New Mexico Traffic Fatalities

	June 2004* / June 2003	
<b>Total June Fatalities</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Year to Date (YTD)</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>198</b>
<b>YTD Alcohol Involved</b>	<b>75 (32.05%)</b>	<b>101 (51.01%)</b>
<b>No Restraints Used</b>	<b>86 (46.2%)</b>	<b>97 (61.78%)</b>
<b>YTD Teen Fatalities</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>YTD Teen Alcohol Involved</b>	<b>13 (41.9%)</b>	<b>16 (45.7%)</b>
<b>YTD Motorcycle Fatalities</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>YTD No Helmet Used</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>YTD Pedestrian Fatalities</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>22</b>

\*2004 data is preliminary, and alcohol percentage calculations exclude unknown involvements.

**Note:** At the time you receive this newsletter, more recent data may have been published. Check the University of New Mexico Division of Government Research website at: <http://www.unm.edu/~dgrint/fars/thisyear.html> for updated material.

## SAFE KIDS Hosts Successful Child Safety Seat Clinic

Katherine Dickerson, Region II EMS/SNM SAFE KIDS Coordinator, reports that on July 24th, the Southern New Mexico SAFE KIDS Coalition, in partnership with the Fort Bayard Fire Department, Silver City Fire and Police Departments, Grant County Sheriff's Office, New Mexico State Police, Alamogordo Department of Public Safety, and Luna County Healthy Start, held two car seat safety inspection clinics in Grant County. They were funded in part by a grant from Safer New Mexico Now and the NMDOT Traffic Safety Bureau.

In spite of a little rain, things went very well. In the morning, at Fort Bayard Fire Station #2, they helped the families of eight children learn how to safely transport passengers in their vehicles and distributed three new seats. That afternoon at Silver City Fire Station #2, they educated the families of ten children and distributed five new seats.

This was the first ever car seat clinic in Fort Bayard, and the first in several years in Silver City.



## BAC and Vans in NHTSA News

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration announced that as of July 1, 2004, every state in the U.S. has adopted the .08 blood alcohol concentration (BAC) standard for impaired driving. Delaware was the last state to comply and is now eligible to receive part of the \$500 million in incentive money, provided by the 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21), to states that enact .08 BAC laws. The grant funds may be used for highway safety or highway infrastructure projects. New Mexico's portion for FY 2004 is \$423,533.

In other news, NHTSA reissued a warning to users of 15-passenger vans. The vans have a rollover risk that increases dramatically as the number of occupants increases to full capacity. The likelihood of a rollover when the van is fully loaded is five times greater than when the vehicle contains only the driver. The risk of rollover also increases significantly at speeds over 50 m.p.h. and on curved roads.

Similar warning were issued by NHTSA in 2001 and 2002. Federal law prohibits the sale of 15-passenger vans for the school related transport of high school age and younger students but does not prohibit use for transporting college students or other adult passengers.

See [www.nhtsa.dot.gov/](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/) for more information.



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