



NEWS RELEASE

(10/05/05)

Leah Nixon
(Assistant Director of News Services)

Task force becomes Traffic Safety Team

BIG RAPIDS – James A. Santilli, Jr. of the Michigan Highway Traffic Safety Alliance and member of the Ferris State University Pedestrian Safety Task Force was successful with his request to convert the Ferris State University Pedestrian Safety Task Force into the Ferris State University Traffic Safety Team.

“This modification will place a focus on all essential areas of traffic safety, many of which can impact pedestrian safety,” Santilli said. “Nationally, motor vehicle traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for people ages 3 through 33.”

The FSUTST will focus strongly on engineering, education and enforcement initiatives, and target aggressive driving behaviors (i.e. speeding, running stop signs and failing to signal), pedestrian and bicycle safety, impaired driving and occupant protection.

“This is the next step in a sensible approach to traffic safety,” said Martin J. Bledsoe, director of the Ferris Department of Public Safety and head of the FSUTST. “The task force was developed for a targeted response to an important issue. The FSUTST will include all aspects of safe travel.”

Other members of the FSUTST include: James Cook, assistant director of the Ferris Department of Public Safety; Kevin Courtney, director of the Big Rapids Department of Public Safety; Terry Harris, post commander of the Michigan State Police-Reed City Post; Maria Knirk, Ferris Student Government president; Karl Koivisto, Michigan Department of Transportation; Clare Kwant, superintendent of the Ferris Roads and Grounds division; Maxine McClelland, supervisor of Big Rapids Township; John W. Sonntag, Mecosta County sheriff; and Timothy Vogel, director of the Big Rapids Department of Public Works.

According to the Michigan Department of Community Health, four out of five accidental deaths for teenagers and young adults (ages 15 to 24) are due to motor vehicle crashes.

“Teens and young adults are killed at far higher rates in crashes because they are caught in a lethal intersection of inexperience, risk taking and low seat belt use,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta. “All of us – individuals as well as government – must work together to change the nation so that highway safety is every American’s priority.”

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CAPTION –

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Department of Public Safety Officer Joy Paquette speaks to a motorist that was stopped Sept. 29 on Ferris Drive.

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