

## Lattes Texting Daydreaming Oh My!

Distracted driving has become a deadly epidemic on our roads. Cell phone use — specifically, texting, talking, and social media use — has become the most common distraction. Other risky actions include adjusting the radio or GPS, applying makeup, eating and drinking. By driving distracted, you're robbing yourself of seconds that you may need to avoid a close call or deadly crash.

According to NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration), in 2022, distracted driving killed 3,308 people. April, which is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month, is a good time to regroup and take responsibility for the choices we make when we're on the road. And, if you talk to enforcement, they will tell you that distracted driving is under reported as the cause of a crash or one of the causes of a crash.

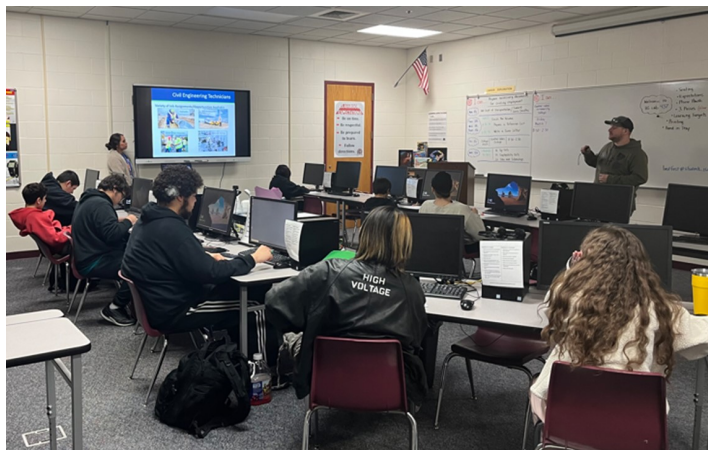
During a portion of Distracted Driving Awareness Month, from April 7 through 14, you may see increased law enforcement on the roadways as part of the national paid media campaign *Put the Phone Away or Pay*. This campaign reminds drivers of the deadly dangers and the legal consequences – including fines – of texting behind the wheel.



**Please Drive responsibly. Don't Drive Distracted.**

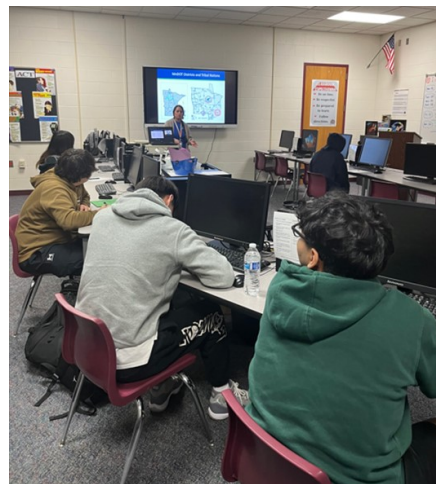
## Cass Lake Bena High School Career Day

Emma Brown (D2 Human Resources), Sue Johnson (NW TZD Coordinator), and Ryan Erickson (D2 Bemidji Maintenance) attended the 11th grade career classes at Cass Lake Bena High School on March 3, 2025. Emma shared MnDOT's student programs, various job fields, benefits, how to apply for a job, and the Indigenous Employee Group mission. Ryan shared the general laborer positions, the training you receive, and job responsibilities. Sue talked about the Toward Zero Deaths program, outreach efforts, and overall traffic safety. The students were educated on the wide variety of jobs and opportunities within MnDOT and invited them to think about MnDOT as they look for employment in the near future.



Careers in  
Transportation  
with MnDOT

A Better  
Minnesota  
Starts With  
You!



## Enforcement Update:

- DWI (optional): March 14-17, 2025—St. Patrick’s Day
- Distracted: April 1-30, 2025
- Speed: May 1-Sept 1, 2025 (covers 100 deadliest days)

In 2025 through March 9, there were 48 traffic-related deaths on Minnesota roadways. That is 23% lower than last year (62). Speed related fatalities are the lowest since 2020. Unbelted fatalities were the same in 2023, but are trending lower than other years in this decade.

## Toward Zero Deaths Outreach

Lincoln High School had a “I Drive Safe For ” board on Valentine’s Day where the students can put a name on the heart of someone that they care about or who cares about them. The board was up for several days and students filled the board with hearts. This was a visual reminder of why it is important to make good decisions when driving or riding in a car every day. Somebody loves you and cares if you make it home safe. The message was to do it for yourself and do it for them . ❤️

Brian Ketring ( MnDOT D2 State Aid Engineer), Sue Johnson (TZD) and Lt Brad Norland (MN State Patrol) attended their annual meeting with the LOW County Commissioners and LOW High School Civic class on February 25, 2025 at the LOW High School. The middle school government class joined us as we discussed traffic safety and data from the LOW region. Lt Brad Norland had the students participate in a mock crash that previously happened in the area.



## Sign Up For Equipment for Your Events This Year! Here Are Just A Few....



## Mark your 2025 Calendars

- Apr 30, 2025—Teen TZD Conference—Evangelical Free Church in TRF
- May 1, 2025—NW Regional Workshop—Thief River Falls Legacy Center
- October 21 & 22, 2025 (T-W) - TZD State Conference -Mystic Lake Center, Prior Lake, MN

### Toward Zero Deaths Northwest Regional Newsletter

Sue Johnson, Towards Zero Deaths Coordinator – NW Region

248 125th Ave

Thief River Falls, MN 56701

218-766-5943

