

Center for Safety Equity in Transportation

If you have a right to get there, you have a right to get there safely.

January 2018

Director's Welcome

All of us at the Center for Safety Equity in Transportation, CSET, are excited about the University Transportation Center grant from USDOT. The focus of CSET is to address transportation safety in rural, isolated, tribal and indigenous (RITI) communities in Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho and Washington. This is a unique opportunity to address a population that has historically been underserved when addressing safety needs.

Rural transportation corridors include small two-lane highways, summer and winter trails, boardwalks, and gravel roads. Each of these is important to the movement of people and goods in rural America and serves many modes of transportation including automobile, all-terrain vehicles, bicycles and pedestrian traffic. In most cases, traffic volumes are low but the variety of modes served presents unique challenges for which there are few standards and guidelines. Further, safety guidelines often don't address the community concerns or completely ignore cultural and heritage needs.

All at CSET realize that we have a lot to learn before we move forward. Consequently, we have chosen to

spend the first-year learning from those of you who live in these communities. We will be reaching out to you to educate us about your issues, what is important to you; what is working and what is not.

We have been working to establish baseline data concerning crashes, injuries and fatalities. We quickly found that the data are sparse, incomplete and often inaccurate. As a result, we are starting to work with agencies responsible for these data to improve data collection techniques and data summaries. This will help identify research focus areas.

We recognize the value of a robust outreach program. Consequently, we are and will continue to engage communities to develop a dialog of safety improvements and education as well as learning where new safety guidelines need to be developed.

While we recognize we cannot address all your needs, we would like to hear from you. Please take a look at our website at cset.uaf.edu for further information. You can send us your thoughts and ideas at cset.utc@alaska.edu or click on the "contact us" icon on the webpage. We will use those comments and questions to develop our future program.

Areas with less than 200 people per square mile account for over 80% of our transportation network.

The average U.S. community size is 6,200 people.

Rural areas account for 20% of the U.S. population but 50% of our road fatalities.

In Idaho, 52% of fatal crashes were single driver crashes, 87% of them occurred on rural roads.



An ATV commuter on boardwalks in Newtok, AK.



An ATV commuter with passenger in Fort Yukon, AK.

CSET has been funded through the 2016 University Transportation Center Program by the US Department of Transportation as part of the FAST Act at approximately \$1.4 million in each of the next five years.

Executive Board Meeting

The Center held its first Executive Board meeting March 23 and 24, 2017 in Fairbanks, AK. An overview of the USDOT University Transportation Centers Program and a review of the CSET proposal were presented by Amy Stearns, Grants Manager, UTC Program, Lachandra Graham, Grants Manager, UTC Program and Caesar Singh, Director, University Grants Programs. At the meeting, the board developed center goals, the mission statement, year 1 timeline and request for proposals. The group toured UAF facilities and visited the Ice Alaska park. Information on the executive board members can be found on the website at <http://cset.uaf.edu/people/>.

Advisory Board Meeting

The Center held its first Advisory Board meeting on December 1 and 2, 2017 in Ketchikan, AK. Members of the Executive Board presented on the efforts to date by each of the participating Universities. The Advisory Board members provided their insights on rural safety research needs for their state and in general. Their input guided the development of goals for year 2 of the Center. Information about the advisory board members can be found on the website at <http://cset.uaf.edu/people/>.

CSET Year 1 Activities

Focus Area 1: Outreach

The efforts funded under CSET Outreach YR1 must enhance our overall understanding of rural, isolated, tribal and indigenous (RITI) safety issues with RITI context. Culturally sensitive solutions are needed that will reduce RITI injuries and fatalities. For example, UAF is developing a partnership with the Newtok Village Council in order to be a resource for their relocation project. This partnership will set the stage for discussions and dialogues with other rural and indigenous communities in the State of Alaska.

Focus Area 2: Synthesis

The efforts funded under CSET Synthesis YR1 are to enhance our overall knowledge of RITI safety issues. For example, a project led by the University of Idaho titled "Documenting the Characteristics of Traffic Crashes for RITI Communities in Idaho" will help enhance the understanding of the impact factors that affect rural traffic crash frequencies and severity, and how these factors vary over time and across regions. The project outcome will also help identify crash causation factors and effective countermeasures to crashes involving RITI communities.

Focus Area 3: Baseline Data

The efforts funded under CSET Baseline Data YR1 are to identify and acquire data related to RITI transportation safety recognizing that road users from RITI communities have higher risk. For example, a project led by the University of Hawai'i at Manoa titled, "Initial Assessment of Transportation Safety Equity for Hawaiians, part-Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in RITI Communities" will focus on gathering data. Very little is known about the transportation safety needs of Hawaiians and other minorities in Hawaii. The road accident incidence and road accident injury rates of Hawaiians, part-Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are largely unknown.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks is actively seeking graduate students interested in research related to rural, isolated, tribal and indigenous transportation safety. Civil engineering is preferred, but also looking for interdisciplinary and Alaskan Native students. For more information contact Nathan Belz at npbelz@alaska.edu.



A new road being constructed from the quarry to the new village site in Mertarvik, Alaska.

