

NEWSLETTER

Abilene Metropolitan Planning Organization

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MPO Promoting Bicycle and Motorcycle Awareness



Photo courtesy of Blair Haynie

Bicycle Ride to School and Work Day

On May 17th, 2013, the Abilene MPO and TxDOT partnered with Dyess Elementary School and several bicycle organizations to promote safety and awareness for the kids on their way to school as well as adults riding to work. Bicycling is an excellent means of transportation for economic reasons as well as the physical.

We had 20 bicyclists ride downtown for the Ride to Work day. Officer Tracy Gates was our key-note speaker. We look forward to a bigger, better ride in May of 2014!



Photo courtesy of Blair Haynie

Motorcycle Ride to Work Day

On June 17th 2013, 43 motorcyclists joined together to promote safety and awareness in the third annual Ride to Work day. The parade through town was led by the City Manager Larry Gilley to Kent's Harley Davidson for a complimentary lunch provided by Kent's. There was a pre-ride safety talk given by Ned Maybee of the Motorcycle Safety Course of Abilene.

We have already begun to prepare for the June 16th, 2014 ride. See you there!

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Policy Board
meeting November
19th, 2013 in the
Council Chambers
located at 555 Walnut
at 1:30 pm.

New Location for the MPO



Photo courtesy of Dean Carter

We have moved! We are now in the Prosperity Bank building. In December we relocated our offices from the Taylor County Plaza to better serve the citizens of the area.

We now have offices for each staff member, as well as ample storage space. No more supplies

under the desk. We have a nice conference room with a ceiling mounted projector and a break room.

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SH 351 Access Management

This proposed project would improve access management along SH-351 from I-20 to FM 2833 with medians and driveway modifications. TxDOT also performed traffic signal studies as part of the planning. Proposed work includes sidewalks, curbs and gutters, drainage improvements and shared use lanes. All work would take place within the existing right of way.



Photo courtesy of Bill Frawley



As a motorcycle rider I am here to tell you of the dangers of Distracted Drivers. Too many times I had to take evasive action to avoid what could have possibly been a life ending crash with someone on the cell phone. And what amazes me is the fact that once the offending driver realizes what could have happened, all I get is a little wave and maybe a mumbled sorry... then they are right back to whatever is so earth shattering important that would jeopardize my life and yours!

Distracted Driving, The Dangers of

While it is no doubt this scenario is played out every day, in every state, and in every city!

According to National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS) "At any given daylight moment across America, approximately 660,000 drivers are using cell phones or manipulating electronic devices while driving." That's **660,000** distracted time bombs traveling the streets of America per second. And that's just the electronic device users, how many more are drinking coffee, eating a sandwich, or reading the newspaper? (I have seen it with my own eyes).

And it gets worse; it seems that those with the least experience behind the wheel are the worst offenders. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Association (NHTSA) "11% of all drivers under the age of 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crash. For drivers 15-19

years old involved in fatal crashes, 21 percent of the distracted drivers were distracted by the use of cell phones"

"Sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds, the equivalent-at 55 mph-of driving the length of an entire football field, **BLIND.**" Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI)

So here is my impassioned plea. If the phone rings...let it. If you get a text notification remind yourself to check that later. You can find a safe place to pull over and then check to see who called or texted. Or better yet just silence it till you get to your destination.

I know life is fast paced, hectic and sometimes just crazy. So don't add to the craziness with Distracted Driving. **PLEASE!**

Editor—Dean Carter