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The Hillary Coltharp story

April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

It was a Labor Day 2007 - the weekend that changed the Coltharp family forever. Twenty-six-year-old Hillary was traveling eastbound on Interstate 24 in Paducah to meet her family for dinner at Kentucky Lake. As usual, she was running late, so they called to see if she was close. "I'm four miles away," Hillary told them. "Go ahead and order my fried ravioli."

As the ravioli sat untouched, her family became concerned and went looking for her. Traffic was backed up on westbound I-24, which at first was a relief, since Hillary was traveling eastbound. But as they got closer, they saw Hillary's wrecked convertible being placed on a tow-truck. They later learned that after hanging up her call, Hillary began texting, which caused her to lose

control. She crossed the median and rolled three times before being ejected 75 feet from her car, landing on her head in the emergency lane of westbound I-24. Along with a skull fracture and severe brain trauma, she suffered a collapsed lung and multiple broken bones. She was airlifted to Vanderbilt University Medical Center, and there began a long road to recovery.

It has been nearly five years since that fateful evening - five years in and out of hospitals and rehabilitation centers. When home, Hillary's days are filled with therapy; a vast difference from life before the crash, when her days were spent playing with her son, partying with friends and family on the lake or working in a hair salon.

[continued on page 7](#)





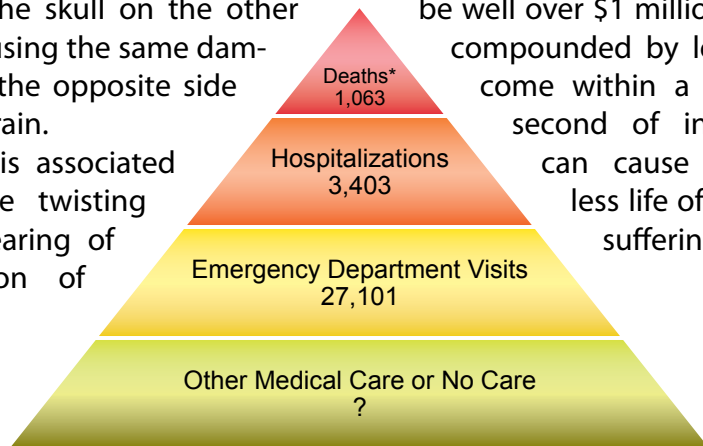
Eddie Reynolds
 Outreach Coordinator
 Brain Injury Alliance of Kentucky

Brain injury and texting while driving

There is no hard data on how many people are killed or injured because someone was texting and driving, but we know that motor vehicle traffic crashes account for the majority of injuries among Kentucky's youth, ages 15-24. They may have quicker reaction time, but the combination of speed and multi-tasking while driving is dangerous at any age.

Motor vehicle traffic crashes injure the brain primarily in two ways: coup/countercoup and Diffuse Axonal Injury (DAI). The coup/countercoup occurs when the head strikes a solid object at a high rate of speed. This causes the brain (floating in a sea of cerebral spinal fluid) to slam forcefully at the point of impact. Not only are tender blood vessels broken and tender tissue swollen, but the brain then flies backward and strikes the skull on the other side, causing the same damage on the opposite side of the brain.

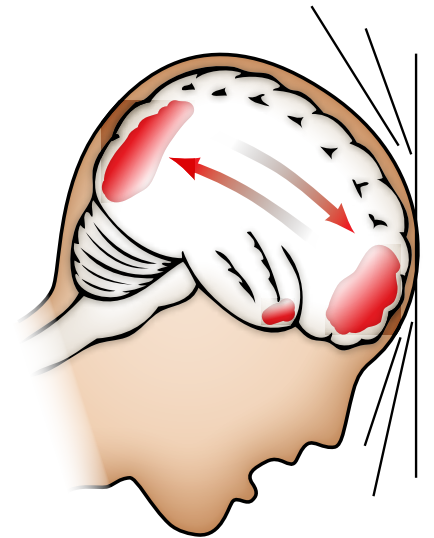
DAI is associated with the twisting and shearing of the axon of



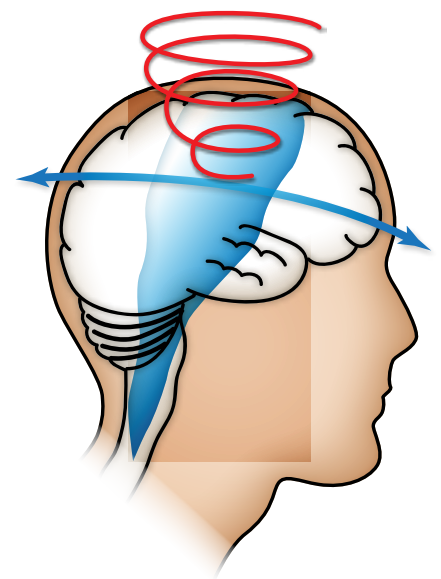
Number of Traumatic Brain Injury-Related Emergency Department Visits, Hospitalizations, and Estimated Deaths*, Kentucky, 2010

the neuron. The axon is the long, slender part of the neuron that is responsible for communicating with other neurons. Because this injury is diffuse, it affects every area of the brain and is considered by some in the medical profession as the more serious of the two injuries. Occasionally, due to a severe loss of blood or near drowning or suffocation, the brain may suffer damage from anoxia. Anoxia is also a diffuse injury with often a very poor prognosis and a very long and often-incomplete recovery.

These brain injuries can leave the person with life-long disabilities that affect physical functioning, ability to think and emotional responses. In short, these injuries require intensive medical and rehabilitation treatment. The cost of a traumatic brain injury can easily be well over \$1 million – often compounded by loss of income within a family. A second of inattention can cause a needless life of pain and suffering.



Coup/Countercoup



Diffuse Axonal Injury



Secretary's Message

— *Michael W. Hancock, P.E.*



One text or call could wreck it all

Did you know that “distracted driving” was the 2009 word of the year according to Webster’s Dictionary? But unfortunately, this is no passing fad. Distracted driving has become a trend with deadly, real consequences.

For anyone who thinks they can talk on their phone, text, apply makeup or do any other distracting activity while driving, it’s time for a crash course in reality from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA):

- In 2009, nearly 5,500 people were killed and a half million more were injured in distracted driving crashes.
- Drivers who use hand-held devices are four times as likely to be involved in a serious crash.
- Twenty percent of injury crashes in 2009 involved reports of distracted driving.
- Younger, inexperienced drivers under 20 years old have the highest proportion of distraction-related fatal crashes.

While those numbers may sound like just statistics, they’re anything but. They could be parents, children, neighbors and friends from right here in Kentucky, such as Hillary Coltharp from Paducah, who is featured in our month-long campaign. There are too many sad tales of deaths and injuries that could have been prevented had

drivers been paying attention to the road instead of someone or something else.

So, why do so many people participate in this dangerous behavior? Unprecedented technology has created unprecedented distraction. We live in a world where people expect instant, real-time information, and those desires don’t stop just because they get behind the wheel. Drivers simply do not realize – or choose to ignore – the danger they create when they take their eyes off the road, their hands off the wheel and their focus off driving.

For those who think they can do two things at once, think about this: According to a study by Carnegie Mellon, driving while using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37 percent. Can you really afford to lose that much brainpower? Driving is an activity that requires your full attention and focus in order to keep yourself and others safe.

Yes, this is a national problem, but it also affects us right here in Kentucky. No one is immune from the dangers of distracted driving. We as a society try to blame other groups, such as young drivers. But, as parents and grandparents, we need to set a positive example and not only refrain from using an electronic device while driving, but refrain from calling your child when they may be driving. Bottom line: one text or call could wreck it all.



YourLetters

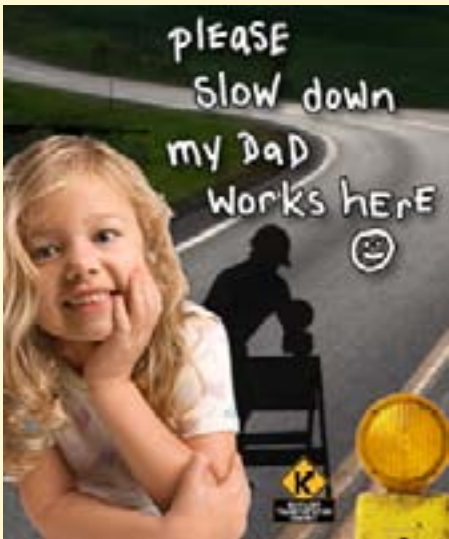
I wanted to pass along an incident with one of your SAFE Patrol highway safety guys. His name was Gary and he stayed with and protected my 16 year old daughter tonight for over an hour while my wife and I organized the means to come rescue her and her friend. Gary was professional and would not accept the tip I offered. He is to be commended! The incident occurred on SB I-75 about 30 miles north of Lexington. Thank you for the program!

—Tim Dodson

Dear Mr. McCoy and Mr. Franklin,

On behalf of the Eastern Kentucky University Baccalaureate Nursing students, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to you for your support of the Battle of the Belts programs at Madison Central and Berea Community high schools. The use of the Rollover Simulator and the Distracted Driving Simulator to reinforce teaching was of great importance. Not only were the students learning for their own benefit, but they will apply it elsewhere when riding with other people. Thank you for your time and the materials to enhance and make the day an educational day!

—EKU Baccalaureate Nursing Students



A split second of driver distraction can turn a highway work zone into a death zone. The past three years in Kentucky, 16 people died and 285 people were injured in highway construction and maintenance work zones. That underscores the importance of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's work zone safety campaign April 23 - 27, in conjunction with National Work Zone Safety

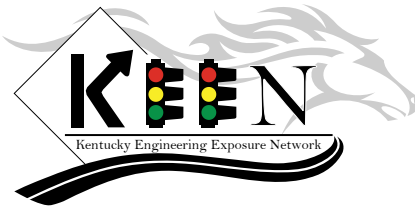
Week. The cabinet is hosting events across the state to highlight the safety message and will run radio public service announcements featuring Transportation Cabinet employees and children of employees. [Click here](#) for more information and to hear the radio public service announcements.

Mark your calendars!

The national "Click It or Ticket" seat belt enforcement campaign is

May 20 – June 3.





Engineers, state highway staff available for classroom visits

Part of Transportation Cabinet's KEEN program

Calling all teachers! Did you know that professional engineers and state highway staff are available to visit your classrooms?

For more than 20 years, the Transportation Cabinet has provided classroom visits as part of the Kentucky Engineering Exposure Network (KEEN) to help educators bridge the gap between the math and science curriculum and its real-world applications.

Through the free program, cabinet employees partner with schools in their own communities to discuss how they build bridges, plan massive multi-lane highways or configure complicated electronic traffic control systems, and to lead students in hands-on learning center activities.

Activities like Foil Boat Construction, Toothpick Bridge Building, Paper Towers and more are engineering-based and designed to reinforce team-building as well as math concepts such as weights and measures, surface area and basic geometry or physics principles like buoyancy, force and friction. Teaching-only lessons about the history of highways and engineering careers are also available.

In addition, the classroom visits include information about the Transportation Cabinet's scholarship programs.

Each year, the cabinet awards as many as 20 college scholarships to students interested in pursuing bachelor's degrees in civil engineering through

accredited Kentucky universities. Scholarships are also available for those pursuing civil engineering technology degrees at two schools in the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS).

The competitive scholarships offer not only a way for students throughout Kentucky to pay for a higher education, but they also offer employment with the Transportation Cabinet upon completion of a degree.

[Click here](#) for more information about the KEEN program, including lists of activities and contact information for area coordinators.

Did you know?

Study urges booster seat use when carpooling

Many parents are more relaxed about booster seat use when carpooling, according to a study conducted by the University of Michigan's C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. According to the study, most parents report that they typically require their child to use a booster seat, but more than 30 percent say they don't enforce this rule when their child is riding with another driver. [Read more here.](#)

Injuries while walking with headphones tripled in seven years

The number of serious injuries and deaths occurring to pedestrians who were walking with headphones has tripled in seven years in the United States, according to a report published in Injury Prevention. [Read more here.](#)



Little progress in reducing speed-related traffic deaths

A [report](#) released by the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) highlights the continued role [speeding](#) plays in traffic deaths and makes recommendations to address the problem. Despite progress in nearly every other area of highway safety, speeding continues to be a factor in approximately one third of traffic deaths every year. [Read more here.](#)



SafetySpotlight ≡

Meet recent staff additions to the Kentucky Office of Highway Safety

Jenn Rosell schedules education programs at schools and businesses statewide for the Division of Highway Safety Programs. She transferred from the Cabinet's Office of Legal Services in November 2011 where she assisted with condemnation and motor carrier cases.

Jenn graduated from Bullitt East High School in 2002 and is a veteran of the United States Army, serving in Kuwait in 2003.

In her spare time, Jenn enjoys watching football and baking cupcakes. She resides in Frankfort with her two sons, Andrew and Gavin. She can be contacted at 502-564-9900 ext. 3593 or Jenn.Rosell@ky.gov.



▲ Jenn Rosell



▲ DeAnn Cinquino

DeAnn Cinquino is an Administrative Specialist III supporting the KOHS Director and the Grants Branch Manager. DeAnn is new to state government and comes to us with extensive experience in marketing, events coordination and finance. She began her career at Eastman Kodak Company in Rochester, New York, in 1982 and moved to Kentucky in 2005 where she became a Business Development Specialist for a local employment recruitment service and most recently worked as the Executive Assistant for Kentucky Council of Area Development Districts.

DeAnn received a Marketing degree from Monroe Community College in 2001. She continued her education at Midway College where she received a degree in Organizational Management in 2010.

In her spare time, DeAnn enjoys outdoor activities such as bicycling and hiking in addition to exploring small towns in Kentucky. She resides in Georgetown. DeAnn can be contacted at 564-9900 ext. 3603 or DeAnn.Cinquino@ky.gov.

Rick Schad is the Administrative Branch Manager for the Office of Highway Safety Education Branch. This team is responsible for providing basic level educational experiences for the following programs: Seat Belt Safety, Child Passenger Safety, Motorcycle Safety, Corporate Outreach, Impaired Driving, Distracted Driving, Young Drivers, and Mature Drivers.

Rick transferred to the Office of Highway Safety from the Division of Vehicle Regulations where he supervised a section in the Customer Service Center. Prior to that, he spent 9 years teaching for both the Justice

Cabinet and Personnel Cabinet. He is a veteran of the Lexington Police Department and the United States Army. Rick has a Bachelor of Science in Police Studies and a Masters Degree in Career and Technical Education from Eastern Kentucky University.

Rick lives in Lexington with his wife, Shelia. In their spare time, they enjoy hunting for rare books, cheering for the Buffalo Bills and operating amateur radios (HAMS). Rick is also a Freemason with the 32nd degree Scottish Rite. He can be contacted at Rick.Schad@ky.gov or 502.564.9900 ext. 3593.



▲ Rick Schad



Paul and Shawn Coltharp of Paducah record the "One Text or Call Could Wreck It All" public service announcement featuring their daughter, Hillary.



The Hillary Coltharp Story *(continued)*

As difficult as the challenges may be, Hillary embraces her recovery with the same passion and determination she's had since birth. She believes she's now obligated to tell her story to prevent others from making the same mistake. That is why the Kentucky Office of Highway Safety is featuring Hillary and her parents, Paul and Shawn, sister, Ashley, and Hillary's friend, Paducah Police Officer Gretchen Morgan, in the "**One Text or Call Could Wreck It All**" public service announcements airing in April as part of Distracted Driving Awareness Month.

In Kentucky last year, approximately 25 percent of the roadway fatalities and 40 percent of injuries were due to driver distraction and inattention.

The goal of this campaign is simple: Save lives by getting drivers to remember that "One Text or Call Could Wreck It All."

View the public service announcements [here](#).

To follow Shawn Coltharp's blog [click here](#).

For more information about distracted driving, [click here](#).

Did you know?

National Safety Council's

"Understanding the Distracted Brain"

Read about the limitations of the human brain when multitasking and view the "[Understanding Distracted Driving](#)" video series

U.S. DOT proposes 'distraction' guidelines for automakers

Proposed recommendations would encourage manufacturers to develop 'less distracting' in-vehicle electronic devices. [Read more here](#).

Watch "Faces of Distracted Driving" videos

View the ongoing video series by the U.S. DOT of families who have been affected by this deadly epidemic. [Watch here](#).

Stop the Texts. Stop the Wrecks. campaign website launched

View information on the Ad Council's texting and driving campaign [here](#).

Teen Passengers: The "other distraction" for teen drivers

New studies describe which teens are likely to drive with multiple friends, and how these passengers may affect teen drivers right before a crash. [Read more here](#).

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety: Distracted driving among newly licensed teen drivers

In-car camera study shows distractions vary by gender and other factors. [Read more here](#).



Chapel Hill, North Carolina became the first town in the nation to pass an ordinance banning both hand-held and hands-free cell phones while driving. The vote occurred at a town council meeting March 26. The ban takes effect June 1. [Read more here](#).



EventCalendar

• An up-to-date and detailed listing will be on our [Events Facebook page](#)

April 2, 2012

- Safety booth at Frankfort National Night Out

April 3, 2012

- D2 Simulator at LaRue County High School
- Safety Booth at Bates Elementary School
- 3D Simulator at Redbird Ranger District

April 4, 2012

- D2 and Rollover simulators at Doss High School

April 5, 2012

- Rollover Simulator at Breathitt County High School

April 10, 2012

- Rollover Simulator at Betsy Layne High School
- D2 Simulator at Ft. Knox Army Base

April 11, 2012

- Rollover Simulator at Allen Central High School
- D2 Simulator at Barren County High School
- Sweet 16 at Carroll County High School
- Safety booth at Orr Corporation

April 12, 2012

- D2 at Somerset High School
- D2 Simulator at Big Rivers Electric
- Sweet 16 at Logan County High School

April 13, 2012

- D2 Simulator at Jenkins Independent High School
- Ghost Out at Ft. Knox High School
- Rollover Simulator at Jones Park Elementary

April 16, 2012

- Ghost Out at Adair County High School
- Mature Driver program at Lexington Senior Citizens Center

April 17, 2012

- Rollover at Bullitt County Alternative Center
- 3D Simulator at Graves County High School

April 18, 2012

- D2 Simulator at Kentucky Power Company in Pikeville
- Sweet 16 at Owen County High School
- Sweet 16 at Dayton High School

April 19, 2012

- 3D (Drunk, Drugged and Distracted Driving) Simulator at North Oldham High School

April 20, 2012

- Mock Crash at Carroll County High School
- Ghost Out at Warren East High School
- 3D Simulator at Lee County High School
- Sweet 16 at Pendleton County High School

April 21, 2012

- Rollover Simulator at Shelby County Family Health & Fitness Day

April 25-27, 2012

- LIFESAVERS - Galt House Hotel



May 1, 2012

- D2 at Butler County High School
- Rollover Simulator at The Providence School
- D2 and Rollover simulators at Montgomery County High School

May 2, 2012

- D2 Simulator at Gallatin County High School
- Rollover Simulator at Holy Cross High School

May 3, 2012

- D2 Simulator at Butler Traditional High School
- Ghost Out at Dayton High School

May 5, 2012

- Safety booth at Governor's Derby Breakfast
- B.R.A.K.E.S. (Be Responsible And Keep Everyone Safe) program at Franklin County High School

May 6, 2012

- B.R.A.K.E.S. (Be Responsible And Keep Everyone Safe) program at Franklin County High School

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Cooperative Agencies



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

