

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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NTSB WEBINAR: *
*
COMMUNICATING AND CONNECTING SAFETY *
MESSAGES TO NATIVE AMERICAN *
COMMUNITIES *
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* * * * *

via videoconference

Thursday,
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APPEARANCES:

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W E B I N A R

(1:00 p.m.)

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3 MR. WORRELL: Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you for
4 joining today's Webinar, communicating and connecting safety
5 messages to Native American communities. Part of a long overdue
6 conversation on reaching underserved communities to improve
7 transportation safety. Today's webinar is hosted by the National
8 Transportation Safety Board and will last approximately an hour
9 and 45 minutes, hour and a half.

10 I am Nicholas Worrell, the Chief of the Office of Safety
11 Advocacy Division here at NTSB. As I said in our earlier
12 webinars, we have to intentionally include underserved communities
13 in order to not unintentionally exclude them. Today's webinar is
14 about reaching Native America communities specifically. And we
15 have opened this learning opportunity to other advocacy groups who
16 want to learn and grow with us here at NTSB.

17 In our early seminars, we talked about the need to talk with
18 people, not about them. The need to respect the diversity within
19 each audience, the need to avoid stereotyping and above all, the
20 need to authentically communicate with other groups. We have also
21 heard that often the messenger can be as important as the message.
22 For the NTSB, we look to outside groups with expertise in
23 connecting and communicating.

24 With only a handful of safety advocacy staff out of a total
25 of approximately 400 employees, NTSB advocates by collaborating

1 with groups aligned with our safety issue or safety
2 recommendations. What should we and such partner group know
3 specifically about Native American communities is not just an
4 academic question that I'm asking. According to the Bureau of
5 Indian Affairs 2022 Annual Report, do those who identify as
6 American Indian or Alaska Natives are killed and injured at a rate
7 of two or three times that of other ethnic groups.

8 Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of unintentional
9 death for American Indians and Alaskan Natives ages one through
10 44. The 574 Federally recognized Native Alaskan and American
11 Indian tribes are -- geographically spread throughout the United
12 States. Each tribe is unique in its heritage, language and
13 lifestyle.

14 The lack of motor vehicle crash data and tribal reporting are
15 areas of continual struggle contributing to the difficulty of
16 reducing motor vehicle death among Native Americans. As we have
17 done with our other communities, today we are asking how to reach
18 Native American communities with the best safety messages and
19 practices, how to identify and recognize transportation safety
20 advocates to spread the best safety practices and messages to the
21 grassroots.

22 The Administration, as I said in previous (indiscernible)
23 have recognized that the overall racial and ethnic diversity of,
24 of our country continues to increase. Gaps and ratio in ethnic
25 equity persist. Recent Executive Order have sought to address

1 these disparities.

2 Today our panelists will help us better understand what it
3 takes to communicate and connect with them. Last month the
4 Federal Highway Administration announced almost \$21 million in
5 grant award for 88 tribal projects that will reduce roadway
6 fatalities and serious injuries on tribal land, well proven
7 countermeasures in the bipartisan infrastructure law. These are
8 direct measures.

9 I invite panelists to feel free to discuss funding
10 challenging in traffic -- in the traffic safety community as well.
11 And I want to thank all of you, our panelists -- and our
12 panelists for taking the time out of your busy schedules to share
13 and add value with us today. I'll briefly introduce them by -- by
14 their name, title and a very brief, brief mini-bio, but we will
15 put their bios in the chat and it's on our e-event page on
16 NTSB.gov for you to learn about them.

17 First we will hear from Tosheena Nez, Multicultural
18 Communications Manager for ICF Next. Tosheena is a
19 (indiscernible) communications specialist with more than five
20 years of experience at multicultural communication and advocacy
21 for Native American and Alaskan Native audience. Then we will
22 hear from Mary -- Maggi Gunnels, Regional Six Director National
23 Traffic Safety Administration. Dr. Gunnels oversees the Federal
24 Highway Safety Program in Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico,
25 Oklahoma, Texas and in the Indian nations.

1 Next we will hear from Laura Sonderup, Managing Director and
2 Senior Strategist, Strategist and Heinrich Marketing, a full
3 service advertising agency headquartered in Denver, Colorado.

4 Laura is a nationally recognized ethnic marketing expert and
5 frequent cleanup -- keynote speaker at national conferences.

6 Our final presenter will be Coby -- Cody Beers, a Senior
7 Public Relations Specialist with the Wyoming Department of
8 Transportation. He is (indiscernible) liaison to the Eastern
9 Shoshone and Northern Arapahoe Tribes of the West River
10 Reservation in Central Wyoming.

11 And to make sure that we are connected with all of you, if
12 you have questions, please enter them in the chat box and once we
13 -- once our panelists have presented, we will take as many of your
14 submitted questions as -- possible and have a wonderful
15 interaction between you and the panelist. So without further ado,
16 let's turn it over to our first panelist, Tosheena Nez,
17 Multicultural Communications Manager for ICF Next. Tosheena?

18 MS. NEZ: Hi, everybody. Okay. (Indiscernible) hello,
19 everybody. My name is Tosheena Nez. I am Dene, a member of the
20 Navajo Nation. I work at ICF Next as a multicultural
21 communications specialist. My focus is working with Native
22 American and Alaska Native audiences. ICF Next, Next is a global
23 government consulting technology and innovation firm based in
24 Reston, Virginia.

25 My background is in public health. My current work focuses

1 on communication in authentic engagement with Native American
2 audiences. Naturally, much of the work that I do is still health
3 related.

4 Today I'm excited to address the important topic
5 communicating and connecting safety messages to Native American
6 communities. And I will be focusing on the foundational knowledge
7 and the basics and the other wonderful panelists presenting after
8 me today will cover more. So key points today for my section is,
9 first, native people are diverse. We are not all the same.
10 Second, historical events have lasting impacts on native
11 communities and we are modern people.

12 Third, understand and respect tribal sovereignty. Fourth,
13 have a sustainability mindset. Really quickly, some definitions.
14 So indigenous. Indigenous communities are peoples with pre-
15 existing sovereignty who were living together as a community prior
16 to contact with settler populations. Most often, although not
17 exclusively, Europeans and then Native American. Native
18 Americans, also sometimes referred to as American Indians, are
19 members of any of the indigenous peoples of North, Central and
20 South America, especially those indigenous to what is now the
21 Continental U.S.

22 And one thing that I'm going to state also is that we are
23 people and we are not statistics. So keep that in mind as I go
24 through this. So first, let's talk about identifying native
25 people. Identifying native people is complex. There are so many

1 tribes and I will just cover the basics right now. So I want to
2 make sure that you can communicate and speak with, engage with
3 native people in a good way. So the, the title of the slide is we
4 are not a monolith, meaning that native tribes are not all the
5 same. Tribes are actually very diverse.

6 When working with tribes, it is important to listen and ask
7 first, how does the native person that you are working with
8 identify themselves and their community. For example, you can ask
9 how would you like for me to say the name of your native
10 community. Generally, it is safe to say native community because
11 it's specific enough to know that they know what you're asking
12 for. And my answer to that question would be you can call me Dene
13 or you can call me Navajo.

14 Personally, both words are acceptable to me. Dene translates
15 to the people in the Navajo language. And the word Navajo was a
16 term that was forced onto us, but I acknowledge that it is more
17 well known and it is also the official political name. So tribe
18 names that we call ourselves and other names that have been forced
19 onto us have stories and meaning behind them. That is why it's
20 important to listen and ask first.

21 There is no single Native American language. Native tribes
22 are diverse in their languages and culture. Currently, there are
23 574 Federally recognized tribes and out of those 574, 229 of them
24 are in Alaska. This means there's at least 540 -- 574 names for
25 different tribe names. And that's not including names that we

1 call ourselves.

2 So the U.S. Federally recognized tribes that legal
3 agreements, such as treaties with the U.S. Federal Government,
4 that enforces a nation to nation relationship. Tribal nations are
5 sovereign nations with their own rights to self-governance. For
6 example, on the Navajo Nation, we have our own Navaja Nation
7 President and I am both a citizen of the Navajo Nation and a
8 citizen of the United States.

9 There are approximately 324 Federal land areas of Indian land
10 areas in the United States. Reservations are just one type of
11 land area that are reserved for tribes to use. This designation
12 is usually through the treaties and some reservations are located
13 on ancestral lands, while other are placed -- are places that
14 tribes were forcibly relocated to by the U.S. Federal Government.
15 And we will cover a little bit more about this in the next --
16 section.

17 So first, tribal sovereignty gets its own slide because it's
18 just that important. And tribal sovereignty is important to
19 understand for proper tribal engagement. The 574 Federally
20 recognized tribes have a nation to nation relationship with the
21 Federal Government and individual states must respect tribes as
22 nations as well. Federally recognized tribes maintain their right
23 to govern themselves. Each tribal nation determines their own
24 government structure, so the governmental structures are different
25 from tribe to tribe.

1 Since there's so many tribes, I personally don't know the
2 governmental structure of all 100 -- all 574 of them. So as an
3 example, for the Navajo Nation, just because that's where I'm
4 from, I can share about it. Other tribes will do things
5 differently, like I said. So on the Navajo Nation, we have our
6 elections and then we vote for our Navajo Nation President and we
7 have different representatives and local leadership to represent
8 us.

9 One way to think of this concept of tribal sovereignty is to
10 -- when engaging with tribes, remember to respect that tribe --
11 respect tribal lands as if you are visiting a foreign country. It
12 is best to always consider tribal sovereignty when working with
13 tribes. If you don't, you may encounter issues, such as needing
14 to ask for deadline extensions due to tribe' political, cultural
15 or social approval processes that you may not have been aware of.

16 So it's important to of course communicate with the people
17 that you're working with. And this is just a photo of seal of the
18 Navajo Nation. So I'm going to provide some brief historical
19 context because it is important. So as I continue, I ask everyone
20 in the audience to please seek to understand before judging any
21 indigenous concepts or practices that I mention today. This
22 history is not the same for all native people.

23 So this is just a very basic overview. I encourage you to
24 learn more about the specific tribes in your area and their
25 history because it's very important. So in a normal friendship,

1 people generally take the time to have conversations with each
2 other to get to know each, know each other a lot better and
3 establish a good relationship. So making that same effort to
4 learn about foundational things before engaging with native
5 communities will similarly help to build a better relationship
6 with tribes.

7 Before trying to start a partnership with a tribe, it is good
8 to be mindful of that tribe's history. This provides a foundation
9 to build on and helps to avoid burdening native people by over-
10 questioning them and to avoid being unintentionally offensive.
11 You don't need to know everything about a specific tribe's past,
12 but be aware of the historical contexts and how they affect the
13 native people in modern day.

14 First, different tribes have different experiences with
15 colonization and I will not be covering all experiences and all
16 histories, all histories today. This is just a brief overview as
17 I said. I strongly recommend going over this on your own when you
18 have more time. So these are Federal policies that have happened.
19 So starting in 1830, there was the Indian Removal Act that granted
20 lands west of the Mississippi River in exchange for Indian lands,
21 leading to the U.S. Government's forced removal and relocation of
22 many tribes.

23 The bottom part I talk about Navajo history specifically, but
24 that's just because I'm Navajo. It'll vary. And then from -- in
25 the mid-1800s, there was the Indian boarding schools, where the

1 U.S. Government or Christian missionaries forcibly removed
2 children from their home and made them, forced them to attend
3 Government schools for the purpose of assimilation. And in this
4 photo, you can see that a person before who was in a traditional
5 regalia, they got their hair cut and they were forced to wear
6 Western clothing.

7 And then in -- around 1956, the American Indian Urban
8 Relocation Program created by the Bureau of Indian, Indian Affairs
9 offered assistance to native people to move to metropolitan areas
10 to assimilate them as well. And this led to unemployment
11 discrimination and loss of cultural support. So as you can see,
12 this is just very brief and I encourage you to learn more about
13 it. We have strong ties to the land, generally.

14 I have to say some, not all because we are not a monolith.
15 And please be respectful of closed practices. Some traditional
16 and ceremonial practices are -- if you're not a part of that
17 tribe, you're just simply not allowed to know about it. So please
18 be respectful of that. Don't try to probe and don't try to keep
19 asking questions about it.

20 So another thing is that sometimes indigenous knowledge that
21 conflict with Western society and Western -- socialization. So
22 there's different things to have additional conversations about.
23 And if a tribe ever says no to something, please understand that
24 they have very good and many reasons to say no and just please
25 respect that. Okay. The basics, get to know the community, learn

1 about demographics. Does your community speak English? What
2 other languages do they speak? Do they speak their indigenous
3 language? Those are very important. So try your best to use
4 plain language in your communications.

5 Learn about what types of resources they have and how you can
6 be supportive with what they have and what your goals are and try
7 to align them to make a good partnership. And as I had mentioned
8 with the historical context, I have that slide just to inform why
9 some tribes might be more distrustful than others when it comes to
10 working with outside organizations. So please keep those things
11 in mind.

12 Now, I'm going to talk about engaging and communicating next.
13 So when working with native tribes, please be careful to maintain
14 trust and we build -- focus on building a healthy relationship and
15 make sure you're doing your actions -- your -- yeah, you're
16 purposeful in actions that you're taking. Focus on strengths, so
17 try to get out of that disparity mindset and try to focus on what
18 strengths people have because that's more of the modern thing.

19 Again, partnership is crucial and relationship building.
20 Understand how much mistrust there is how ways to go about
21 remedying that. Now, I want to focus, I want to focus on number
22 six that I have bolder. So have a plan to engage long term. So
23 it is actually a pet peeve to some tribes when outside entities do
24 not plan for sustainability. And tribes do not want to create a
25 relationship, do a project and then be left with scraps or

1 leftovers. They do not want to have a project fail in the long
2 term due to poor sustainability after an outside organization can
3 leave.

4 It is better to have a plan for long term -- a long term
5 standing partnership before trying to work with any tribes to keep
6 good tribal relations. Communicating. So always ask permission
7 for any communications and, and get approval for everything. This
8 is a lot easier to do when you have a good partnership with the
9 tribe because you will always have people representing that tribe
10 who can tell you yes, do this, don't do this, this is what we
11 recommend. And listening to the tribe and always getting those
12 approvals is a way to show that you are respecting tribal
13 sovereignty.

14 Again, use plain language. Oh, sorry. This is really
15 important. Use modern day representations in your photos. Try to
16 avoid using historical photos because we are a modern people with
17 modern lives. That's the main thing. And then always make sure
18 you're representing the correct tribe, so make sure that you're
19 not showing the wrong tribe's photos for a completely different
20 tribe. Okay.

21 Now, key points again. Tribes are diverse. History is
22 important to understand, but we are modern people. And always
23 respect tribal sovereignty and have a sustainable --
24 sustainability mindset. And then I'll leave you with this last
25 tip that is crucial.

1 If you take anything away from my presentation, if you really
2 care about connecting with tribes, when you find yourself working
3 with any state, local or Federal Government or public service,
4 including your own organizations and you look around and there are
5 no tribes represented, ask them what about the tribes. That will
6 really help you become best friends with tribes. Okay. Thank
7 you. And I'm going to turn it over to Dr. Maggi next.

8 DR. GUNNELS: Thank you, Tosheena. And that was just
9 terrific. I, I know I really appreciate you sharing all that. I
10 know I always learn something and absolutely did today. So hello,
11 everyone. I'm Maggi Gunnels from the National Highway Traffic
12 Safety Administration and I'd like to thank Chief Worrell and the
13 National Transportation Safety Board and of course all our expert
14 panelists today.

15 And it's -- this is a really important dialogue we're about
16 to have and I really appreciate the opportunity to represent and
17 be part of that. And I know my hope, I think our hope really is
18 that we can convey some, some strategies and some examples of
19 things that work and we hope that these will result in safer
20 people, safer roads, safer speeds and safer vehicles.

21 And many of you may recognize that those are critical
22 elements of the safe system approach, which is a key strategy
23 incorporated within the United States Department of Transportation
24 National Roadway Safety Strategy. And so today there are four
25 concepts or strategies that I will focus on. And I'm actually

1 going to echo one very intentionally that Tosheena shared with us
2 just a moment ago.

3 And so I'll talk about those in just a moment. And I did
4 want to mention that I think it's so important to consider what
5 we've heard and what we'll hear today because all of these lessons
6 really guide us to really making those connections. And I think
7 connecting is, is really the key here. Communication must be
8 effective, but it's about the connection.

9 So these four concepts are things are important elements of
10 what we use in our work. And again, acknowledgment of tribal
11 sovereignty. We're a Federal agency, but from everyone who works
12 with Native American communities, this, again, is so critical, as
13 you've already heard today. Understanding the specific tribe or
14 tribes you want to reach and of course, cultural appropriate
15 language and messaging. Language does matter. And thinking about
16 partnership and how partnerships really leverage our opportunities
17 to work better with tribes.

18 I wanted to just begin, if I could, with just a brief
19 discussion of NHTSA's work with tribal nations, beginning with
20 our, our highway safety grant programs. So that we are -- I'm not
21 sure everyone is familiar with NHTSA, so I thought I'd get started
22 with that. And we work closely with the Department of the
23 Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs. We do this in accordance with
24 Federal Statute in the administration of grant funds that we award
25 to individual tribal nations.

1 In 2023, NHTSA awarded a little over \$8 million for the
2 purpose of addressing road use or behavioral safety challenges in
3 tribal communities. So there's some -- here's some examples of
4 the types of, of work that we fund and do. Traffic law
5 enforcement, community education, child passenger safety education
6 and we often most -- very importantly, I believe, work to help
7 develop and sustain child safety technician training and child
8 safety -- seat distribution with the Native American -- with the
9 Native American communities, as well as assisting with safety
10 messaging. And, and that may include things like developing
11 storytelling messaging. So those are some examples of the types
12 of work that we fund.

13 And I don't know if you're aware, but NHTSA does have a
14 tribal working group led by our stakeholder engagement specialist.
15 And we have offices across the country. There are ten regional
16 officers and we work around the country, as well as with key
17 offices at our headquarters. And I hope that many of you have had
18 an opportunity to meet Assistant Secretary Arlando Teller and
19 Director Milo Booth, who lead our office of Tribal Affairs that's
20 within the Office of the Secretary of Transportation.

21 And of course we work closely with the Federal Highway
22 Administration and all of the United States Department of
23 Transportation agencies to ensure that our grants and programs
24 work in a complimentary fashion. So that's, that's sort of a
25 framework for where we begin.

1 So first I'd like to of course acknowledge tribal sovereignty
2 and thank you so much, Tosheena. That was a -- such an important
3 explanation that you did about the 574 Federally recognized
4 tribes. And of course tribes live from Florida to, to Alaska,
5 with a great proportion, as you know, being from and in Alaska.
6 The land size, the population, the government structure and the
7 cultural practices vary greatly. And of critical importance is
8 the self-governance within the tribes, where laws are established
9 within their own jurisdictions because tribes are not a
10 subdivision or affiliated with a Federal or state government.
11 They are governments.

12 So that's really critical to think about when you're doing
13 programs and also to think about whether or not there might be
14 traffic safety laws that are sustained or might not even be
15 present in a tribal community. Tribes are empowered, of course,
16 to make their own decisions about what are best for their own
17 communities and, and are acknowledged in the Constitution and
18 their authority is established through treaties, statutory law and
19 the United States Supreme Court decisions.

20 So when, when we, when an outside Governmental entity wish to
21 engage with a tribe, it's so important that we are -- we are
22 communicating through the lens of government to government. And
23 these relationships take time to establish and they're based on
24 mutual respect. So tribal sovereignty is critically important.

25 Second, to expand a bit upon Tosheena's point about

1 understanding the tribe or the tribal nation, before we engage
2 with a tribe, we do research. We spend time looking at the
3 history. We want to recognize the uniqueness of that tribe and,
4 and frankly honor the tribe. It's really important because a
5 tribe, for example, in the Pacific Northwest may be very different
6 from one in the Southeastern part of the, the United States, such
7 as the Miccosukee.

8 So it -- many tribes do have official websites. They have
9 social media. You can oftentimes find really important
10 information about history and structure, cultural practices and
11 programs just by doing some research and informing yourself. So
12 reviewing this information will educate yourself and those with
13 whom you work and inform your approach about contacting tribal
14 officials.

15 And when you're thinking about traffic safety, for example,
16 ask the question does the tribe have a transportation department,
17 a police department. Is there a public health department. What
18 is the structure of the tribe and who are you trying to reach.
19 And so as you complete your research and get to know a little bit
20 more about the tribe, think about what the key issues are in that,
21 in that particular community and what are the safety priorities.

22 And as mentioned already, many tribes hold cultural
23 celebrations during specific times of year. So recognize that
24 tribal officials may be busy. They may not be available or have
25 time to meet with you or if you've already presented an idea or

1 had a discussion, it may take some time to hear back. And that's
2 perfectly acceptable and reasonable.

3 In addition to, to websites and those types of things, when
4 you're looking at social media accounts in Native American
5 communities, think about the community announcements and you might
6 learn a little bit more about the lay of the land or the lay or
7 the roads really, the safety issues by looking at these
8 announcements about constructions and weather and some of the
9 safety challenge that, that are being faced. So all this
10 information can be very important when forming your approach and,
11 and how to best meet the needs, needs of the tribes.

12 And I know that we, when speaking to tribal officials, we use
13 official titles. We understand and ask about the names that are
14 supposed to be used and are very respectful of that and tribal
15 sovereignty. I would, I would say a lesson we've learned that's
16 very important is to be patient. We can offer information, data,
17 programs, things like this, but expect this, this to take time and
18 consider and be considerate by perhaps a higher level counsel.

19 So a brief email or phone call is okay for an introduction,
20 but that doesn't work when you're trying to rush in and, and make
21 something happen. And I really appreciate Tosheena's point about
22 sustainability. It's, it's a long term relationship. It's not a
23 short term relationship. So again, allow sufficient time to
24 develop that relationship and, and -- or whether you're having a
25 leadership meeting, events or partnership activities, request

1 always to meet in person at a time and place that's convenient and
2 be ready to listen, understand their view and concerns.

3 And one example to provide to you might be that we often will
4 ride out with law enforcement officers so to understand better
5 what the roads are like and what the challenges they face are when
6 we're looking at what types of programs might be best for that
7 community. And I would say be patient when responding and allow
8 time to have a dialogue. There's no rushing necessary, but just
9 take time to understand and recognize that it may take a -- a bit
10 of time to communicate when you're seeking an agreement and you're
11 looking to make that connection and again, looking for the long
12 term relationship.

13 So third, we'd like -- I'd like to mention the, the, the
14 really important notes we've received about culturally appropriate
15 safety messaging. And, and in this case, language really does
16 matter and certainly images are included in that. Language and
17 imaging are really critical to communication strategies and you'll
18 hear more about that in, in just a moment. But I know the
19 polished look of our traditional general market messages, I think
20 we all know they really may not resonate with a particular tribe
21 or community. And a positive reinforcement of social norms is
22 likely to receive -- be received better as compared to something
23 that's more punitive or, or enforcement focused.

24 So we typically will appeal to community safety to advance
25 the preservation of the tribe, to empower the next generation and

1 to really focus on an empowered future that, that can work in that
2 particular community. And as Tosheena mentioned, it's so
3 important to craft safety messages and consult tribal officials,
4 tribal members when you're looking at those messaging and seek
5 their input. And you can offer to feature tribal -- members in
6 the messaging. Or if you're doing media productions and things,
7 you can hire Native American actors and always compensate people
8 for their time, individuals, actors and whoever participates for
9 the time and effort, just as you would if you were doing a
10 traditional media production.

11 And then the fourth point is really about leveraging
12 partnerships. And, and partnerships are the foundation for much
13 of what we do. Partnership opportunities can be strengthened and
14 created, especially when there's a shared vision of safety within
15 a tribal community. Partnerships really help bring that
16 connection and make it happen. And so everyone's working towards
17 the same mission and the same goals.

18 And I'd like to offer just a couple of examples of things
19 that, that we have done at our agency that you could think about
20 if you're about to approach a tribal community and -- or if you're
21 interested in working with us on something, which could be
22 possible as well. We're happy to do -- could -- to talk to you
23 about that as well.

24 So we've, we've hosted things, like, over the past number of
25 years we've hosted educational webinars. We funded many different

1 types of tribal safety activities and programs. I hope that some
2 of you on this call might have been at the Tribal Motor Vehicle
3 Safety Summit in Denver where we partnered with the Tribal Injury
4 Prevention Resource Center to talk about motor vehicle safety. We
5 did that last year. And we sponsored recently in the Spring
6 education and outreach activity at the gathering of nations, which
7 is a wonderful and -- opportunity for engagement with tribes.

8 And our regional offices from coast to coast really do stand
9 ready to work with tribal communities or those interested in
10 working with tribal communities on highway safety issues and
11 priorities. A few more examples might be our grant programs
12 through the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Indian Highway Safety
13 Program. For example, tribes are able to ask for assistance with
14 grant writing, technical assistance, as well as participate in
15 periodic grant writing workshops. We held two of these last year.
16 One in Denver and one in Albuquerque and those are at no cost to
17 participants.

18 We also can provide data assessments. So -- and, and has --
19 it has been mentioned and probably will continue to be mentioned,
20 there's a challenge in data collection and data analysis and
21 understanding the traffic safety issues with the Native American
22 communities. But we do have a team that will do a -- an
23 assessment of traffic safety data and systems. And that helps not
24 only pinpoint, pinpoint emerging safety issues, but it might also
25 help with other types of grant applications.

1 And finally, just a couple of more examples include our
2 educational webinars. And we have an upcoming one in November on
3 vehicle safety with the Tribal Injury Prevention Resource Center.
4 And that will be focused on things like making your vehicle safe,
5 checking for recalls and of course those can be repaired at no
6 cost to, to the person that is, that is participating. And then
7 we have traffic safety campaign materials, digital social media
8 and a number of resources online that can be used.

9 And we do want to mention especially that there is a
10 significant need for child passenger safety instructors and
11 technicians to be trained and who can serve Indian country. So
12 talk to us. We're glad to look for partnerships and how to
13 improve the cadre of instructors and technicians across, across
14 Indian country. And again, I did mention that we had ten regional
15 offices across the country that really want to serve Native
16 American communities. And we want to reduce the crashes, the
17 injuries and the deaths that we see on our roads.

18 So in closing, I'd just like to really echo again the four
19 very important concepts and the lessons we've learned over the
20 years. Tribal sovereignty is critical to connecting with Native
21 American communities and attention to government structure.
22 Governments, the cycle of governments and who's leading the tribe
23 of governments, which change typically, as you've heard. It's
24 very important when you're doing engagement activities and looking
25 to sustain those activities.

1 Second, take time to understand the tribe you want to learn
2 about and with whom you want to engage. And each tribe is unique
3 and that really -- underscores really the importance of specific
4 safety messaging strategies that incorporate cultural differences
5 and, and sensitivities. Third, ensure your safety messages, your
6 images, your communication strategies are culturally appropriate,
7 specific and relative to that tribe.

8 And then fourth, partnerships are really important in working
9 in Native American communities. And these really are a foundation
10 for connecting with members of Native American communities. And
11 we're happy to collaborate with you. So I hope those have helped
12 a bit. And it's really been a pleasure to share our experiences
13 and our perspective in communicating and connecting safety
14 messages to tribal communities.

15 We really appreciate this opportunity and I know we all want
16 to reduce and frankly end deaths and injuries and crashes on our
17 road. So thank you and it's my great pleasure to hand the virtual
18 microphone, if you will, over to our colleague Laura Sonderup, who
19 is an expert in safety messaging. So off to you, Laura.

20 MS. SONDERUP: Maggi, thank you so much. I will take a quick
21 second to get my slides ready to go. There we go. Hello,
22 everyone. Thank you so much for taking the time to join us today.
23 while we share some of our insights and experiences with you. I'm
24 particularly glad to have an opportunity to share with each of you
25 today the insights that my team and I have gathered over, over,

1 over 14 years of working collaboratively with members of the
2 Standing Rock, Spirit Lake, Turtle Mountain, Three Affiliated,
3 Eastern Shoshone, Northern Arapahoe, Ute Mountain Ute and Southern
4 Ute Tribal communities as they endeavor to reduce injuries and
5 fatalities on their respective roadways.

6 While I do not identify as an indigenous woman, I am a
7 marketing professional who strives to deliver respectful, relevant
8 and most important, results oriented outcomes. So let's get
9 started. Today, we'll have two of us actually speaking from
10 within the same deck. I'll take part one. Cody Beers from WYDOT
11 will take over at the end of my slides.

12 So when we think about message development, and you've heard
13 a little bit of this from Tosheena and Maggi both today, ownership
14 is absolutely key to successful campaign deliverables. Members
15 must be active participants in the message development process.
16 There's no other way to approach this. You've also heard some
17 references to language. We know that in some of the 574
18 communities, the use of -- native language is declining. So
19 keeping those words alive is particularly important.

20 And we have discovered such amazing opportunities in the
21 tribal communities with whom we've partnered to work with elders
22 to translate the traffic safety messages. It is just such an
23 incredible experience to have the privilege to hear their stories
24 as they work to translate the traffic safety messages into their
25 native languages. So do not -- I'm just encouraging you, do not

1 overlook that opportunity.

2 And then finally, we've talked a little bit already about
3 identification and proper use of tribe specific icons. So as we
4 start to show you some of the creative examples with the hope of
5 inspiring some, some creative ideas of your own, you'll see a
6 theme of featuring families, sacred landscapes, in some cases
7 customs and symbols and regalia.

8 I also want to encourage you to go into this process knowing
9 that flexibility is key. This is an example of a member of the --
10 one of the Wind River tribal communities who also happens to be a
11 school principal. We wanted to do a radio spot with him. He was
12 thrilled. He was a partner in the script development, but he
13 could not get away from school to go to a studio to record. So
14 guess what, we brought the studio to him. That's the sort of
15 flexibility we need to be keeping top of mind.

16 We've also talked a little bit, Tosheena and Maggi both
17 mentioned the importance of ceremonies. So going to powwows for
18 example can be an awesome opportunity not only to help individuals
19 who do not identify as indigenous learn more about their, their
20 neighbors, but it also can give you an awesome opportunity to get
21 photographs to use in future traffic safety messaging. A couple
22 of things to think about.

23 I think Tosheena mentioned some of the tribal ceremonies are
24 off limits. So always ask permission. This should be part of an
25 ongoing conversation that you're having with members of the tribal

1 communities with whom you're working. Ask if you might attend
2 this event. After you've gotten permission to attend the event,
3 then it's also critical to ask permission of the individuals that
4 you may be taking photographs of. I think Maggi mentioned the
5 importance of compensating. So that absolutely, you have to have
6 a budget item in your creative process to ensure that we're
7 properly compensating the individuals with whom we're partnering
8 for creative development.

9 So specifically today, I did name -- because I think it's
10 important to name each of the tribal communities with whom we've
11 worked, but you'll see that some of these projects have been with
12 -- as part of a contract with Region Eight, NHTSA Region Eight.
13 We've also worked with the Wyoming Department of Transportation,
14 as well as the Colorado Department of Transportation.

15 So let's get started and take a look at some of the work that
16 we've done in partnership with four of the tribal communities in
17 North Dakota. You'll see first thing as you start to look at some
18 of this creative that, as we -- Tosheena and Maggi both mentioned,
19 it is critical we never ever want to use stock images. It is
20 critical that we're showing the tribes individuals from within
21 their communities, respective members of the tribal counsel, of
22 law enforcement, of healthcare, educators. All of those
23 individuals have a story to tell. And I believe it's our
24 obligation to give them that voice.

25 So what you will see as we go through a lot of this creative,

1 these are not headlines that my creative team has written. These
2 are not creative concepts that we've developed. This is what
3 we've done as an aspect of listening. It is so critical to
4 listen. To sit and talk with individuals, to talk with these two
5 gentlemen who are part of law enforcement and hear what their
6 opinions are. Where do they think the biggest opportunity is.
7 And then to take their words and put those words into the
8 creative.

9 Here are a couple of other examples, one featuring members of
10 law enforcement from one of the other tribal communities. You'll
11 also see in both of these that native language has been used
12 within the copy in the, the ad. The one on the right, we will be
13 known forever by the tracks we leave. It's a Dakota proverb that
14 one of the tribal members brought to my attention during our
15 conversations. And just being able to utilize those insights from
16 the members of the communities with whom you're working is
17 critical to effective message development.

18 There's another example. All right. So let's transition for
19 a moment to our work with the communities comprised within the
20 Pine Ridge Reservation. And it's -- got a map on here for you
21 just so you're sure where Pine Ridge is located. So lower part of
22 South Dakota on the Nebraska border. So a couple of the examples
23 of some drinking and driving messaging featuring families who were
24 on that particular day participating in powwows. And then a
25 buckle up message as well.

1 Now we'll move a little further south down to Colorado to the
2 Southern Ute and Ute Mountain communities. You might recall a few
3 slides back talking about sacred landscapes. This is certainly a
4 great example of the feedback that we received in those
5 conversations with our contacts at the Ute Mountain community that
6 there are some landscapes, there are some, some views within the
7 reservation that are particularly important to the members of the
8 community and are considered sacred. So having that insight when
9 we're trying to determine appropriate images for billboards in
10 this example is critical. And again, you really have to depend on
11 those community members to give you those meaningful insights.

12 And another example showing sacred landscapes in a billboard
13 on the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe's reservation. Ute Mountain, as you
14 can -- if you -- if you'll use your imagination a little bit,
15 you'll be able to see within this mountain range the, the sleeping
16 Ute. And, and so again, an example of using sacred landscape in a
17 bumper sticker, as well as, you'll notice along the bottom, that
18 is a pottery design. The black and white design is really
19 important to the Ute Mountain community and they're very well
20 known for their beautiful pottery. So being able to, again,
21 introduce a relevant image that says to the tribal community
22 members, hey, this message is for me. I see myself and my family
23 and my community in this message.

24 And then also working with the folks at KSUT, a radio station
25 with -- affiliated with the Southern Ute community is equally

1 important. So you've seen a lot of print and billboards simply
2 because those are the easiest things to show you in a, in a
3 webinar. But it's also important to think about what are those
4 other messaging opportunities that might be available to you
5 within the tribal community.

6 So maybe there is a reservation station that you could be
7 running traffic safety messages on. And again, talking with those
8 individuals, working directly with them on production, on script
9 development, it is amazing the insights that you can glean from
10 those respectful relationships. So strongly encourage you to
11 consider that as an option.

12 And then we'll head back up north just a bit to Wyoming and
13 talk about the Wind River Reservation. We have both the Northern
14 Arapaho and the Eastern Shoshone Tribes are both a part of the
15 Wind River Reservation. So always making sure that we're talking
16 to those individuals, those families, those business leaders, the
17 tribal leaders representing both of those communities is key.

18 Another thing that's key, and we've talked a bit about this,
19 so, so I hope you're, you're listening and, and thinking about how
20 you can do this within your own state or within your own
21 community, but the importance of listening. So we frequently do
22 tribal surveys. We do listening sessions because, again, it's so
23 critical to hear what people are thinking and then take that
24 information and put it back out into the community in a meaningful
25 way in an effort to reduce those roadway injuries and fatalities.

1 So here are a couple of examples of billboards that actually
2 have quotes that we gathered in listening sessions from respected
3 tribal members. So they really truly have a voice in this case
4 and their names are associated with those messages. Here are two
5 other examples of messages that came out of those surveys and
6 listening sessions. We know that pedestrian safety is very, very
7 important. So hearing what an individual tribal member is saying,
8 be seen. Be safe. Your life depends on it. Literally using
9 those words is a critical part of effective message development.

10 And I'll share with you a couple of other examples. We're
11 going to hear from Cherokee Brown (ph.), this woman in just a
12 moment in a video that she's going to talk a little bit about a
13 loss that her family experienced. And you'll notice in this case,
14 there have been some instances where we've led with English,
15 followed up by native language. This is a nice example of leading
16 strongly with native language and then English secondarily, all
17 driven by tribal input. So I've got a couple of videos I'd like
18 to share with you.

19 (Video is played starting at 56:13.3)

20 UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS: (Untranslated.)

21 MS. LEBO: My name is Emory L. Lebo (ph.). I'm a finance
22 director for the Northern Arapaho Tribal Housing. I also serve on
23 the Fremont County School District Court team. I am also a board
24 member for the Wind River Development Fund.

25 The road we're standing on is known as Blue Sky Highway.

1 This road is special to me because I use it every day to transport
2 my kids to school, practice, games, as well as getting myself to
3 work. It's the lifeline of our community here. It's the pathway
4 to success for our community. This community is made up of
5 grandmothers, aunts, uncles, moms, fathers and our precious
6 children.

7 If you were to drive impaired, I would ask why would you risk
8 all of that. We care about each other here and we wouldn't want
9 anything bad to happen. There are 33,000 miles of roads in
10 Wyoming. This one's mine. Don't go down that road.

11 (Video ends playing at 57:20.4)

12 MS. SONDERUP: All right. I have another video to share with
13 you. I mentioned just a moment ago you saw this member of the
14 community featured in a billboard creative execution. Let's take
15 a listen to hear about the loss that her family experienced.

16 (Video starts playing at 57:38.9)

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hillery (ph.) was supposed to meet us
18 for a family gathering and a ceremony that night. We always went
19 over the, make sure you have your seatbelt on, but never crossed
20 my mind that she was racing her vehicle. Hillery had a smile that
21 can just brighten up any room. She could go from playing a game
22 on a court at state and going straight to the court to the runway.
23 She was just free. Her spirit was so free.

24 We don't leave the driveway if the seatbelts are not on. But
25 what I realized it doesn't really matter. It could be 50 yards

1 down the road and you can get killed. Hillery was less than a
2 mile from where she was going from her parents' house. If she had
3 had her seatbelt on that day, I, I believe she'd still be here. I
4 wouldn't wish anybody to feel this kind of pain. Kids being kids
5 is playing in the backyard and not laying in a field dead. I
6 don't get to watch her play basketball for college. That was her
7 dream and she never made it to that.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: (Untranslated.)

9 (Video ends playing at 58:56.9)

10 MS. SONDERUP: And then the final video that I'll share with
11 you is one that we partnered with indigenous youth on the
12 reservation to help us produce. And if there's anything I can
13 leave you with today, it's what on this slide. Let's think
14 proactively about engaging tribal youth, not only as a means of
15 reducing injuries and fatalities on our roadways, but as a means
16 of developing the next generation of transportation experts within
17 our tribal communities.

18 All right. We're in the homestretch. Cody, get ready to, to
19 jump in. A couple more examples, this particular execution with
20 the headline tough love tough guy. As you can see, this one was
21 translated and I would say historically speaking, for the, for the
22 14 years that we've been working with the Wind River Reservation,
23 this has probably been the most impactful campaign.

24 And in fact, those of you who are on the call who are in
25 marketing, you probably appreciate that most of the time when we

1 see crossover, how does crossover happen? It's typical when a
2 really solid concept starts with general marketing and then what
3 do we do, we adapt it to diverse communities, right. Well, I am
4 so proud that in this case, we turned that on its ear. We took a
5 very strong tribal message and we crossed it back over to general
6 market. So that's the sort of progress that we want to see.

7 Now, as I wrap up, I think that Tosheena or Maggi had
8 mentioned something about being very careful with historical
9 images. And I want all of us to respect that advice. I also want
10 to use this particular concept as an example of what can I do now.
11 Maybe -- well, fiscal year '24 funding, you probably don't have it
12 just yet. So you're already thinking about what can I do right
13 now. I'm hopeful that you've been inspired by some of the things
14 that you've heard on today's call and our conversations.

15 So what are some steps that you might be able to take. And
16 this is a perfect example to use to answer that question. The
17 very first year that we worked cooperatively with WYDOT on the
18 Wind River Reservation, we were there for a week in meetings with
19 the tribal counsel, with business leaders, with moms and dads,
20 talking about what a traffic messaging campaign could look like.

21 And as part of that sort of get to know you of conversations,
22 one of the tribal leaders asked me to tour the museum that is on
23 the reservation. And as she was guiding me through the exhibits
24 and we were talking, I happened to see this image of this mother
25 and child hanging on a wall. And so she and I stopped. We talked

1 a little bit about this message. And being a creative, working
2 for an agency, I immediately thought about the connection between
3 then and now. And that tribal mothers and fathers have been
4 transporting their children safely forever. Putting them in a car
5 seat isn't really a new message. It's a new way to transport, but
6 the idea of transporting and caring for our children is not a new
7 idea.

8 So as she and I talked, of course I asked for permission. I
9 literally snapped a picture of the picture hanging on the wall in
10 the museum on my phone, brought it back to the creative team and
11 said, what can we do with this. So here is, in my opinion, a
12 really respectful informed use of a historical image that connects
13 what we -- what the, what the tribal communities have been doing
14 with what we're asking them to do today. And that is to make sure
15 that their little ones, their little ones are being properly
16 restrained.

17 So I'm hopeful that, that this shows you a way to maybe get
18 started in an unexpected way that really doesn't take much of a
19 budget. So to recap, the biggest thing I can leave you with, and
20 again, you've heard this from several other speakers and Cody may
21 even weigh in on this as well, tribal members must be a part of
22 any message development undertaking without exception. And when
23 you listen and you listen for meaning and you listen for intent
24 and you listen to hear some of those cultural nuances, you're
25 going to do a great job with developing messaging for use in

1 reducing injuries and fatalities.

2 Cody, I'd like to turn it over to you.

3 MR. BEERS: Thank you, Laura. And I can't say anything but
4 wow after following this amazing group of people. I'm going to
5 say many of the same things that, that they have said. My name's
6 Cody Beers. My family were long time ranchers on the Wind River
7 Reservation. So you may, you may be wondering why a middle aged
8 white guy is, is sitting here speaking to you about how to
9 communicate with Native American tribes.

10 Well, it's been part of my family's history for about 80
11 years. And I'm a fortunate person to have had grandparents like
12 mine who lived and worked successfully on the Wind River
13 Reservation. It helped me to have some credibility up front, that
14 street cred that we're all looking for out in our communities.
15 And on a place like Wind River Reservation that is right smack dab
16 in the middle of the state. It's a reservation that takes up
17 about 2.2 million acres. And it's shared by two tribes, the
18 Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapahoe, which is a unique
19 situation in the United States.

20 That is the only reservation that is shared by two different
21 tribes and two sovereign nations, who speak two different
22 languages, who have two different tribal governments and that we
23 work with at WYDOT because transportation in a rural state like
24 Wyoming is so critical and it's so critical on Wind River. And
25 you'll hear me say on Wind River and that -- when I say that, I'm,

1 I'm speaking of the Wind River Reservation, which is right outside
2 my window here at my office.

3 So I wanted to talk to you a little bit about how we have
4 approached our long term relationship with the, the tribes on Wind
5 River. And I will say it's long term because I'm not the first
6 one who's done this work. We've had, we've had a series of folks
7 through the years who have -- who've had this relationship, even
8 though I would tell you my, my relationship is unique to all of
9 them because, because of my family history and also because of
10 what I do outside of the Wyoming Department of Transportation.
11 When I've, I've had the opportunity to work with tribes, I've done
12 that.

13 And I also do it on the sports activities of the Wind River
14 Reservation. And I'm currently in my tenth year as the voice of
15 the Wyoming Indian Chief's basketball teams, who have been very
16 successful in girls basketball and boys basketball. And, and that
17 has continued to develop my trust base friendship with both
18 tribes.

19 Today we want to talk about some of the things we do. And
20 it's very important that in Wyoming, that we've partnered with
21 these two tribes to improve the road structure on the reservation
22 and to talk about the four Es. Things we've done through our
23 marketing campaigns, working with the fabulous contractor, being
24 Laura Sonderup and Ms. Fonny Dod (ph.) and also known as Heinrich
25 Marketing.

1 Education has been a big deal. And emergency services,
2 enforcement of both tribal code and Wyoming state law and U.S.,
3 U.S. codes is an important thing. And then of course engineering,
4 how do we improve roads and bridges basically within a sovereign
5 nation. We do have state highways that go through Wind River. We
6 have a U.S. highway that goes through Wind River, but we also have
7 many tribal roads which feed as collector roads and allow the
8 tribal people to get to, to schools, to church, to get off the
9 reservation, to get medical services, to get a number of things.
10 And then just like us, to get out and enjoy the world so to speak.

11 So with that, Laura, let's move on to, to our next slide.
12 WYDOT I believe is relatively unique because we are so rural in
13 Wyoming. And then we've got Fremont County, which Wind River is
14 totally located inside of. Fremont County, Wyoming is in the top
15 ten as far as land areas for counties in the United States. And
16 it is about roughly the size of Vermont. And so then you plonk
17 down the Wind River Reservation inside of Fremont County and
18 you've got areas that are many miles apart.

19 And, and, you know, a ride into town from the middle of Wind
20 River is 25 to 40 miles often. And so very spread out. A lot of
21 driving. And that's why transportation becomes such an important
22 part of the culture on Wind River and many of the rural
23 reservation throughout the American West and other places. So
24 what we have tried to do at WYDOT is to use positive messaging and
25 a community based model as a way to change behavior.

1 We use Native American voices, Native American images.
2 You'll never see Cody Beers, the white guy delivering these
3 messages except maybe on the radio, along with the many friends
4 that I've been fortunate to accumulate through the years on Wind
5 River and the many acquaintances who have pointed me in this
6 direction or that direction as a way to tell Wind River's story.

7 So one of the things that I strongly believe in, and I think
8 you'll fail if you try to promote safety on a, on a reservation,
9 on a tribal nation where tribal sovereignty is so important, is
10 that the tribal community must carry that tribal safety messaging
11 to their families, to their friends, their coworkers. For way too
12 long, these communities have, have been told what to do by the
13 American Government and white, white eyes like me.

14 And so they want to set their own course for safety. They
15 want to save their lives on their own and, and they want to speak
16 to their own people. And so I think everything we have done has
17 lent into that strength. And we've had great partnerships by
18 doing that. So we have continued to evolve our messaging through
19 time with the, the landmark messaging that we still use. And that
20 is seatbelt use, promoting that as the first and most important
21 thing to do when you climb inside of a vehicle.

22 And also we have continued to work on what is, what has often
23 been a tragic story and that's people losing their lives, being,
24 being injured because of the use of alcohol and drugs and then,
25 and then combing that with lack of seatbelt use and driving

1 vehicles. And then, you know, I'm proud to say this has been a
2 long term effort, a sustained effort thanks to a continuing great
3 relationship with an outstanding worldclass marketing agency who
4 specializes in these areas of, of safe discussions, safe relevant
5 messaging, being culturally sensitive to messaging on Wind River
6 and throughout Freemont County.

7 Because we are a big community of about 45,000 people. And
8 21 percent of our population in this county is Native American.
9 So we -- we're represented by Native Americans in the Wyoming
10 State Legislature and these same Native Americans are, you know,
11 representing their people on their, on their own business counsel.
12 So you'll see and you may have noticed in Laura's slide that we,
13 we often use an inter-tribal approach to messaging on Wind River
14 because of the two tribes and transportation is one of those
15 functions of both tribes that allows us to speak to everyone on
16 Wind River.

17 So let's move ahead to our next slide. Education is big.
18 When we first started working with Heinrich Marketing in 2009, we
19 spent a lot of time talking. First -- the first time I met Laura
20 was at a conference in Utah and we sat and, and just talked about
21 life on Wind River. She shared messages for me and, and
22 information about what was happening on other reservations. And,
23 you know, we began talking about how do we develop messaging for
24 tribal safety talks.

25 And I guess the, the first thing that we both agreed on is

1 that we wanted to take this to the grassroots level on this
2 reservation in Wyoming and find out what the issues are from the
3 tribal perspective. And I think that has helped us more than
4 anything we've done. We've kept our messages centered around
5 cultural identity. We've ran the messages by our tribal counsels.
6 We've asked for their help. They've helped us develop these
7 messages.

8 And number one, we've listened. Something I've heard
9 throughout this presentation today that it's very important to
10 listen. When I say listen, I mean listen to understand. That is
11 very important. When you, when you listen to respond, to most
12 people, and I get very frustrated working in an agency full of
13 engineers who, who already think they know the answers to things
14 without listening to understand. And it's very important to do
15 that in a cultural environment too like Wind River.

16 Allow people to talk. And when they pause, understand that
17 they're probably not finished talking yet. Again, a cultural
18 understanding of communication in a tribal environment is that
19 often those conversations, those explanations can be drawn out and
20 those pauses do not meant that that person talking is, is giving
21 you an opportunity to, to share what you want to share. They're,
22 they're formulating their next bullet point, so to speak.

23 So it's, it's very important to understand culturally how,
24 how they -- these people communicate. My friends, my neighbors,
25 people that I often have lunch with and, and listen and laugh,

1 often cry together, pray together. And, you know, I've had
2 awesome ceremonies. People have come into my house and blessed my
3 family. We've saged together. And that's unique and it helps us
4 develop that partnership and that friendship. And I -- when I say
5 partnership, I want to say friendship because it's really that
6 close, family related partnerships with the tribe and friendships
7 with the tribes that has allowed me, WYDOT and Heinrich to do the
8 work we've done on Wind River.

9 Next, next slide. Talking about emergency services a little
10 bit. I'll share a few things that, you know, they are statistics,
11 but they, they really contribute to some of the issues with
12 traffic safety on Wind River. Fremont County, the fifth largest
13 county in the state. We don't have interstates in this part of
14 the world. I'm about two and a half hours from Yellowstone Park
15 in Northwest Wyoming. You know, things that you've heard about
16 this part of the state probably is, you know -- you've heard about
17 Yellowstone, maybe Grand Teton National Park, maybe Jackson Hole.
18 I've hoped that you've heard about Wind River and, you know, the
19 beautiful landscapes we have in Northwest Wyoming. But we also
20 have about five percent of the crashes and about eight percent of
21 the fatalities in the State of Wyoming.

22 Emergency services, great examples of things that happen in
23 our county that you might not see in other places. And this is a
24 quote that when Laura and I were putting this thing together, it's
25 very difficult to get, get an ambulance onto the reservation in

1 many instances because of the, the large size, you know, the size
2 of a county that we have. As I said, about the size of the state
3 of Vermont. And so what you'll often see is these ambulances will
4 sit at strategic places on and off the reservation throughout the
5 day.

6 Often Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, you know, are, are most
7 prevalent time of the week for these crashes. And when a crash
8 happens in a rural area, it, it is often faster to load the
9 injured person in your own vehicle and as I told Laura, haul ass
10 to the hospital in Lander and hope for the best because we live in
11 such a rural area that it's, it's very difficult to get that on
12 time, fast medical response in these rural areas. And that, you
13 know, and Wind River is probably one of the most rural areas of
14 Wyoming.

15 So go ahead, Laura. About 70, 70 percent of American Indians
16 live in an area that is about one hour or more from a level one
17 trauma center. And we only have one in our county, that being in
18 Lander, Wyoming in a town of about 7,000 people right off the
19 southern edge of the Wind River Reservation. This is common
20 across the country, that these reservations are often in very
21 rural areas. And so it's difficult to transport people to, to
22 these level one trauma centers.

23 Nationwide, emergency medical service units average about
24 seven minutes from the time of a 911 call to get on scene. That
25 median time on, on reservations and rural Wyoming, rural Wind

1 River Reservation increases out way past what's here, but that's a
2 nationwide average of about 14 minutes in rural settings. Often
3 an ambulance trip can take, you know, 30 minutes to someone's home
4 on Wind River and, and then another 30 to 40 minutes back to the
5 level one trauma center.

6 And so, you know, it's, it's a challenge and that's why
7 transportation is a very important thing. And, and you heard
8 Emory Lebo say in her video that transportation is really the
9 lifeline of, of life on the reservation. And so that has helped
10 WYDOT to work on safety messaging, to get out there and do other
11 work on Wind River. Go ahead, Laura.

12 Enforcement is a, is a key deal. We have a multi-
13 jurisdictional type of enforcement on Wind River. When I say
14 that, the reservation has the Wind River Police Department, which
15 is run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. There's the Freemont
16 County Sherrif that patrols these same areas, Wyoming Highway
17 Patrol. These three agencies get together, they train and so the
18 sheriff can answer calls on Wind River. The Wyoming Highway
19 Patrol can, can answer calls in a support type system, along with
20 BIA.

21 So it works very well for helping to reduce fatal crashes due
22 to impaired driving and seatbelt laws. And, and these three
23 agencies and also local police departments in, in four different
24 communities, including Riverton, where I live, and Lander,
25 Shoshone, they have come together to create what's called the

1 Freemont County DUI taskforce. And really it's about education.
2 We put a lot of information out before we have these taskforce
3 events over holiday weekends.

4 The goal here is to, to find nobody that's drunk, nobody
5 that's under the influence of drugs, but yet to educate about
6 seatbelt use, about child safety seats and other things. But the
7 DUI taskforce does find things out there. Most recent -- one of
8 the most recent ops we had was during a brewfest, which is for
9 lack of a better way in saying it, it's a -- you can pay \$50 and
10 get into these things and, and drink all kinds of local, local
11 brews, other things. These brewmasters come in from all over the
12 region.

13 And so we, we took advantage of the opportunity. We've
14 created a safe ride partnership with this local publicly funded
15 bus company, which is actually -- received funds from NHTSA to do
16 its work, the Wind River Transportation Authority. And we
17 provided safe rides during the Lander Brewfest. But police were
18 also out, the DUI taskforce. And they made traffic stops. They
19 did find people who were impaired. They found people who were
20 under the influence of controlled substances. They, they focused
21 on speed a little bit because people want to keep driving faster
22 and faster.

23 They did issue a bunch of warnings and then safe ride gave a
24 lot of people rides home. It was one of the most successful
25 events we've had for promoting the idea of safe rides around the

1 edges of the Wind River Reservation.

2 In 2022, as I said in this very rural environment, Freemont
3 County, which includes Wind River, as I said earlier, we had ten
4 fatal crashes with 11 fatalities. That's in an area with 40,000
5 people. 114 injury crashes with 140 injuries. A lot of property
6 destruction only crashes. We have wildlife on our roads. We have
7 other things. And the single car run off the road rollover
8 continues to be the most common crash in Wyoming. And then we had
9 the seventh highest total of county crashes in Wyoming.

10 But I'm, I'm happy to report some really positive things and
11 we'll talk about that as we get along. WYDOT has been very active
12 with the tribes, with the Wind River Inter-Tribal Counsel, which
13 is a collection of, of members of each business counsel of each
14 tribe. They come together on issues that are common to the, to
15 the tribes in general and transportation is one of those.

16 We have rebuilt several highways, including Wyoming-132,
17 which is known as Blue Sky Highway, which goes between Lander and
18 areas to the north. It goes through Ethete, which is a business
19 center on the reservation. We recently were able through a NHTSA
20 grant to buy two digital message signs to promote seatbelt use and
21 enforcement of the tribe's 0.05 DUI law and to provide, you know,
22 safety messaging around schools, around speed limits, all those
23 things.

24 WYDOT officially owns those digital message sign trailers,
25 but we have worked hand in hand with the tribes. We trained them.

1 This is a slide, the current planner/director for the Wind River
2 Inter-Tribal Counsel DOT, Winslow Friday and we did a training
3 session. And those tribal message signs were right out on the
4 road. And, and we decided to ask NHTSA if we could, if we could
5 fund these messaging trailers through a highway safety grant and,
6 and they said yes.

7 And so we're very excited to be actively engaging drivers
8 throughout Wind River with this digital message approach, which is
9 something that I know the tribes are excited about too. And, and,
10 you know, you're, you're working with friends like Winslow Friday
11 to do positive things like this. And it's, it's been a great
12 thing on Wind River and I'm, I'm very, very humbled by this.

13 Again, important things to do is, is to develop these trust
14 based relationships. Always tell the truth when you're, when
15 you're out there and it's something that my grandpa, who was, you
16 know, the rancher on the reservation, told me when I was a little
17 kid. And that's, you know -- he used to say, you know, Ike (ph.),
18 when you, when you tell the truth, you never have to remember what
19 you said. And I think that's such an important thing when you're
20 working every day in your regular life, but also with the
21 indigenous tribes and partners where trust is so important.

22 Listen to understand. Work on the strengths that a -- the
23 tribal people are most proud of. And one of the strengths, and
24 they're very proud of their transportation infrastructure because,
25 as I said before, it really is the lifeblood of life on the

1 reservation. Goods and services, emergency management, safe
2 transport of their children.

3 We have involved members of the business counsel in other
4 things. We had a great opportunity to bring the two tribal
5 counsels together and to, to get BIA, Wind River Police
6 Department's help when we did a military exercise right on the
7 edge of, of the Wind River Reservation. We landed a C-130, we
8 landed a drone that you've heard about all -- doing military work
9 all over the world. We landed two A-10 Warthogs on the highway.

10 And we had to use tribal roads to make it a success as a
11 detour around this piece of state highway, which is within a mile
12 of the Wind River Reservation. And by the way, those are the Wind
13 River Mountains in the background. And as far as I'm concerned,
14 it's one of the most beautiful places on Earth. But if, if it
15 wouldn't have been for the two tribal counsels working hand in
16 hand with us, that military exercise would have, would have not
17 happened. And that is something that is very important to the
18 culture on the reservation, very patriotic. Very interested in
19 being involved in the U.S. military. Excuse me. Many of the
20 tribal members have -- are veterans. And we've used that in, in
21 our, in our efforts to promote responsible driving too on the Wind
22 River Reservation.

23 So outcomes of our campaigns over the last -- I've been doing
24 this for about 16 years. And then Laura and I, through Heinrich
25 and Fonny Dod have, have been working for the last 14 years on

1 this is that partnerships and trust based friendships are the
2 norm. And it does not happen overnight. One of my favorite
3 stories to tell, real quickly, is, is I've developed these
4 friendships over time through transportation and through our great
5 working relationship.

6 And I was sitting outside of a counsel meeting waiting to get
7 inside and, and you kind of feel like you've gotten there with
8 friendships and you're continuing to work on those when you're,
9 when you're sharing text messages back and forth with tribal
10 members inside the counsel chambers. Well, I got in and this
11 gentleman that had been sitting on this couch by me looks at me
12 and he says, I've been here, and he pounds his fist on the table,
13 I've been here for weeks and months trying to get in here. Why
14 can't I get in there. And I said, well, you need to have some,
15 some respect and you need to have honor and trust and friendships
16 and you have to be patient and listen to understand.

17 Again, it's very important that the tribal leaders and
18 members are active participants in creating this safety messaging.
19 Discussions and design of highway construction and, and highway
20 safety projects is ongoing and we have actively engaged the tribes
21 on Wind River to tell us what the needs are out there. And then
22 we continue to declare war on impaired driving on and off the
23 reservation because these are family members.

24 Seatbelt use is improving on Wind River. These are, these
25 are up to date statistics coming from Freemont County. This is a

1 very interesting graphic. And this is the same period that we've
2 been working on. DUI offenses, as you can tell, over the past ten
3 years have dropped 79 percent. We don't have some of the current
4 years in there, but what we're finding is our average BAC isn't
5 really dropping and I believe that we're finally, we're finally
6 starting to impact the pros who are doing this activity with our
7 active DUI efforts and lifesaving efforts on Wind River. So
8 that's a very positive thing.

9 In conclusion -- could you go back one slide, Laura? In
10 conclusion, we continue to address those Four Es on Wind River.
11 But I'll tell you what, success is measured by friendships, by
12 trust and our ability to listen. And so with that being said,
13 I'll turn it over to Nicholas. Thank you all for being here today
14 and, hey, come visit us in Wyoming.

15 MR. WORRELL: Thank you. Thank you, Cody. I really
16 appreciate it. Thank you very much, Laura, Maggi, Nez and thanks
17 to all of you again. I feel like we have learned a tremendous
18 amount. This is a great body of information. We'll have this
19 information readily available, the recording that we'll post about
20 next week or so. Then we'll have some more information that we
21 will send up and you can certainly follow us at NTSB.gov or follow
22 us on Twitter. We'll put that information at NTSB.

23 I know a lot was mentioned also. We heard a term repetition
24 that there might be some repeating, but I've often learned that
25 repetition, as they say, is the mother of learning, the father of

1 actions, which makes it the architect of accomplishment. So
2 there's nothing wrong with a little repetition.

3 Now, without further ado, I want to take a few questions. We
4 have about eight minutes or so, so I am going to tee up the first
5 question here. There's one that was sent in. This may be
6 premature, it says, so I am not directed to a specific panelist,
7 but I'm sure hoping some of the panelists will speak more directly
8 to how we could work with diverse urban environment and seek to
9 better reach our Native American citizens -- or cities can
10 communicate.

11 Seventy-one percent of Native Americans live in cities now
12 and perhaps don't have that strong and immediate connection with
13 the tribal identity or they might look to share -- hear the --
14 hear that question addressed. Would anyone like to address that
15 for the panelists?

16 MS. SONDERUP: I would be happy to jump in. I think that
17 that is a terrific question because we really have, by the very
18 nature of where some of the speakers are located, we have focused
19 more on reservations. But we're based in Denver and so I can tell
20 you that, you know, very, very large urban location. And what we
21 have found to be particularly helpful with our work, with the
22 Colorado Department of Transportation, not only on the two
23 reservations in the Four Corners area, but to also work with
24 community serving non-profits in Denver.

25 The Denver Indian -- Indian Family Services Center

1 immediately comes to mind. This is a non-profit organization that
2 strives to support all of our indigenous neighbors throughout the
3 Denver metro area. So this is not nearly as tribe specifically
4 focused, but instead those messages that we develop in partnership
5 with the non-profits are much more global in their messaging. So
6 that gives us a chance to maybe talk about the importance of
7 family, to talk about the importance of properly restraining your
8 children.

9 And again, not as tribal specific because there are 20, 30,
10 40 tribal members represented within their service area. But
11 always remembering some of the things we talked about today that
12 can be used in, in a more generic fashion. And I hate to use the
13 word generic because it's always still culturally relevant. But
14 non-profits can help you in urban areas.

15 MR. WORRELL: Thank you. Tosheena, I know a little bit -- I
16 know you wanted to address that, add some comments to that too as
17 well. Go ahead.

18 MS. NEZ: Thank you for your question. So follow up to what
19 Laura said. Yes, so especially in the larger cities, like she
20 said, Denver, there -- you would be surprised the native presence
21 there is. So one of the things about native communities is that
22 we are very heavily community based. So -- and you would --
23 there's a lot of alliances.

24 So in Cody's presentation he mentioned that there was a type
25 of tribal -- alliance where generally how this works is there's

1 different representatives from different tribes that all meet
2 together to address issues on certain stuff. So there are a lot
3 of organizations like that that exist that have representation
4 from a -- especially tribes that have a smaller population where
5 they can all work together, they can pool funding and they can
6 help to address these challenges.

7 So there, there are a lot -- a number of alliances like that
8 that you may be able to work with. And there's also -- for this
9 topic specifically with talking about transportation safety, you
10 know, that also aligns with health. So -- naturally. So there
11 are a lot of urban Indian health places. It's just a matter of
12 finding out which, like, tribal alliances there are, which -- even
13 non-profits, as Laura said, and which urban Indian health centers
14 that there are in your area.

15 So those have a good representation of the different tribes
16 that are in that area, but also, like -- there's a joke that
17 Navajos are everywhere, so wherever you're at, there's going to --
18 you might meet a Navajo person. So even if you're not in the
19 Southwest, even if you're on the East Coast, up in the Northwest,
20 you'll -- you will find a diverse, a diverse, diverse people from
21 all over that are native. So there are opportunities out there,
22 it's just a matter of finding it.

23 And one thing that I would say is if you -- in general, this
24 might not work for everybody, but if you have a good relationship
25 with somebody who is native, you might be able to just ask them.

1 Like, hey, I'm, I'm in the city. Like, for example, Denver. And
2 you can ask them, like, okay, what, you know, what native
3 community serving organizations do you -- are -- do you know of.
4 And then you can find out information that way because -- yeah.

5 Especially, like, community leaders or people who are active
6 in the community usually know that information because they often
7 serve as an unpaid community connector. And they're like, oh,
8 yeah, there's this and they'll send their native relatives. Like,
9 go over to the health center, go over to the community center. So
10 there, there is ways to find that and make partnerships with them.
11 And there's also, like, the tribal alliances.

12 They -- there's also been communications that are good at
13 showing people in those -- that represent the tribal nation around
14 that city. They show good images of, of people who look like us.
15 So it -- the -- you can still be culturally relevant in cities,
16 even if you're off the reservation. It's very doable.

17 MR. WORRELL: Thank you. Anyone else? Maggi, did anyone
18 want to (indiscernible) other than that? If not, I'll go to the
19 next question.

20 DR. GUNNELS: And I, I just -- for, Tosheena, I think another
21 example would be, like, the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma.
22 You know, where they -- and they have quarterly meetings and have
23 all kinds of activities. And so we were lucky to be invited to
24 the quarterly meeting just in July, so.

25 MR. WORRELL: You know, I'm up on time, but I want to ask one

1 more question here. How did you all engage with tribal youth to
2 develop campaigns? What are the best strategies for communicating
3 and engaging with young drivers, teen drivers specifically?

4 Anyone want to take a --

5 MR. BEERS: Yeah, I'd be glad to speak to that a little bit.
6 We, we started out our work about 15 years ago talking to young
7 people who were very good athletes. And so we started using that
8 athletic move to get into the schools. And these were -- these
9 are people that are, you know, are out there on Thursday nights
10 and Friday nights and Saturday nights representing their school.
11 And, and so we, we started there.

12 And as we're -- as this thing has grown, we've enlisted the
13 -- many other students in the high school and that, that got us
14 the foot in the door. And, and I think people watch what's
15 happening and, and they, and they want to be part of it. And, and
16 it kind of builds in a viral sense off of it. And so getting into
17 those schools, they open relationships with the cultural leaders
18 within the schools is a very important thing to do I think in a
19 rural sense and also in an urban sense.

20 I -- you know, the -- that's the future right there and, and
21 these are going to be the next leaders. And so developing that
22 through families and also through schools is very important. And
23 we've had a lot of success getting young people advocacy going
24 that way.

25 MR. WORRELL: Awesome. If anyone else wanted to chime in?

1 If not, I'm going to go ahead and wrap it up here. You can
2 certainly -- if you had a question and you wanted that directly to
3 any of the panelists, feel free to email me as well. You have my
4 information, email and I'll make sure I get those questions so we
5 can do follow up for each of -- to each of the panelists.

6 Again, thanks to all of the panelists, to all of you who
7 joined today's webinar to discuss communicating and connecting to
8 Native American communities. It has been an eye opener. They say
9 knowledge is power, but it's power -- it's as powerful as you
10 utilize it. So let's not let this knowledge go to waste. As we
11 in the advocacy community learn and grow together and we become
12 more intentional about communicating and connecting with
13 underserved communities, I do hope that we are looking to the next
14 steps.

15 You have given us -- the panelists here today have given us a
16 lot of food and a lot of good foundation to view the landscape
17 from. We have not solved anything today, but we have shared our
18 efforts and approaches and I know that you have been working on --
19 with many of the liaison or the information you've provided. So I
20 thank you all again for sharing with me and, and more importantly,
21 to all of the attendees how to get the job done.

22 Once again to our panelists and to all of you, thanks for
23 joining us. The recording will be posted out in a week or so. It
24 will also be transcribed as a transcript and we'll put that on our
25 website. For more information on our various social media

1 channels, follow us on -- at NTSB Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn,
2 any one of those. Again, we're grateful for your time and for the
3 opportunity to share with you today.

4 Have a great day and a safe evening.

5 (Whereupon, at 2:55 p.m., the webinar concluded.)
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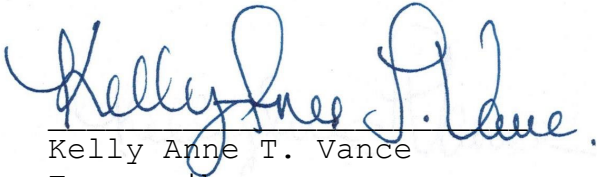
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: NTSB WEBINAR: COMMUNICATING AND
CONNECTING SAFETY MESSAGES TO
NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

PLACE: via videoconference

DATE: August 10, 2023

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
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Kelly Anne T. Vance
Transcriber