

Traffic Safety: Looking beyond 2001

ATSSA's annual convention and Traffic Expo helps carry traffic safety measures well into the future

by James S. Baron

The American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA) will host a roadway safety convention and exhibition, Traffic Expo, Feb. 16-20. This year's convention and Traffic Expo, the 31st in ATSSA's 32-year history, will be held in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

ATSSA members have a goal this year to save more lives on the nation's roadways than ever before. This goal may be reached through ATSSA-member products and services and other creative and wide-reaching association efforts.

"When I first came to ATSSA three years ago, several of our members mentioned the Traffic Expo was the same year after year," said Roger Wentz, executive director of the 1,800-member association.

Since the arrival of Wentz, the last few years have not only seen new innovations, technology and products introduced to the world through Traffic Expo, but ATSSA members have

a unique opportunity to showcase and demonstrate their products to an ever-growing number of attendees.

This year, for example, a New Products Showcase has been created to allow those who preregister an opportunity to display a special placard at their booth indicating their company has developed a creative new product or service since last year's Traffic Expo. In addition to the placard, these exhibitors also will have their product name, a full product description and their respective booth number published in the *Convention Program and Exhibit Guide* in order to call Traffic Expo attendees' immediate attention to their new products.

"This is a great way to flag what's new to the industry and to give members immediate attention as people visit the Traffic Expo and set out to explore

the massive show floor," Wentz added.

A similar effort, the New Product Press Conference, is a separate event scheduled for Feb. 20 that allows companies another opportunity to display their products through brief demonstrations and presentations to the media and guests in attendance. Last year's press conference immediately put many ATSSA members into the media



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spotlight nationwide through **ROADS & BRIDGES**, local newspapers and television programs who learned for the first time of their products and services as a result of this event.

Safety workshops

Numerous workshops also have been arranged beginning Feb. 18. These seminars allow attendees to discuss and learn a wide range of roadway safety issues of importance. There will be something for everyone, from work-zone safety, to the NCHRP 350 Report, to retroreflectivity. These topics and many more will be covered in tightly packed, fast-paced interactive forums.

Perhaps one of the biggest issues to be discussed among attendees this year will be the new *Millennium Edition of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD). A double session workshop, scheduled for Feb. 19, has been set aside to cover significant changes contained in the new manual.

More importantly, helping the industry better understand this particular issue, and others like it, does not end when Traffic Expo concludes.

Opening Session

ATSSA President Dennis "Chip" Sterndahl will host the Opening General Session Breakfast meeting on Feb. 18.

Sterndahl will cover many important issues in his remarks during the breakfast. He also will introduce to the industry the first look at the new retro-reflectivity educational video "Night Lights," and will challenge guests to play an active role in National Work Zone Awareness Week. This year the event is scheduled for April 9-13, again as a nationwide effort to make roadways safer for all drivers and workers of all ages.

Continuing efforts

The theme of the sold out 2001 Traffic Expo is "Safety Through The Ages," a motto selected to recognize the importance of roadway safety issues among all drivers—from the young to the growing population of elderly drivers nationwide. The theme will be carried by the association for the remainder of the year and beyond.

So much emphasis will be placed on the MUTCD this year, for example, that ATSSA was asked by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to conduct a March 20 nationwide videoconference on the MUTCD. Several FHWA staff members, the actual drafters of the document, will present the manual during the broadcast, while simultaneously taking questions from the field via toll-free telephone numbers.

The broadcast will be held March 20 from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. EST. It will be aired from Northern Virginia Community College in Annandale, Va., to downlink sites across the country, including Puerto Rico and Hawaii. **RB**