



STATE OF MICHIGAN

GOVERNOR'S TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMISSION

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Macomb County Department of Roads recognized by Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Commission

Department honored for innovative solution to reduce head-on crashes

The Macomb County Department of Roads (MCDR) has been recognized by the Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Commission (GTSAC) for its innovative efforts in reducing fatal crashes in the county.

The MCDR was presented with an Outstanding Traffic Safety Achievement Award on March 5 at the GTSAC Awards ceremony in Grand Rapids during the 28th annual Michigan Traffic Safety Summit, hosted by the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning. The GTSAC honors organizations, programs and individuals for distinguished involvement in traffic safety.

Macomb County experiences approximately 25,000 traffic crashes annually, with numbers showing an upward trend each year. A significant concern is lane departures, which often lead to head-on collisions causing fatalities or severe injuries. Nearly half of Macomb County is rural, with two-lane roadways that are disproportionately represented in fatal crashes.

To address this issue, Macomb County installed centerline rumble strips decades ago. However, the strips were unpopular among residents due to the loud noise generated when vehicles crossed them, and the program was abandoned. Seeking alternate solutions, MCDR engineers found a road treatment used in Minnesota—mumble strips. These patterned strips are ground into the pavement, offering adequate in-vehicle noise and vibration while minimizing external noise.

With grants from the state's Highway Safety Improvement Plan, the MCDR installed mumble strips along 100 miles of two-lane roadways by 2021. Unlike traditional rumble strips, which feature rough, square grooves, the strips are designed to reduce abrupt tire impacts. The road centerline markings were then applied over these grooves, ensuring both safety and functionality since the markings reflect light more effectively, especially at night or on wet pavement.

Results of a before-and-after crash analysis showed that head-on crashes were down 80 percent, run-off-the-road or rollover crashes decreased by 27 percent, and fixed-object crashes fell by 15 percent.

The GTSAC was formed in 2002 to serve as the state's forum for identifying key traffic safety challenges and developing and implementing plans to address those issues. The commission includes representatives from the departments of State Police, Transportation, Education, State, and Health & Human Services, as well as the Office of the Governor, the Aging and Adult Services Agency, and the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning. There are also three representatives from local government appointed by the Governor.

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