

**TRAFFIC SAFETY ISSUES IN NORTH DAKOTA: FINAL REPORT**  
**Phase II, Driver Knowledge, Attitude, Behavior and Beliefs**  
**Focus Group: Young Male Drivers**

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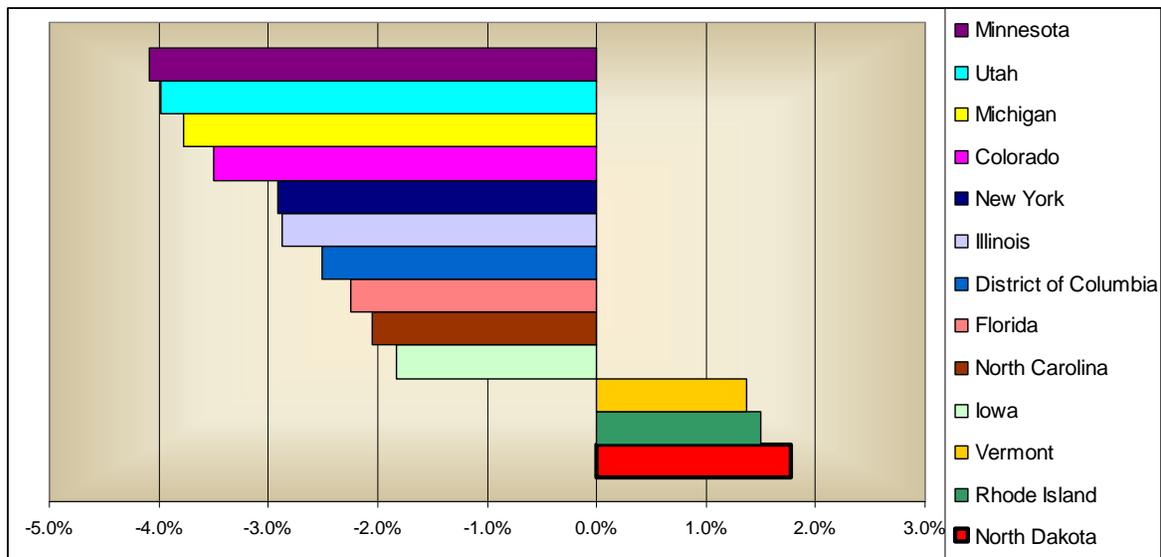
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## INTRODUCTION

Traffic safety is a widespread social concern. Each year vehicle crashes are the cause of numerous injuries and death. In 2006, motor vehicle crashes caused 42,642 deaths in the United States (FARS query, 2008). While no motor vehicle fatalities are acceptable, and there is not an appropriate or accepted fatality rate, there are states that have been making better progress than others when looking at historical data. Figure 1 shows historical trends in nation-wide traffic fatalities for some of the top and bottom states. The numbers graphed are the yearly change in fatality rates per 100 million vehicle miles traveled on average from 1994 to 2006 (FARS, 2008).



**Figure 1** Traffic Fatality Trends: Top & Bottom States, Average Yearly Change 1994-2006 in per 100 M vehicle miles traveled

The top or “best” ten states are those with negative bars, meaning the state’s fatality rates, on average, have decreased from year to year. The three states with trend lines shown in the positive direction are the bottom or “worst” three states. These states have experienced, on average, positive yearly changes in fatality rates, meaning more people killed based on miles traveled from year to year (FARS query, 2008). Minnesota ranks the best at

number one while North Dakota ranks 51 among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Using the per vehicle miles traveled gives the numbers context so they can be compared on an equivalent basis. Since North Dakota has a small number of fatalities relative to some of the greatly populated states, this is a good method for comparison.

The North Dakota Department of Transportation's (NDDOT) Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) is aware of the unacceptable traffic fatality trends and has a vision to make positive changes. Figure 2 graphs North Dakota traffic fatalities from 1994 to 2006. The fatalities were lower in the 1994 to 1996 period, and have climbed since then, staying fairly stable in the last five years. However, the state wants these numbers to decrease. That is the only acceptable goal: to reduce the number of traffic-related deaths in the state. Clearly, actions need to be taken to reduce these trends.

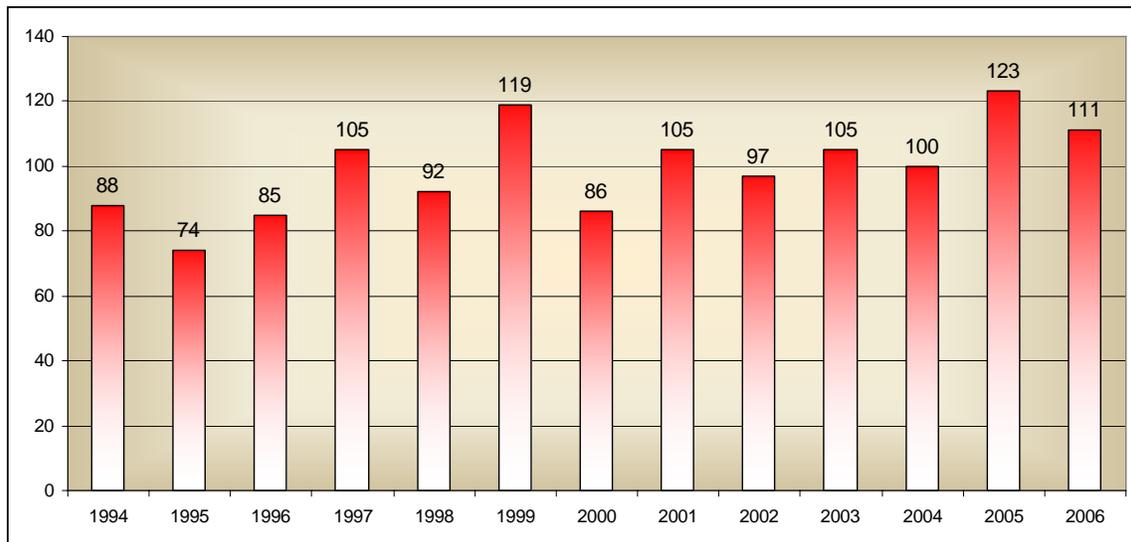


Figure 2 North Dakota Traffic Fatalities, 1994-2006 (FARS online query)

While fatal crashes are the most devastating, there are two other crash types that need to be addressed. The other two crash types are injury crashes and property damage only (PDO) crashes. Again, while death is not involved, they can cause pain, suffering and

economic strains. North Dakota has opportunity for improvement in reducing all types of motor vehicle crashes. During the ten-year period 1997 to 2006, there was an average of 15,527 crashes annually in North Dakota (ND Crash Summary, 2006). The three crash types are shown in Figure 3. Total crashes in the state have been fairly stable over these ten years, with a low of 14,423 in 1998 and a high of 16,922 in 2004. PDO crashes make up nearly 80 percent of all crashes over these ten years, while injury crashes comprise 20 percent and fatal crashes are 0.6 percent of all North Dakota crashes.

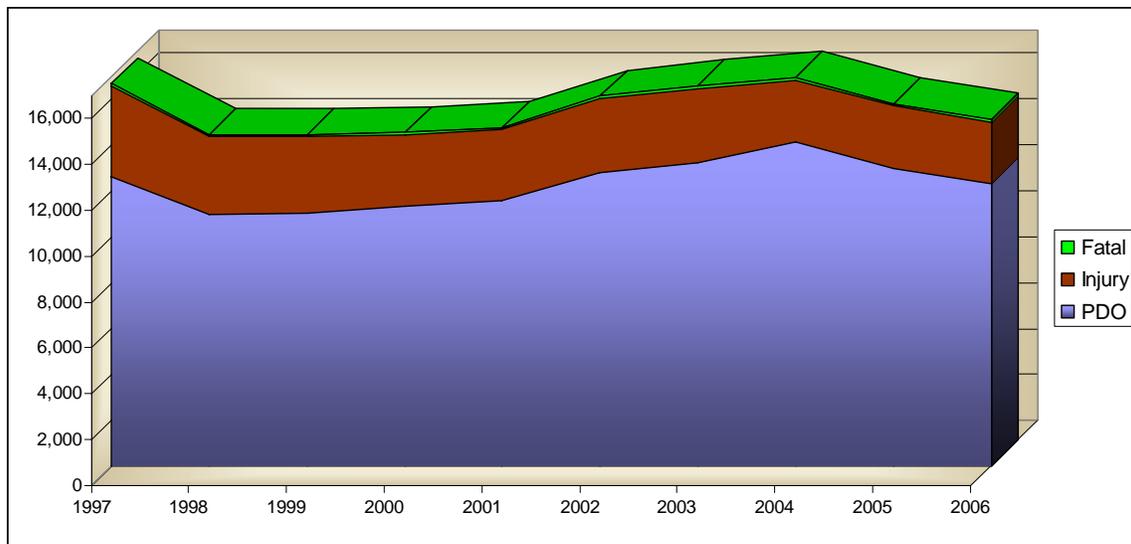


Figure 3 North Dakota Motor Vehicle Crashes: PDO, Injury & Fatal, 1997-2006

The reasons for vehicle crashes are many: wild animals, weather conditions, impaired driving, distracted driving, poor road conditions,... and the list goes on. While some issues regarding traffic safety are engineering matters, there are also human behavior issues. Many motor vehicle crashes are due to poor driver behavior, which can be altered with the right data, research and educational tools. Tackling the problem on the human behavior requires understanding those who are driving. This includes gathering in-depth information about driver behavior and also about perceptions these drivers hold regarding their driving. While

these things are true nation-wide, there are specific criteria that need to be addressed individually for each state, and this is no exception for the state of North Dakota.

Given the vastness of driver behavior problems, it is unrealistic to address the problem as a whole. Instead, we can focus on specific behaviors within a small group of people and target a group where need for change is evident. North Dakota crash data reveals concerns in the areas of driving under the influence as well as seat belt use. In 2006, alcohol, drugs, and or medication was the second leading contributing factor in North Dakota fatal crashes (ND Crash Summary, 2006). As for seat belt use, it plays a huge role in saving lives. Of the fatalities in 2007, 72 percent were unbelted (ND crash data). Analysis of the current data for our state distinguishes a certain demographic group with a high proportion of crashes involving alcohol and/or lack of seat belt use. Male drivers ages 18 to 34 have a high incidence of crash occurrences in our state. This population is selected based on data showing the majority of crashes and crash-related fatalities occur in this population. North Dakota Traffic Trends from 2005 indicates the highest rate of vehicle crashes based on number of drivers for each age category, is highest for drivers 18-20, followed by 21-24 and then 25-34 (NDDOT, 2005). The NDDOT Traffic Trends also shows crash involvement by sex. Although males make up half of the driving population, in 2005 they made up 57 percent of people involved in all crashes.

The problems in North Dakota are evident: lack of seat belt use and impaired driving. The answer seems simple – persuade North Dakota drivers to use their seat belts and to never drive after consuming alcohol. But, the problem lies in the question, “How can we change driving behaviors to reduce or stop the resulting tragedies?” Changing human behavior is not easy. Data is needed to answer this crucial question. Engaging North Dakota drivers in traffic safety surveys and focus groups will provide information that can

be condensed into a tool to be used for program planning and countermeasure selection decisions. What intervention will give the OTS the most “bang for the buck” in traffic safety education, policies, and investment for target populations?

### *Objective*

The objective of this project is to obtain as much information as possible regarding risky driving behaviors in male drivers ages 21 to 34. The literature shows that young adult males can be labeled “risky drivers” as a whole. The results from this project will enable the OTS to formulate customized programs that educate drivers and positively impact behaviors to improve traffic safety. Obtaining accurate, up-to-date information assures the best use of time and money invested. The knowledge gained in this research will be used to provide resources and education that is effective in traffic crash prevention, and ultimately in reducing crash fatalities and injuries in not only the target group, but for all people on the road who potentially could be affected by poor driver behavior.

### *Organization*

The following report is made up of five sections. First, the problem is discussed using North Dakota crash data and driver record data. The second section includes the specific research questions addressed. The third portion of the report explains the methods used to gather data and provides an explanation of project administration. Next, results of the focus groups and pre-discussion questionnaires are provided. Lastly, a summary of the project is included along with discussion regarding potential opportunities for making positive seat belt use and impaired driving changes for the state of North Dakota.

## **THE PROBLEM –PROOF IN THE NUMBERS**

The problem is large and complicated. Ultimately, North Dakota is not seeing the reduction they want in crashes, and the resulting injuries or death. The two focus areas identified as high potential for improvements are seat belt use and alcohol-impaired driving. Analysis of North Dakota crash data and driver record data points this out and will be discussed further later in the report.

### *The impaired driving problem*

In 2006, driving under the influence ranked number three in type of driver citations given due to all types of crash events for North Dakota (ND Crash Summary, 2006). In North Dakota fatal crashes for the same year, DUI was the number one type of driver citation given at the crash event (ND Crash Summary, 2006). In addition, the same publication notes that alcohol, drugs and/or medication is the second leading contributing factor in North Dakota fatal crashes for 2006 (after speeding or too fast for conditions). A contributing factor for a vehicle crash is recorded by a police officer at the scene of the crash, and can record a maximum of two factors for each unit (ND Crash Summary, 2006). These two statistics are alarming – citations connected to vehicle crashes along with crash contributing factors are highly attributed to alcohol.

The average portion of North Dakota fatal crashes that are related to alcohol use for the 1998 to 2006 time period is 47.4 percent. Table 1 contains the numbers for each year (ND Crash Summary, 2006).

Table 1

Percent of North Dakota Fatal Crashes that are Alcohol-Related, 1998 to 2006

Year	All Fatal Crashes	Alcohol Related	% Alcohol Related
1998	79	37	46.8
1999	92	45	48.9
2000	80	40	50.0
2001	96	48	50.0
2002	84	41	48.8
2003	95	48	50.5
2004	95	38	40.0
2005	105	49	46.7
2006	101	46	45.4
<b>Total</b>	827	392	47.4

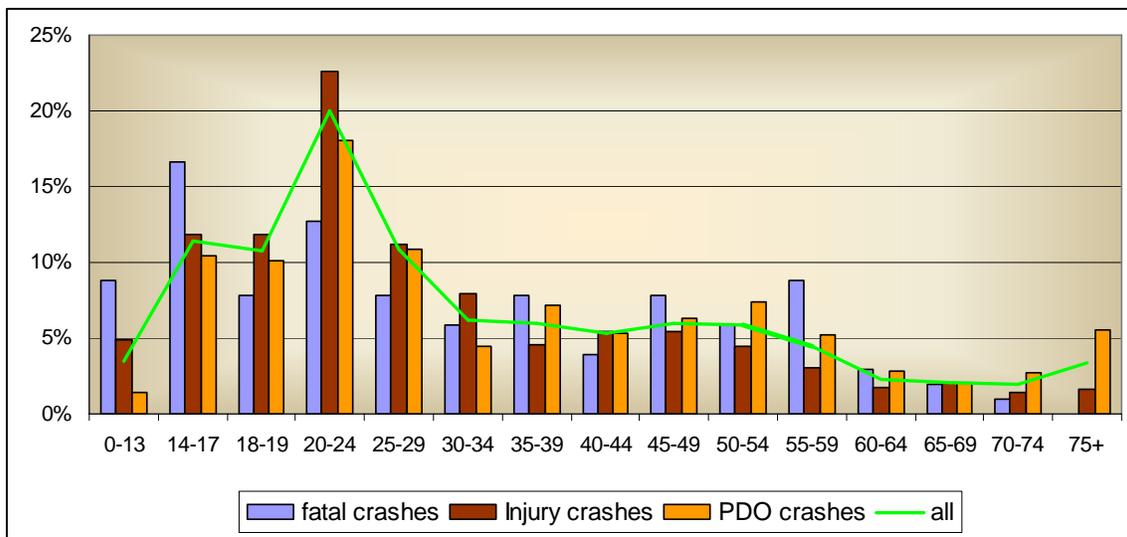
*The seat belt non-use problem*

Although North Dakota has made some improvements in seat belt use, there is still progress to be made. Seat belt use for our state has increased steadily from just under 40 percent in 1998 to 79 percent in 2006 (ND Crash Summary, 2006). The statistics for seat belt use in ND traffic fatalities are staggering. Of the 744 North Dakota fatalities from 1999 through 2006, 76 percent were not restrained (FARS online). In 2006, 67 percent of the fatalities in ND were not using seat belts (ND Crash Summary, 2006). When comparing North Dakota to other states, improvements seem evident. In 2005, thirty-six states reported better seatbelt use rates than North Dakota. In this year, Hawaii and Washington had 95 percent seatbelt use while North Dakota's was just over 76 percent (ORDOT, 2005).

*The drivers causing the problem - age*

Male drivers ages 18 to 34 have a high incidence of crash occurrences in the state. This population is selected based on data showing the majority of crashes and crash-related fatalities for North Dakota occur in this portion of the population. North Dakota Traffic

Trends from 2005 indicates the highest rate of vehicle crashes based on number of drivers for each age category, is highest for drivers 18-20, followed by 21-24 and then 25-34 (ND Traffic Trends, 2005). Age is a factor in seat belt use also. ND Crash Summary shows ages of unbelted crash occupants for 2006. The age group with the greatest portion of unbelted occupants for all crashes is ages 20 to 24 with 20 percent. Figure 4 shows the ages for unbelted occupants for all types of crashes in the state for 2006 (ND Crash Summary).

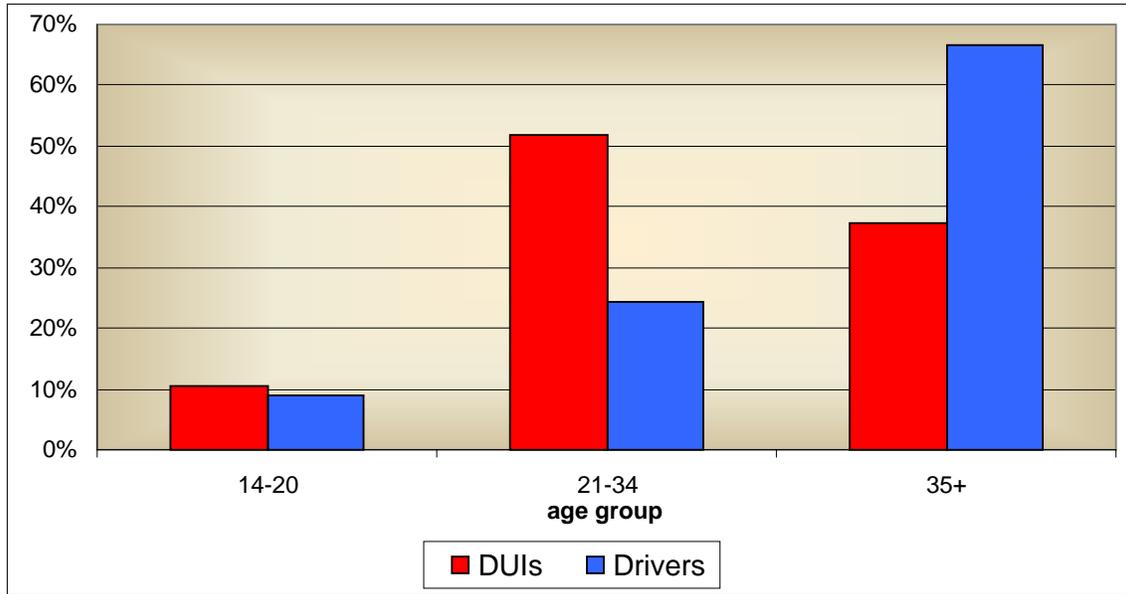


**Figure 4** North Dakota Crashes: Age of Unbelted Occupants, 2006

In 2006, just under 65 percent of all **alcohol-related** crashes in North Dakota were due to drivers between 17 and 34 years of age. When looking only at those impaired drivers of the legal age to consume alcohol (ages 21 to 34), they make up 47 percent of all alcohol-related crashes in our state (ND Crash Summary, 2006). For the purposes of this study, we focused on the latter group as the research questions do not address underage drinking.

As far as the age categories that tie closely to the impaired driving citations, drivers 21 to 34 are prevalent. When looking at North Dakota citation and driver record data (NDDOT data, 2007), the three-year period from 2004 to 2006 indicates that age group

encompasses almost 52 percent of all DUIs, while only accounting for 24 percent of the driver population (based on 2006 license numbers). Figure 5 shows the comparison for three age groups.



**Figure 5** Driver Age, percent of DUI convictions in North Dakota (2004-2006)

*The drivers causing the problem - gender*

NDDOT Traffic Trends (2005) also shows crash involvement by sex. Although males make up only half of the driving population, in 2005 they made up 57 percent of people involved in all North Dakota crashes. When looking at North Dakota traffic fatality data, males stand out. For the same year, 66 percent of male fatality victims (vehicle operator) in ND were unbelted compared to 58 percent of females who were not using a seat belt (ND Crash Summary, 2006).

North Dakota DUI citation data further illustrating the gender dissemination for drinking and driving. DUI convictions for 2004 -2006 show males predominantly are picked up drinking and driving (NDDOT data, 2007). Men make up 76 percent of DUIs for these

years, while they make up only 50 percent of licensed drivers, as of 2006 (ND Crash Summary 2006, NDDOT data, 2007). Figure 6 provides a comparison of North Dakota DUI convictions by sex of driver.

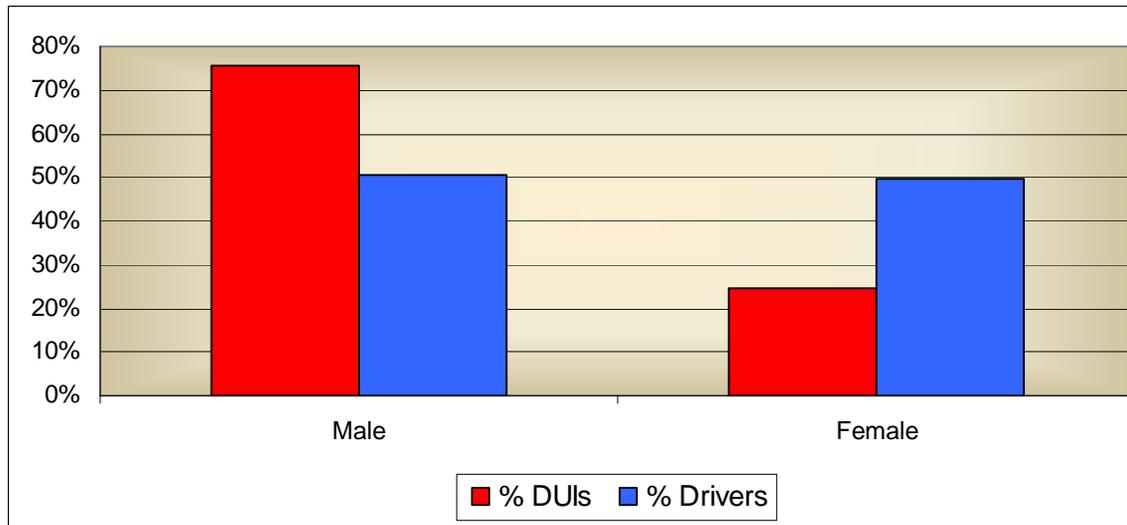


Figure 6 Driver Gender, percent of DUI convictions in North Dakota (2004-2006)

Looking at North Dakota traffic conviction data further supports the problem. In the three-year period from 2004 to 2006, a Chi-square test compared all drivers convicted of a seatbelt violation. Looking at these convictions by age and gender, the difference is statistically significant ( $p < .0001$ ). Males make up a majority of the convictions in this period (72 percent). Out of the males, the largest number of convictions was in the age group 21 to 27 years old with 22 percent. The complete set of statistics for seatbelt convictions is included in Appendix A.

Using the same analysis for DUI convictions for the years 2004 to 2006 shows similar trends. A Chi-square test indicates a statistically significant difference between genders and age groups ( $p < .0001$ ). When comparing the people convicted of DUIs by age and gender, males comprise 76 percent. The age with the most DUIs is 21 to 27, making up

36 percent of the DUIs for male drivers. The complete set of numbers for this comparison is included in Appendix A.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### *Goals*

The ultimate goal of this research is to collaborate with the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), North Dakota Safe Communities, and young, male drivers to make positive changes to advance traffic safety in the state. Focus groups were administered statewide to collect information on the targeted drivers' knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and beliefs regarding driving under the influence of alcohol and seat belt use. Information and ideas gathered from the focus groups will be used to reduce North Dakota traffic fatalities, injuries, and crashes overall.

### *Research questions*

The specific research questions addressed by our research collaborators are:

1. What are the specific drinking behaviors, beliefs and attitudes of young, male North Dakota drivers regarding driving with an illegal blood alcohol limit?
2. What contributes to impaired driving in this target group of drivers?
3. How do we reduce or stop impaired driving in this target group of drivers?
4. What are the behaviors, beliefs and attitudes of young, male drivers in North Dakota regarding use of seat belts?
5. What contributes to or inhibits seat belt use in this group of people?
6. How do we increase seat belt use in this target group of drivers?

Answers to these questions will allow for improvements in traffic safety in North Dakota. Decreases in drinking and driving will potentially lead to reductions in vehicular crashes and resulting injuries and death. As for seat belt use, it is the best defense against impaired drivers. Increasing seat belt use among this population will save lives and prevent injuries in the event of a crash.

## METHOD

### *Scope*

The young, male driver traffic safety project aims to collect information regarding risky behavior of drivers ages 21 to 34 that actively operate a vehicle in North Dakota. Information for this project was collected through focus groups consisting of males falling into the appropriate age categories from each of the eight North Dakota Human Service Regions (to allow results to advance prevention efforts on a regional basis). Questions regarding behaviors specific to traffic safety focused on impaired driving and seat belt use. Participants were asked about specific driving behaviors, as well as their knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and beliefs regarding drinking and driving and seat belt use. Opinions on methods for prevention of unsafe driving in this specific target group were also included in discussions.

### *Focus Groups*

In order to obtain detailed information regarding driving behaviors in North Dakota, focus groups were conducted throughout the state with the targeted group of drivers, males ages 21-34. A focus group is a discussion referring to a specific topic with a group of people with similar backgrounds. The discussion is led by a group facilitator who introduces the discussion topics and assists the group in moving forward with discussion. The focus group methodology has limitations just like all research techniques, but also has many advantages. A main advantage is the possibility of uncovering attitudes and opinions that are hard to achieve with a simple survey. Since a facilitator is involved, any unclear responses can be clarified on the spot with follow-up questions. In addition, “they are usually well accepted by the community as they make use of the group discussion which is a form of communication found naturally in most communities” (Dawson, 1993).

Participant selection is usually achieved through a convenience sample with the use of a screening question tool. In other words, only those people who meet specific criteria will be included in the group discussion. Each discussion should consist of four to twelve people and commonly takes one to two hours. The discussion should focus on two or three main ideas, which in this case will revolve around impaired driving and/or seat belt use in young, male drivers and will attempt to gain answers to questions like:

1. What would make young, male drivers who drink and drive stop this behavior?
2. What would make young, male drivers use their seat belts?

The information collected from the focus groups will be distributed to traffic safety partners for use in developing customized programs to educate drivers and positively impact risky behaviors to improve traffic safety.

As mentioned above, focus groups are discussions held with roughly ten people to discuss a clearly-defined topic. The timeframe is usually one to two hours. Typically, the participants are given some type of compensation for participation, whether it is direct monetary compensation or a donation to a charity. There are focus group facilities in some urban locations, but focus groups also can be conducted in community rooms in buildings such as schools, community centers, restaurants, churches, libraries, stores or banks.

Participants are commonly chosen by convenience sample. That means the participants are chosen based on availability and accessibility, and thus not representative of the larger population. In order to make sure each participant fits the criteria, a screening tool is used in the recruitment process. This is basically a set of questions that defines the characteristics needed for the study. The focus group is administered by a focus group moderator who introduces the focus group topic(s) and keeps discussion moving. The moderator uses a

discussion guide for each focus group that is developed beforehand and outlines the issues of interest. It is important to record the discussions that take place, so they are commonly audio recorded or video recorded, in addition to an observer taking notes.

This qualitative research method was first used in the 1930s by social scientists (Dawson et al., 1993). More recently, focus groups have been used as a research tool for a wide range of subject areas. Although they are well-planned in advance, the objective is to allow for a thoughtful, free-flowing discussion among participants where real feelings and experiences allow for better understanding of a specific topic. As stated in a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration report about fatigued driving, “Focus groups are useful tools for providing insight into the experiences, behavior, attitudes and perceptions of a specific audience. The people selected to participate in focus groups are chosen according to common characteristics related to the topic of the group. Focus group discussions allow for group interaction and provide insight into why a specific audience holds certain opinions beyond that which we can achieve through other quantitative research techniques” (Nelson et al.). Although focus groups do not provide hard statistics, they provide a human face to an issue of importance. Focus groups allow researchers to delve deep into a topic and retrieve a level of understanding not always obtainable with quantitative methods like surveys.

#### *Examples of focus groups in transportation*

1. Focus groups have been used in exploring transportation issues. A National Highway Traffic Safety Administration study used focus groups to test countermeasures for vehicle crashes related to fatigue. Nelson et al., from the Harvard School of Public Health, conducted focus groups targeting two groups. The groups were young males and shift workers as these groups were identified as

- high risk targets that are likely to experience drowsy driving. The goal of this research was to uncover risk factors of drowsy driving, motivations for changing these factors, and potential interventions to decrease crashes involving falling asleep at the wheel (Nelson et al.).
2. A report prepared for the Wisconsin Departments of Transportation, Corrections and Health and Family Services used focus groups for analyzing alternatives for repeat impaired driving offenses other than incarceration (Dieringer Research Group, Inc., 2001). Wisconsin identified impaired driving as a major problem, and decided to focus on repeat offenders in efforts to improve this problem. The Dieringer Research Group, Inc. held four focus groups with people considered experts in the field of impaired driving. These participants included people with jobs in the areas of police departments, education, counseling, treatment, attorneys and public health. A summary with recommendations was presented to the Wisconsin Departments listed above, from the focus groups as well as individual interviews and phone surveys (Dieringer Research Group, Inc., 2001).
  3. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) also did a study in 2003 using focus groups to study drinking associated with driving motorcycles. The study, which is titled, "Drinking, Riding, and Prevention: A Focus Group Study," delves into the critical problem of motorcycle crashes related to alcohol consumption. NHTSA wanted to research attitudes and beliefs of people who drive motorcycles in regards to drinking and riding. There were twenty focus groups conducted around the U.S. for purposes of this study. Patterns and themes from these discussions were analyzed and used for report preparation with a

recommendation section for reducing impaired motorcycle driving (Becker et al., 2003).

4. Another focus group study example within the transportation realm is a project done for the Colorado Department of Transportation in 2006. The Colorado DOT hired private consultants to conduct six focus groups on perceptions of traffic congestion. Traffic congestion is a substantial issue in the state of Colorado and one that state residents are concerned about. This qualitative research was done in order to better understand residents' feelings and views of congestion in the state, measure tolerance of traffic congestion, assess perceptions of the DOT's efforts in this area, and really obtain in-depth information about how this issue affects the lifestyle of Colorado residents (PBS&J and Public Opinion Strategies, 2006).

#### *Project execution*

Initially, sixteen focus groups were planned statewide. The sixteen focus groups were distributed throughout the eight regions based on population. Table 2 below summarizes the initial focus group schedule. **Figure 7** shows the eight North Dakota Human Services regions that were the geographical stratification for conducting the focus groups.

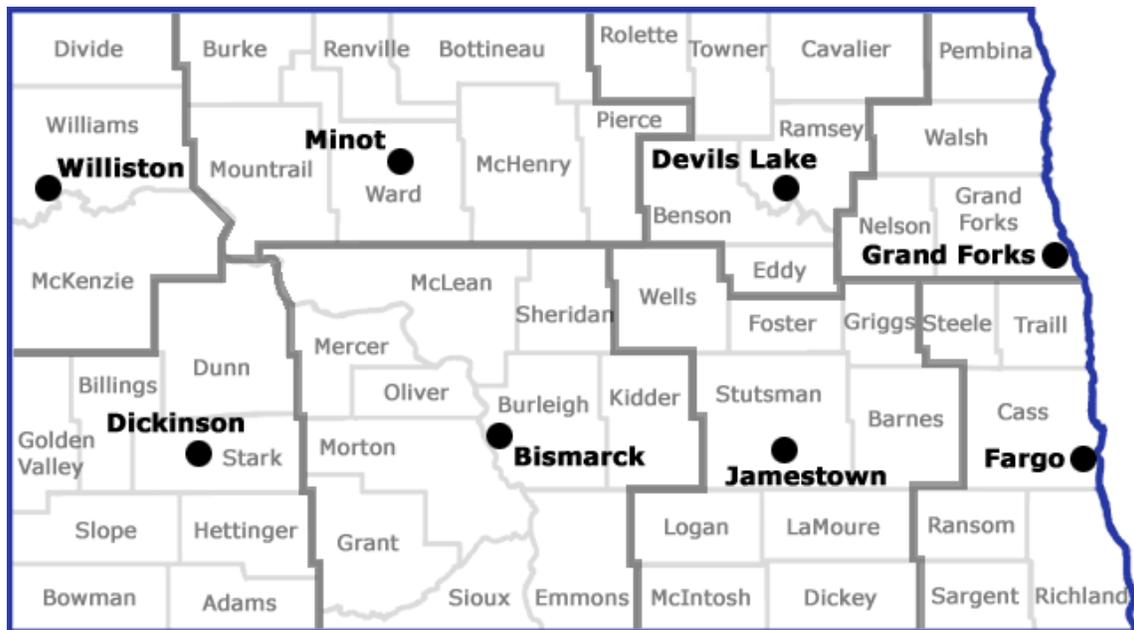


Figure 7 North Dakota Human Services Prevention Regions,  
 Source: <http://www.nd.gov/humanservices/>

Table 2 Focus Groups Administered in each region

<b>Region</b>	<b>Focus Groups, originally scheduled</b>	<b>Focus Groups, actually administered</b>	<b>Safe Communities coordinators</b>
Bismarck	4	2	1
Devils Lake	1	1	1
Dickinson	1	1	1
Fargo	4	4	3
Grand Forks	2	2	1
Valley City/Jamestown	1	1	2
Minot	2	1	1
Williston	1	1	1
<i>North Dakota</i>	16	13	11

The focus groups were held between October 1 and December 10, 2007. Two focus groups originally intended for the Bismarck region and one for the Minot region, were cancelled due to lack of participation interest within the timeline of the project. The specific dates and locations of the thirteen final focus groups are summarized in Table 3. All of the focus groups were held during the timeframe of a typical lunch hour, except for the

Dickinson meeting. The focus groups were held during this time so that participants could be given lunch as an incentive for participation. In some cases, the participants' employers allowed them this time to participate with no time limit as a volunteer opportunity to assist the Safe Communities of that particular region. The Dickinson focus group was held at 5:30 p.m., and participants were given dinner as an incentive for assisting with the discussion.

This was due to participant availability and convenience.

**Table 3** Focus Group dates and locations

<b>Focus Group No.</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Trip</b>	<b>Location</b>
1	Grand Forks	October 1, 2007	A	Grand Forks
2	Grand Forks	October 2, 2007	B	Park River
3	Devils Lake	October 10, 2007	C	Devil's Lake
4	Williston	October 16, 2007	D	Williston
5	Dickinson	October 17, 2007	D	Dickinson
6	Jamestown/Valley City	October 24, 2007	E	Valley City
7	Bismarck	October 29, 2007	F	Mandan
8	Fargo	October 31, 2007	G	Wahpeton
9	Fargo	November 5, 2007	H	Fargo
10	Fargo	November 15, 2007	I	Fargo
11	Bismarck	November 28, 2007	J	Bismarck
12	Fargo	December 6, 2007	K	Mayville
13	Minot	December 10, 2007	L	Minot

A discussion guide was developed in a collaborative effort between the OTS, the North Dakota Safe Communities coordinators and the Rural Transportation Safety and Security Center. The discussion guideline includes outline questions or topic-openers that focus on seat belt use and impaired driving. Care was taken to keep the guideline phrasing objective and non-influential. The complete guide is included as Appendix B. This discussion guide was used by the project facilitator as a tool to guide discussion. It was not

followed exactly at each discussion, as the facilitator let the participants lead discussion in various directions. It was simply used as an outline to keep the discussion focused on the specified topics, in this case seat belt use and impaired driving.

### *Focus Group Specifics*

Specific details for each focus group were coordinated by Safe Communities coordinators in that particular region. The Safe Communities coordinators found participants for the focus groups, as well as a location and catering option for the corresponding meeting. The time and effort of these coordinators was invaluable, as they knew the people and places suitable for the project. Recruiting six to twelve participants for each of the thirteen focus groups would have been a monumental task in itself if Safe Communities had not been brought into the research process. Splitting it up among these organizations that are well-developed and integrated into the community made the process go smoothly. This “buy-in” is important when working on an action research project involving personal intervention with individuals as the researcher needs trust and credibility, which can be given through the community person – in this case, the Safe Communities coordinators.

Each focus group was attended by the participants for that region, the group facilitator, Tamara VanWechel, and the project coordinator, Laurel Benson. After welcoming the men and thanking them for coming, they were invited to get food or look at food choices while we waited for others to arrive. In most cases, the Safe Communities coordinator who helped plan the meeting was in attendance and helped to welcome the participants. The coordinators were encouraged to say a few words and explain their part in the project before the meeting started. They left the room before the discussion began for consistency and methodological reasons.

The group facilitator introduced herself and the project coordinator and encouraged participants to eat as the meeting progressed. The project was briefly explained and the process to occur during the hour ahead. The facilitator then opened the discussion using the discussion guide as an outline, first discussing seat belt use and then impaired driving.

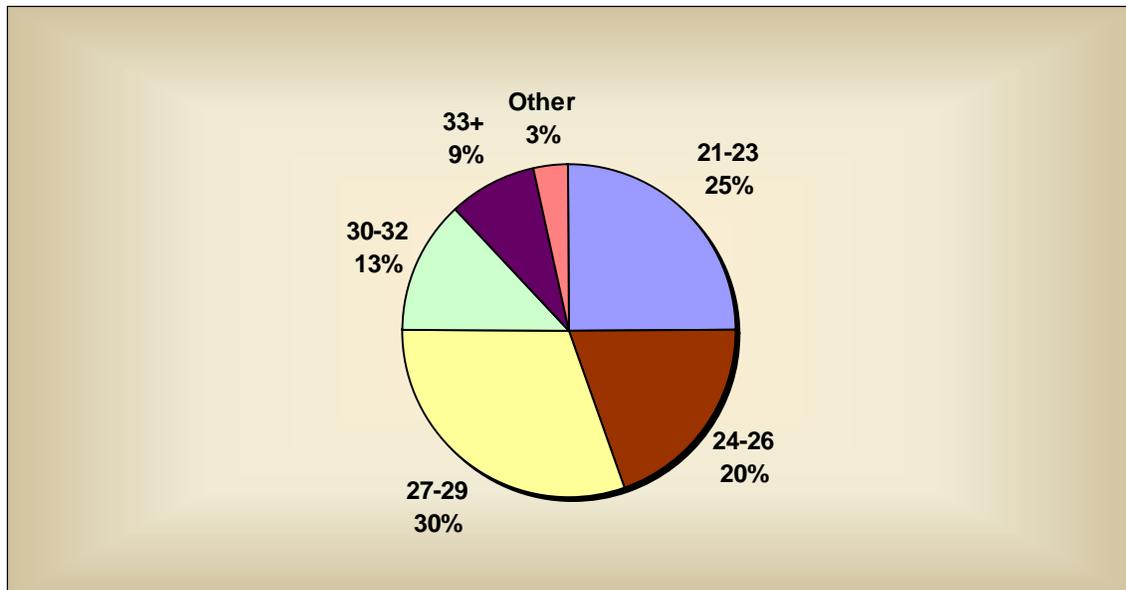
Before conducting the official focus groups for this study, a practice run was conducted at the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute and North Dakota State University. This involved using the same methodology as planned for all the group discussions as practice for purposes of meeting length and discussion flow.

## RESULTS

### *Focus Group Questionnaires: The participants*

The number of participants per focus group ranged from three to eleven, with the average being seven. The grand total for number of participants involved in the focus groups around the state is 92. The pre-discussion questionnaire asked participants demographic questions, along with a few questions regarding traffic safety issues and beliefs. The complete questionnaire is included as Appendix C. Based on the short pre-discussion questionnaire, the following demographic information provides an overview of the participant population that took part in this research project.

As stated previously, the targeted group for this project was male drivers ages 21 to 34. The breakdown of participants' ages is shown in Figure 8. Participants ages 27 to 29 made up the largest group with 30 percent.



**Figure 8** Age Distribution of Focus Group Participants

Twenty-seven percent of the participants indicated they had “some college” education and the same percentage had a two-year college degree. The level of education for the participants is broken down further in Figure 9.

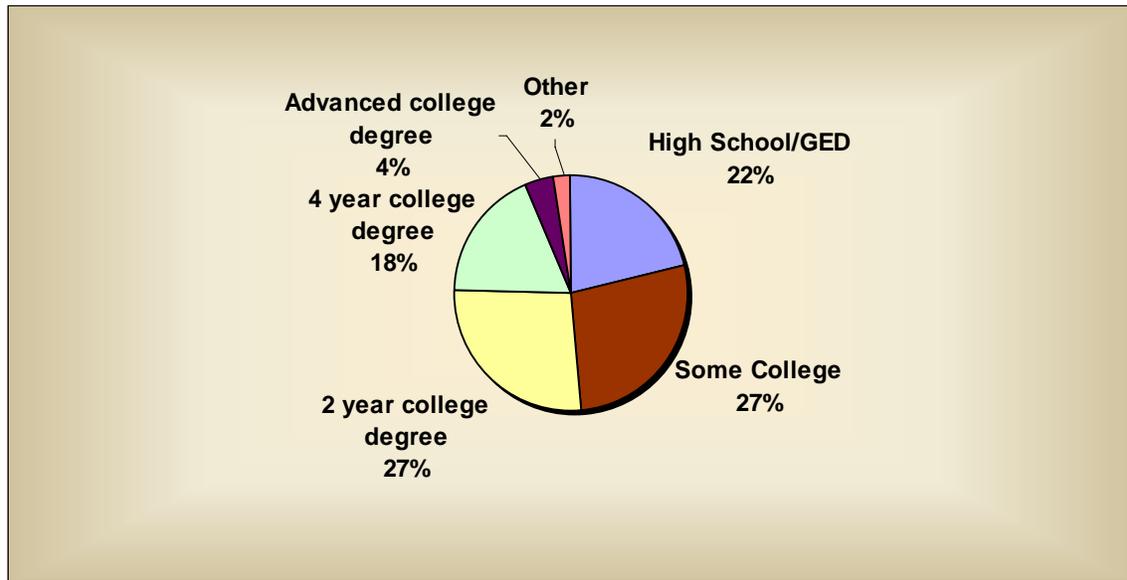


Figure 9 Focus Group Participants' Education Level

The income level category where the greatest number of participants fall is the category \$26-35 thousand annually (37 percent). Figure 10 shows the complete spectrum of income levels for the focus group participants. According to the 2006 American Community survey, the average annual income for North Dakota males was just over \$38 thousand (Webster & Bishaw, 2007). The focus group participants have income levels that are slightly lower than this 2006 average.

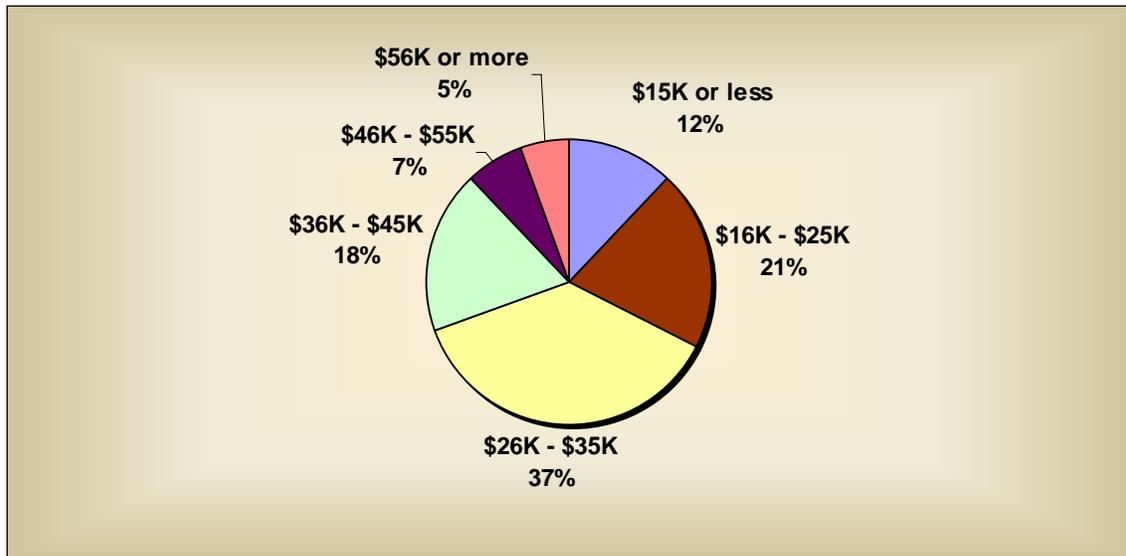


Figure 10 Participant Income Level

The focus group questionnaire included questions regarding marital and child status of the participants. With 55 percent indicating they were single, this category of participants made up the majority. The results are presented in Figure 11. Figure 12 shows the majority of participants indicated they do not have children (62 percent).

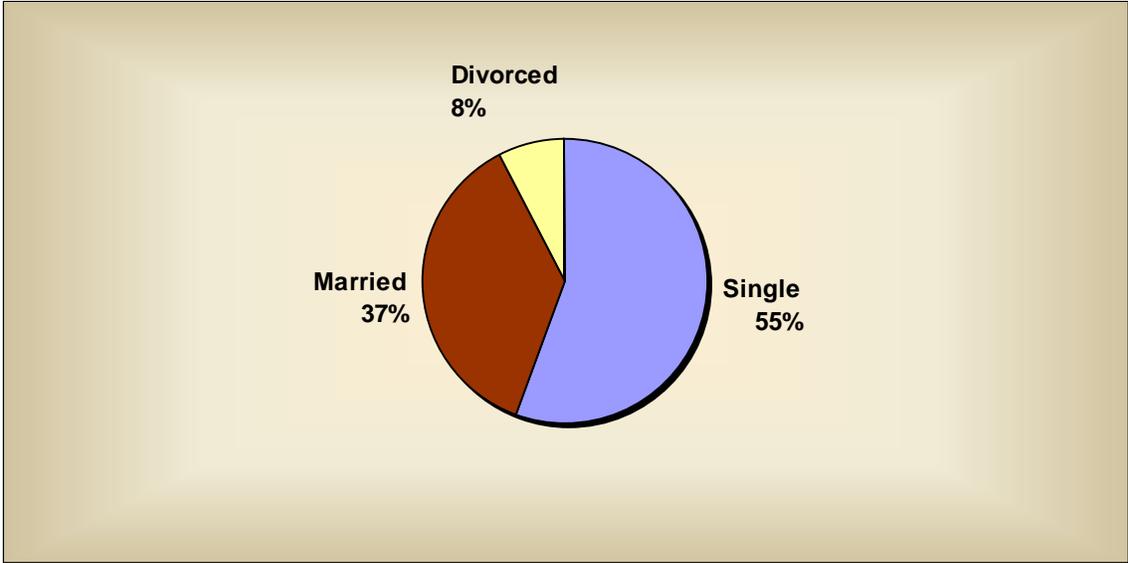


Figure 11 Participant Marital Status

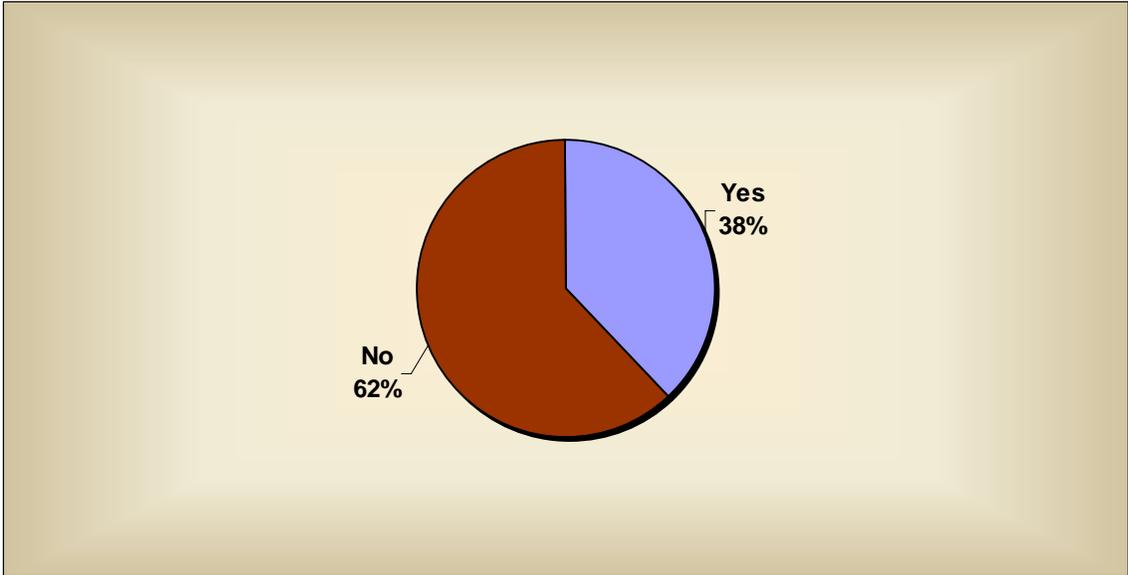
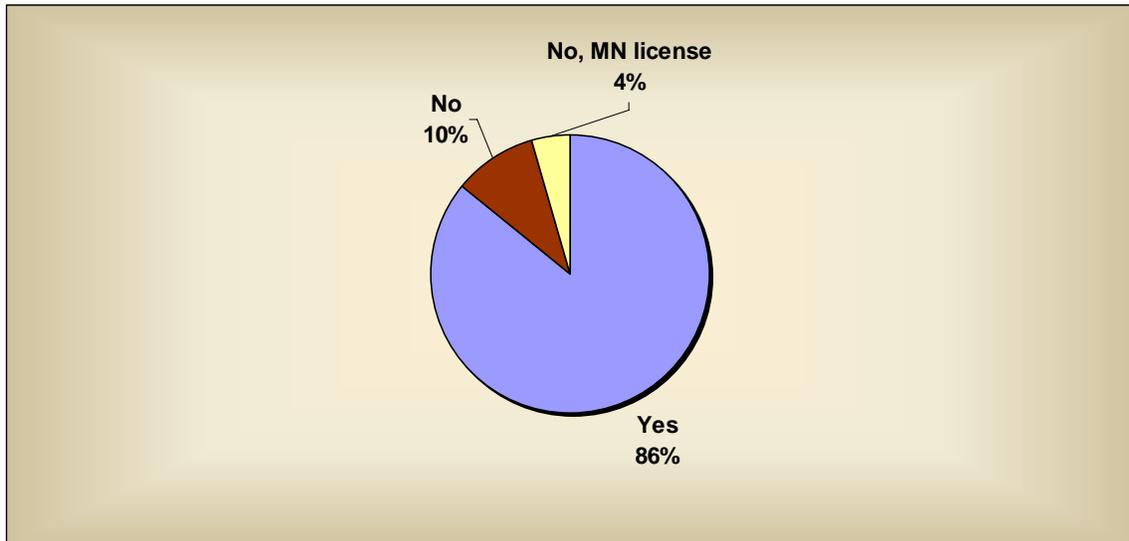
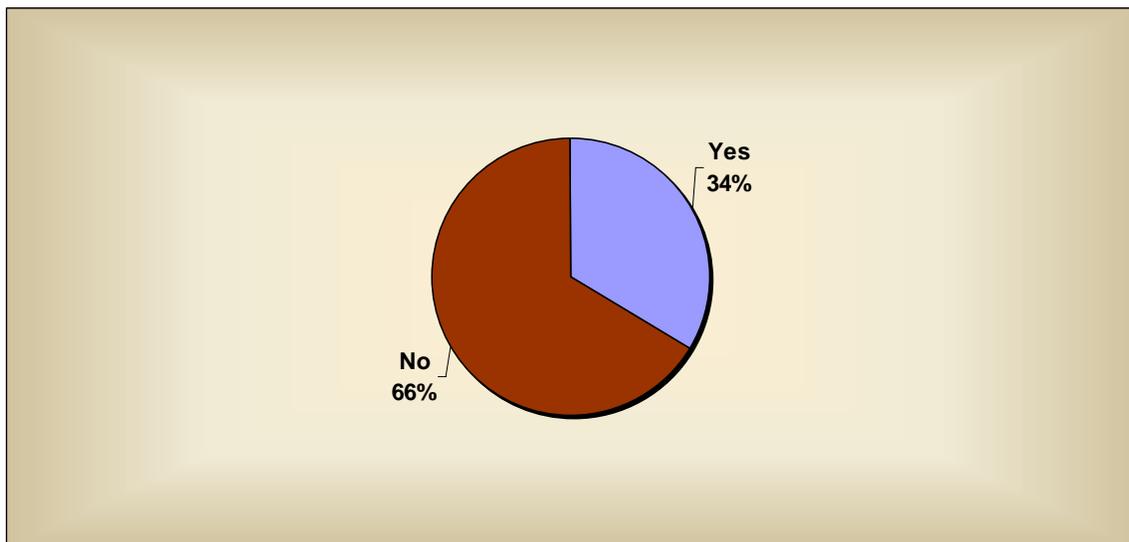


Figure 12 Participant Child Status

Eighty-six percent of the men indicated they had a valid driver's license from North Dakota, and four percent had a valid Minnesota license. As indicated, **Figure 13** shows a few of the men we visited with did not have a valid license. **Figure 14** shows about one-third of the men also have a commercial driver's license.



**Figure 13** Participants Driver's License Status: Do you have a valid ND license?



**Figure 14** Participants with a Commercial Driver's License

North Dakota residents can get a driver's license at age fourteen after completing driver's education and the necessary behind-the-wheel training. Of the men who participated in our focus groups, a large majority (85 percent) indicated they got their driver's license between ages fourteen and sixteen as shown in Figure 15.

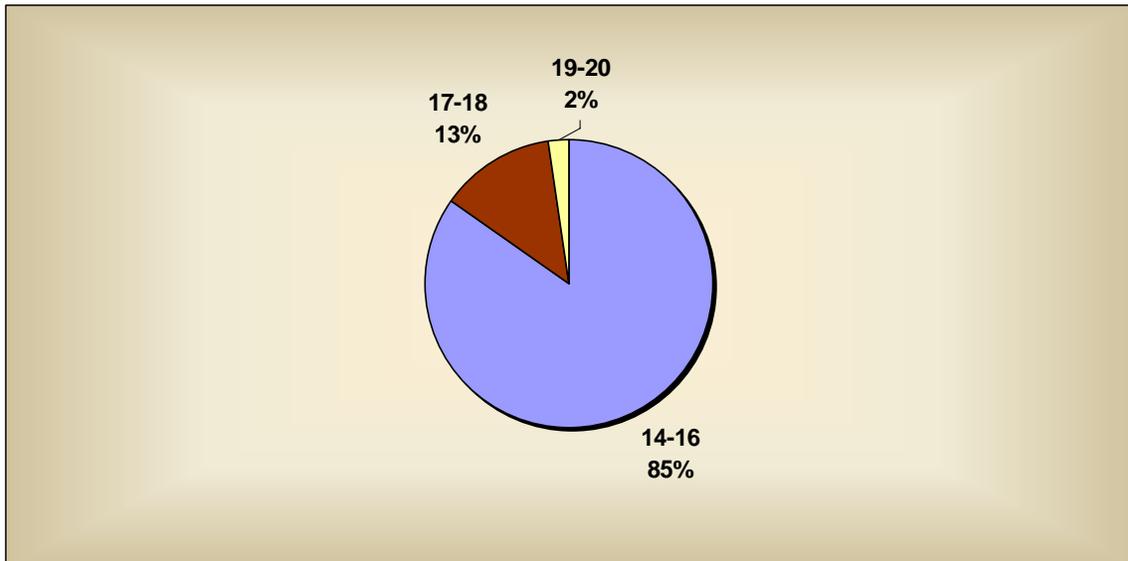


Figure 15 Age Participants Received Driver's License

One question included in the short survey asked roughly how many speeding violations each participant had been issued. Just over 50 percent of the people involved in our focus groups admitted to having between one and three speeding violations (Figure 16). When asked about driving under the influence (DUI) violations, only thirteen percent had ever been convicted (Figure 17).

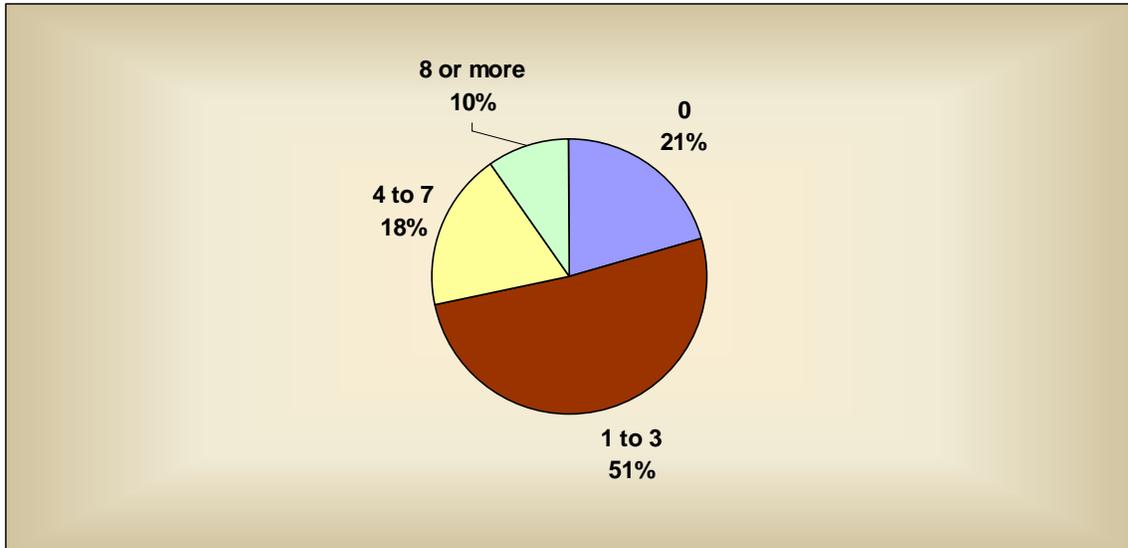


Figure 16 Participant Speeding Violations

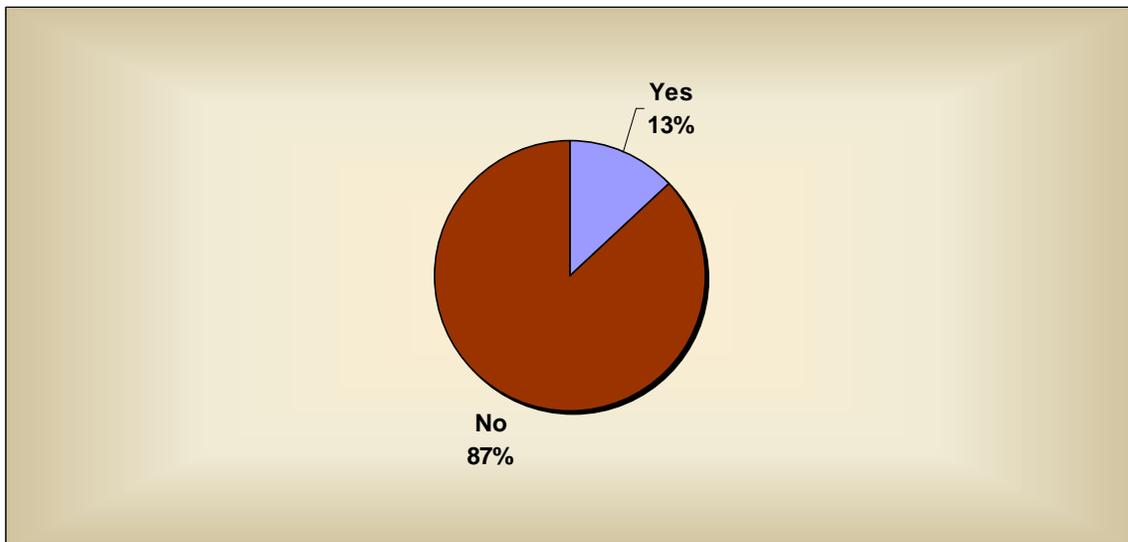


Figure 17 Participants Who Have Had a DUI Conviction

In 2006, the North Dakota seat belt use was 79 percent (NHTSA, 2007). Figure 18 shows how often focus group participants wear their seat belts. Sixty-three percent indicate they use a safety belt either “Always” or “Most of the time”, which falls below the statewide seat belt use number for 2006.

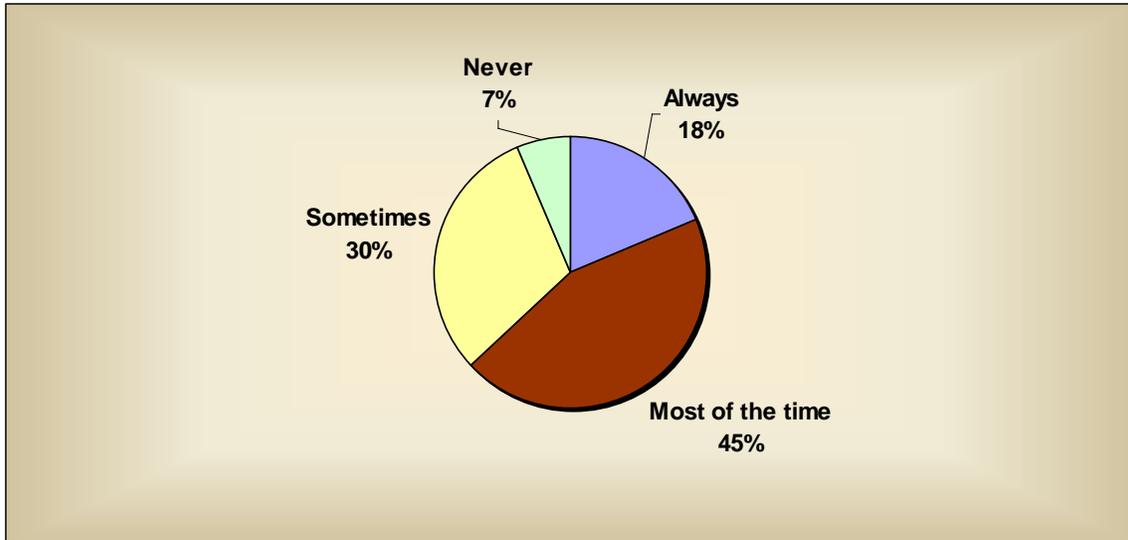


Figure 18 Participant Seat belt Usage

To get an idea of the beliefs of male drivers ages 21 to 34 regarding drinking and driving, they were asked the following: Do you feel drinking and driving is a problem within your group of peers? A vast majority indicated yes as illustrated in Figure 19.

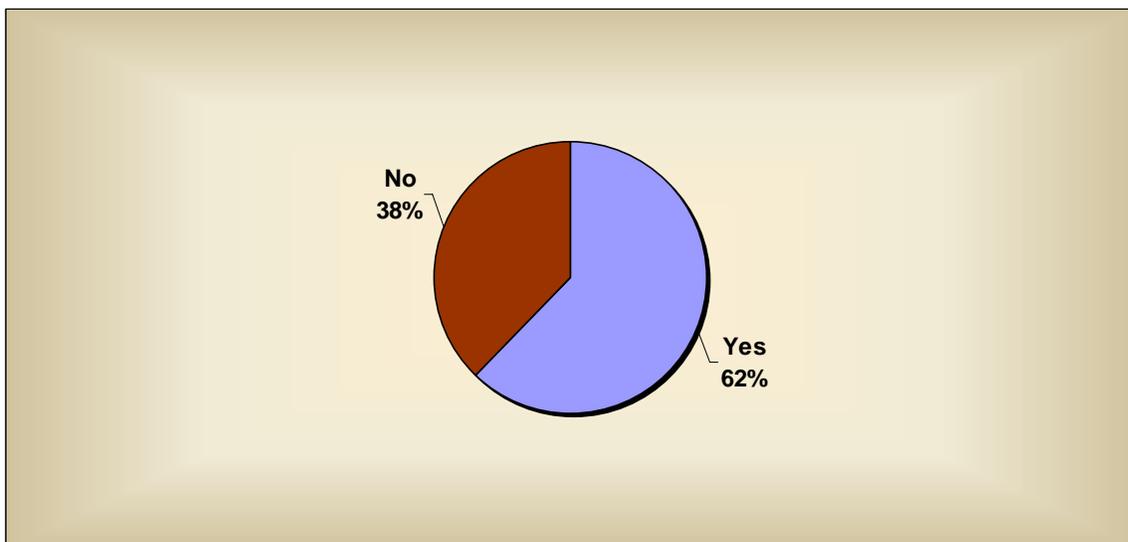


Figure 19 Views on if Drinking and Driving is a Problem with Peers

Questions were included regarding the beliefs of current seat belt and DUI violations. The first question asked if stricter penalties would be effective in getting more male drivers to use a seat belt. The majority of participants indicated “yes” as shown in Figure 20. Figure 21 shows “yes” responses to a parallel question regarding stricter penalties for DUI convictions. Sixty-three percent of the people questioned thought harsher penalties would be an effective method of decreasing drinking and driving.

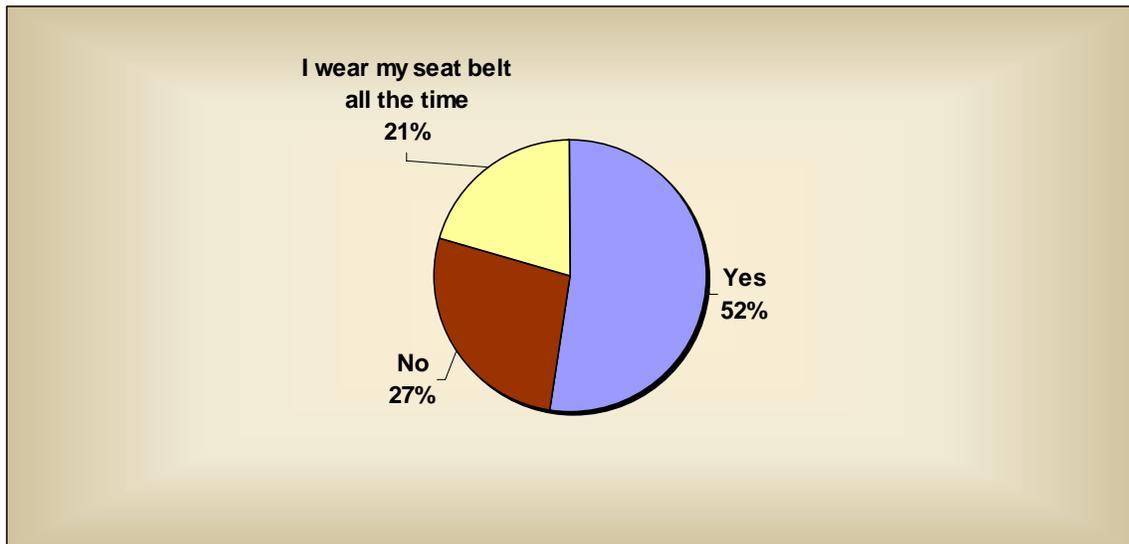


Figure 20 Would Stricter Penalties be Effective for Increasing Seat belt Use?

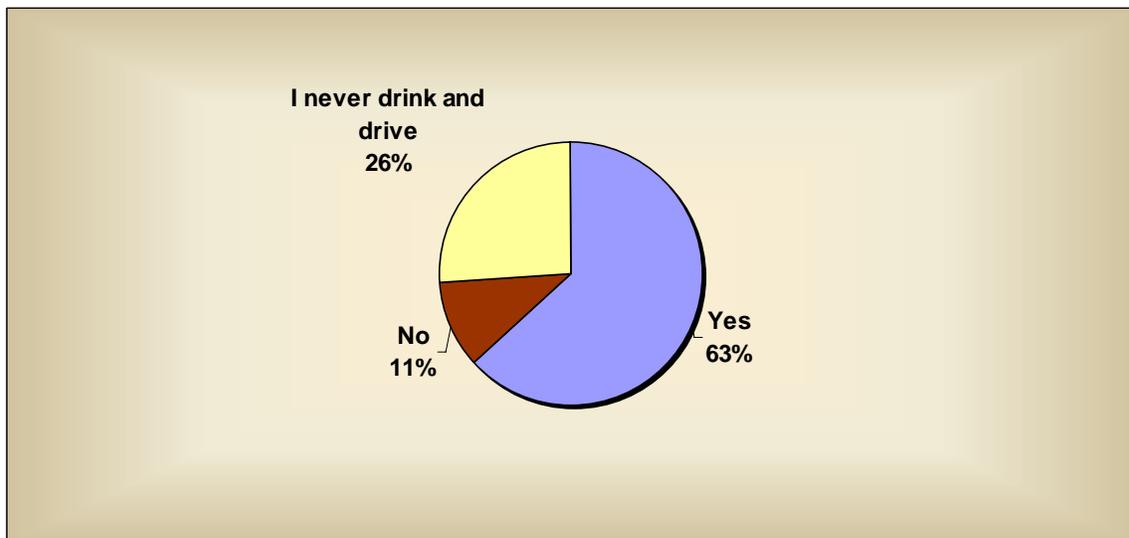


Figure 21 Would Stricter Penalties be Effective for Decreasing Drinking and Driving?

The following is the complete question that corresponds with Figure 22 and Figure 23. Participants ranked the seven options from one to seven, with one being most effective way of improving seat belt use among young, male drivers. Figure 22 shows all ranks provided by participants throughout the state. The bar graph indicates the quantities for each rank (one through seven) for each category. The highlighted categories in Figure 22 (law enforcement and children in car) are viewed as “most effective” overall. The options with the least effective ranking are media coverage and peer pressure.

Please rank the following from 1 (most effective in making male drivers wear a seat belt) to 7 (least effective in making male drivers wear a seat belt). Do not rank “other” if it is left blank.

- \_\_\_ Media coverage such as TV, radio or billboard announcements
- \_\_\_ Peer pressure
- \_\_\_ Law enforcement
- \_\_\_ Driving with children in car
- \_\_\_ Larger Fines
- \_\_\_ More points off driver’s license
- \_\_\_ In-car reminder (beeping and/or blinking indicator)
- \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

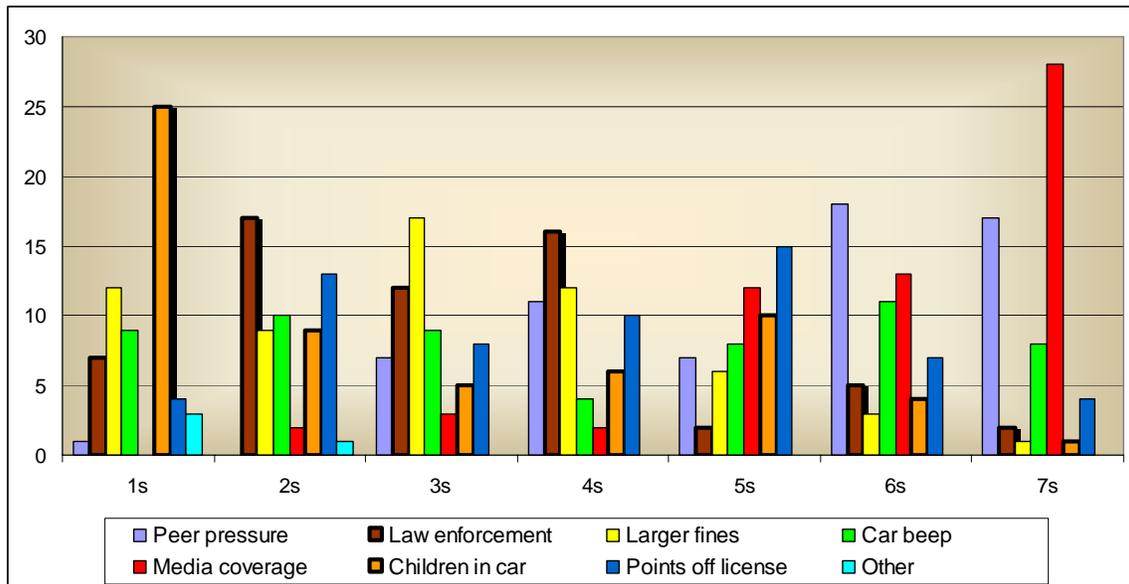
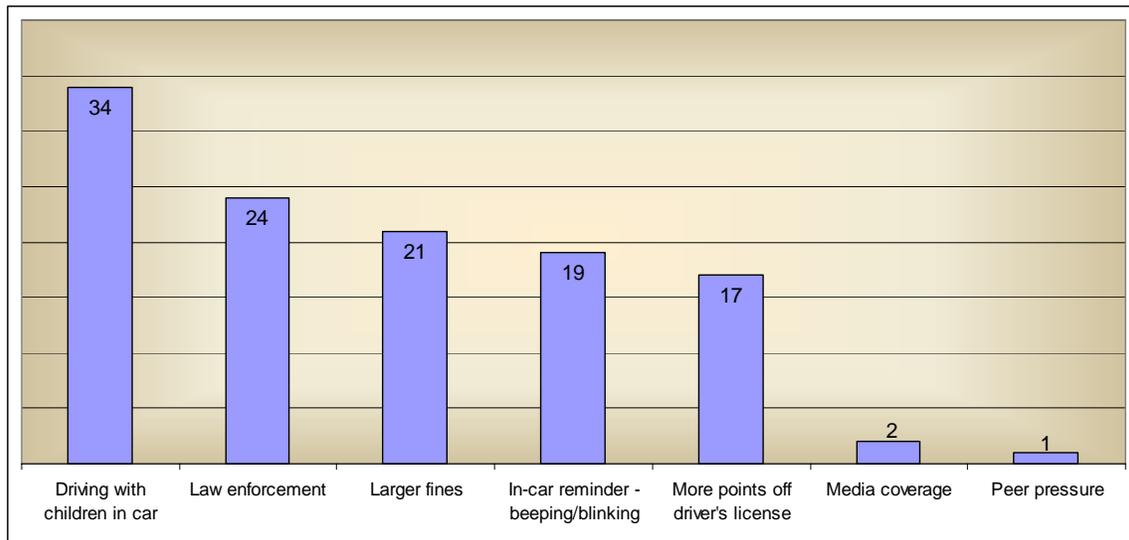


Figure 22 All Rankings Provided for Methods to Promote Male Driver Seat belt Use

The most effective methods are highlighted again in Figure 23. The options with the highest number are viewed as most effective for getting young males to wear seat belts by the focus group participants overall. The totals in the figure are how many participants ranked that option as either a one or two.



**Figure 23** Ranked most effective for promoting seat belt use for male drivers on a scale of 1 (most effective) to 7 (least effective)  
 \*Total number of 1 or 2 rankings

The following is the complete question that corresponds with Figure 24 and Figure 25. Participants ranked the seven options for stopping drinking and driving from one to seven, with one being most effective. Figure 24 shows statewide participant answers to this question. The bar graph indicates the quantities for each rank (one through seven) for each category, with the highlighted bars being viewed as “most effective” overall. Again, “law enforcement”, “children”, and “larger fines” are perceived by the greatest number of participants as being effective methods for deterring drinking and driving. On the other hand, “peer pressure” and “media coverage” were ranked least effective.

Please rank the following from 1 (most effective for stopping drinking and driving) to 7 (least effective for stopping drinking and driving). Do not rank “other” if it is left blank.

- \_\_\_ Peer pressure
- \_\_\_ Media coverage such as TV, radio or billboard announcements
- \_\_\_ Law enforcement
- \_\_\_ Driving with children in car
- \_\_\_ Larger Fines
- \_\_\_ More points off driver’s license
- \_\_\_ Low-cost AND readily available transportation home from drinking establishment
- \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

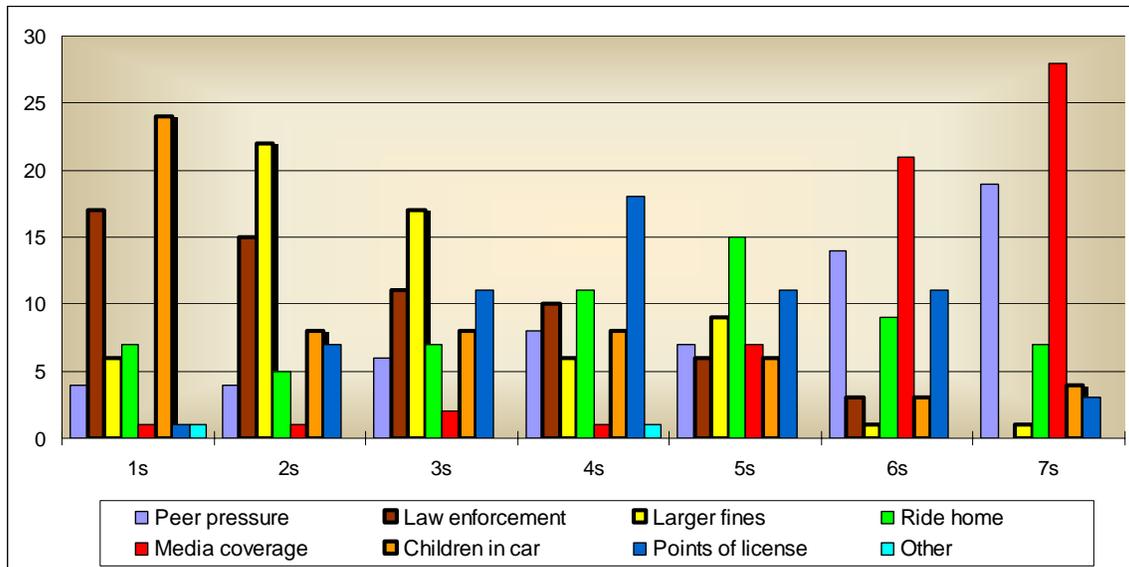
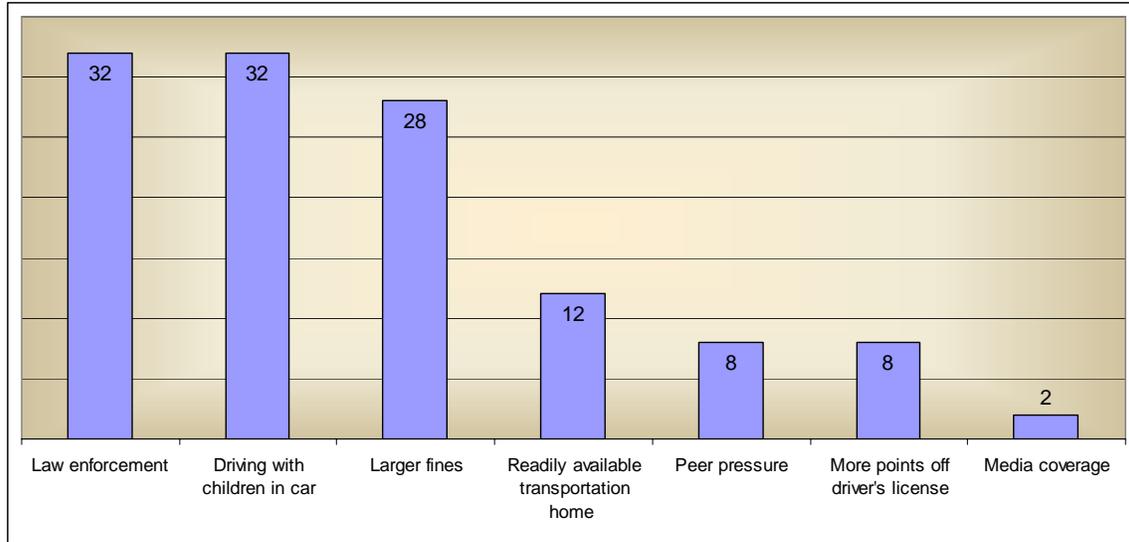


Figure 24 All Rankings Provided for Methods to Deter Male Driver Drinking and Driving

The most effective methods (or “best” methods, as viewed by focus group participants) are highlighted again in Figure 25. The options with the highest number are viewed as most effective for influencing young males to not drink and drive by the focus group participants overall. The totals in the figure are how many participants ranked that option as either a one or two.



**Figure 25** Ranked most effective for deterring drinking and driving for male drivers on a scale of 1 (most effective) to 7 (least effective)

\*Total number of 1 or 2 rankings

The methods these participants indicated would be most effective for decreasing drinking and driving in the targeted group are “law enforcement” and “children in car”. These are the methods that were ranked “1” or “2” by the most people. “Larger fines” also ranked high among participants as a method for deterring drinking and driving.

#### *Focus Group Discussions: Theme Development*

Themes were generated based on analysis of the group discussions. The following themes were discussed in roughly six or more of the thirteen focus groups. However, it should be noted that this is a qualitative research practice, and thus the results can be considered subjective. The results from focus group research are not generalizable to the entire population that makes up the demographics of the target group. Instead, the information provides an in-depth look into the attitudes, behaviors and beliefs of people that fit into the target group. Thus, the results can direct action strategies to implement opportunities that will have the greatest impact for the largest number of people. The

researchers coded the comments/discussions based on the discussion guideline questions and the keywords and answers from the participants. Patterns have been deciphered and are discussed in the following paragraphs.

### **Seat belt Themes**

*How many of the participants use seat belts regularly (or 'most of the time')?*

- Approximately half of the men participating in the focus groups based on a raise of hands

*Who uses them?*

- People in larger cities (versus small/rural towns)

*When are young males more apt to wear seat belts?*

- On the highway or interstate
- When children or other family members (wife, mother, etc.) are in the car

*When do men start wearing seat belts??*

- After having children
- In general, mid 20s (if they are going to start at all)

*When do you put your seat belt on (motions you go through when driving away) for those who do buckle up?*

- When backing up or when a few blocks down the street
- After hearing the car's auditory seat belt signal/beep

*Is it an important safety/health issue?*

- Yes - In general, the belief is seat belt use is an important public safety issue.

*Reasons why males (ages 21-34) do not wear seat belts*

- In a small town/Only going a few blocks

- In and out of the car a lot

*Do you ask passengers riding with you to wear their seat belts?*

- If they are children, yes
- If passengers are adults, no – in general, they do not ask friends to buckle up

*What is the best way to motivate males ages 21-34 to wear a seat belt?*

- Increase fines for seat belt non-compliance tickets or make the seat belt law primary
- Scare tactics or personal experience stories (for example, someone’s brother died in an accident and was unbuckled)
- However, it was noted in at least six of the groups that either nothing would make them personally use a seat belt or they believe nothing will make some people wear a seat belt.
- Also, multiple comments were made regarding seat belt use as a personal choice, and some participants do not want to be told what to do.

### **Impaired Driving Themes**

*In general, do you think drinking and driving is a problem in North Dakota?*

- Yes - in at least eleven of the focus groups

*Why is drinking and driving a problem in North Dakota?*

- People think they are “okay” to drive – maybe they have had only a few drinks and their perception of “okay” is off.
- Police officers either “look the other way” in smaller communities, or there just is not adequate police enforcement in these rural areas.

- The drinking culture in North Dakota makes it possible because it seems like people view drinking and driving as an “okay thing to do.”
- DUIs are socially accepted in our state or they are not a “big deal.”
 

*If/when you go out for the evening and plan on having a drink(s), do you have a plan for getting home safely?*
- Having a designated driver or calling someone to come and drive them home
- Call a cab or walk
- Roughly eight of the groups brought up problems with taxis. Many people said they would use a taxi to get home from the bar, but they are hard to get a hold of, there are not enough of them around, or they stop running before the bar closes.
 

*What are the best ways to deter drinking and driving in men ages 21-34?*
- Have some type of readily available transportation during bar operating-hours
- A common issue is the unwillingness to leave a vehicle at the establishment overnight.
 

There is potential for vandalism and it is an annoyance to try to find a way to retrieve it the next morning.
- Approximately ten of the groups believed that DUI penalties need to be stiffer to be effective in decreasing impaired driving. Discussions evolved over North Dakota DUI laws being minimal or “a joke.” Many brought up laws being much harsher (or perceived to be harsher) in other states or countries (such as Canada, Minnesota, New Mexico).
- Job-retention is important for participants of the focus groups. Some people discussed employment policies related to DUIs. Some jobs require a valid driver’s license while others simply reserve the right to let an employee go if they are convicted of

drinking and driving. Because economic vitality is based on income-flow, this was perceived as a common deterrence in drinking and driving.

- Another common theme involves drinking-establishment responsibility. The groups thought bars should carry some responsibility for their patrons. They thought bartenders should offer to call a cab, or give some type of transportation option (maybe the bar should have a bus or other vehicle that drops people off at home at the end of the night). Otherwise, bars could give out vouchers for cabs.
- Several groups mentioned that it would be helpful if bars would provide free drinks and/or snacks to the designated driver.
- In order to get the point across to people in this demographic audience, they felt the best options would be scare/shock tactics or stories/information from people who have experienced injury or death of a loved one because of an impaired driver; or who have had horrific experiences as the impaired driver.

Each of the meetings held across the state provided rich information and valuable insight into the traffic safety concerns addressed. Many participants had interesting and helpful comments. The comments have been summarized in the previous text. Some of the specific comments are included in Table 4,

Table 5, and Table 6.

Table 4 Sample Seat belt Comments

Not willing to change habits for themselves (start using seat belts)
Seat belt use is individual decision, should not be a law
Cops don't always wear seat belts
It is a hassle to wear seat belt while hunting.
Getting a ticket doesn't convince me to wear a seat belt
Parents are good example for children - when they promote and use seat belts
Seat belt fines are not effective
Spotting a cop does not make me buckle up
Quoting statistics doesn't work in getting guys to put on seat belts
Seat belt use in North Dakota is random
One person indicated he was pulled over for speeding and just got a seat belt ticket - he was happy because he rather just have the \$20 seat belt ticket
One person said he started regularly wearing his seat belt after getting a ticket for noncompliance
Seat belt law is "communist" - should be a choice
Said seat belt fines in MN are much greater than ND
Participants who were/are ambulance personnel saw first-hand affects of not buckling up. These people were adamant seat belt users.
Law enforcement is less of a factor than safety for seat belt use because it is only secondary offense
I don't wear a seat belt because of risk of being stuck in car in accident/fire
One person worked as paramedic and saw nasty accidents - says that changes your view of using restraints to a must
Don't wear seat belt because I want to be able to escape accident in case of fire

Table 5 Sample Impaired Driving Comments

Promote good parenting - don't let kids drink at home
Look at other states DUI penalties - better/more strict
Discussed needing to raise legal limit for DUI up from .08
"Buzz" driving happens a lot versus being completely drunk while driving
Cops should give rides home from the bar
See who can drive at the end of the evening - who isn't drunk or "least drunk"
Drinking culture in ND - "everyone I know in ND drinks"
Different bar closing times creates a problem - when bars in one city close, drive to next town where they are open later
Checkpoints don't work
Bars need to give free soda to designated driver
DUI penalties should vary by severity of blood alcohol level
Drinking and driving gets to be a social "norm" in small towns
Impaired driving is a problem in ND, but it is a problem everywhere
"Embarrassment factor" not a concern - Drinking and driving is socially acceptable
Canada has stiff DUI penalties
Need different degrees of penalties for DUIs
Educate at a young age the consequences of impaired driving
Parental involvement! - set a good example
Making taxis more available WON'T help college students because they will spend last \$ on beer (would need to be free)
Support in the courts - too many technicalities to keep DUI charge in court, too many "ways out"
Lack of responsibility on the part of younger drinkers who have "rich parents to bail them out"
Lack of major crime in ND means cops are always "looking for DUIs" and therefore, it seems like a bigger issue
One Native American participant says he is always designated driver because they are targeted more by cops
DUIs will always be a problem as long as there is alcohol
When going out, plan to "stop drinking early enough" so you are able to drive home
ND DUI penalty system is a "joke"

Table 6 Sample "Other" Comments

Ad campaigns are annoying - no one pays attention to them
Seat belt ads/campaigns are NOT effective
One group thought generally that education or personal stories do not work as a deterrent
Loss of license does not work in all cases. One participant has lost his license, has had 11 citations for driving under suspension - but still drives. Has to get to work.
Promote family values

## SUMMARY AND “NEXT STEP” OPPORTUNITIES

This section presents a summary of the project themes that resulted from the focus groups. The discussions provided key ideas for which possibilities for traffic safety improvement are many. The recommendations are drawn from both the participant questionnaires and the focus group discussions, but primarily from the in-depth discussions held in each region.

The NDDOT OTS has limited time and resources. Although a variety of actions could be taken, priorities and corresponding timelines will have to be decided based on their annual Highway Safety Plan (HSP) and available resources. Potential steps are outlined as well as issues that need to be considered in order to make positive changes for North Dakota traffic crash trends. The focus group discussions, however, present information that provide a path of opportunities for improving seat belt use and impaired driving issues for North Dakota drivers, especially young, male drivers.

### *Seat belt Use: Opportunities*

The seat belt discussions provide key points that are consistent throughout North Dakota. The problem is not lack of knowledge. Most people agreed that use of seat belts is a safety issue. Thus, they understand wearing a safety restraint will aid in protection if a car crash occurs. Instead, the men seemed to want freedom of choice when deciding to put on a seat belt. Additionally, many people said they either put a seat belt on when kids are in the vehicle or at least insist on the children using restraints before the vehicle moves. Again, they understand the safety aspect, but need to be convinced it can affect them personally. It was noted in several of the meetings that “shock” tactics or use of real stories regarding car crash tragedies may be effective for promoting seat belt use. This was also true for crashes that are the result of drinking and driving. Hearing these horror stories and graphic details

that go along with them may make the safety aspect more tangible to male drivers in this targeted age category.

Another key concept indicates in general, even men who do not wear seat belts regularly will wear them in adverse conditions. For example, they will wear them when the weather is poor due to rain, snow or fog. Many indicated they would put their seat belts on if they were going to drive a long distance or on a major road where the speed limits are higher and more law enforcement is likely. It was noted on multiple occasions, that when driving in one of the larger North Dakota cities such as Bismarck, Grand Forks or Fargo, many would put on a seat belt because of more police presence or the greater perceived likelihood of being in a car crash. Other comments indicated that there is a consistent belief that other states have harsher seat belt penalties, such as neighboring Minnesota. This is also true when we discussed DUI penalties/fines.

It was evident that once these men started wearing a seat belt, for whatever reason, once it becomes habit it sticks. Therefore, it becomes important for children to buckle up at a young age, and hear the safety message consistently from parents and other adults. This is a concept that will have long-term effects. In the short-run, however, greater and more law enforcement was deemed the most effective way to increase seat belt use. Implementing stricter penalties is another method that could likely show quick improvements, but is a legislative issue out of the hands of the ND Office of Traffic Safety. They cannot directly change fines for seat belt use, although can give support for or against strategic legislation. However, an effective strategy may be using the current seat belt law as a factual media push. Even though North Dakota's seat belt law is secondary, it is still a law. As such, it is against the law to be unbuckled while operating a vehicle in the state even though it cannot be a primary enforcement.

### *Alcohol-Impaired Driving: Opportunities*

The focus group discussions also provided ideas that seem consistent throughout North Dakota. Overwhelmingly, the participants of the focus groups agreed that drinking and driving is a problem in North Dakota. They did not all agree that this was a problem with a specific group however, just that it was a problem overall. The problem with drinking and driving is the fact that people are impaired when they make the decision to drive. The focus groups discussed that once you have had a few alcoholic drinks, one actually believes they are “okay” to drive. Some of the groups thought educating people about the number of drinks that someone can have before reaching the legal limit might prove helpful. Many people were unsure if just having a beer or two after work would actually lead to being over the legal blood alcohol limit.

Another key concept indicates job-retention is a factor in some men’s decisions for drinking and driving. When strict work policies regarding “no tolerance” for DUI violations were implemented, participants felt strongly that drinking and driving was not acceptable for their livelihood. For example, people who said employment required a valid driver’s license said they would not risk drinking and driving or they would be out of a job. Perhaps more and better publicized job policies about drinking and driving could be effective in deterring this activity.

Readily available transportation home from a drinking establishment was a topic in most groups. The general consensus was that if a taxi was available, many would use it to get home after having a few drinks. However, taxis are only available in some of the bigger North Dakota cities and frequently those services are limited. Comments were often noted about using a taxi service if you could get a hold of it. On weekends, taxis are in high demand and nearly impossible to get a hold of for transport home. On a positive note, most

people said if there was a good transport option home from the bar, they would use it. In addition, some participants felt drinking establishments should take greater responsibility for its patrons by providing some type of transportation home or at least offering to call a designated driver or taxi. The idea of having a plan before going out for a night on the town appears crucial. As long as there is a plan at the beginning of the night, whether it is a designated driver, using a taxi, walking home or making the decision to have only one beer, the results are good. When men do have a plan, they usually follow it and avoid the chance of operating a vehicle while intoxicated.

Just as was indicated in the seat belt section, there was a lot of discussion on stricter penalties for the impaired driving issue. Again, this legislative issue is not something the OTS has direct control over. However, more and higher visibility law enforcement was perceived as an effective strategy for decreasing drinking and driving in North Dakota. Overall, the idea that a push from the enforcement side, along with stricter DUI penalties and collaboration with harsher and more consistent rulings from the judicial branch would have a great impact on DUI trends for male drivers.

The drinking and driving problem also comes with short-term and long-term solutions. The theme of drinking being a social “norm” was evident. Discussions often provided comments about lack of entertainment options (“nothing else to do”) in North Dakota. This was viewed as especially applicable in small towns. This leads to North Dakota residents drinking and maybe driving, and it is viewed as being “okay.” Although something needs to be done in the short term to decrease accidents resulting from drinking and driving, a cultural shift seems necessary in order to delve into the root of the problem, as it was perceived by the focus group deliberations. Again, parenting and family values were noted as being at the heart of making real changes.

### *In Conclusion*

The information gathered from the statewide focus groups was valuable and enlightening. One thing that became evident is there is no easy answer. Both of these traffic safety issues, seat belt use and impaired driving are complicated. Data shows there is room for improvement and the ND OTS believes improvements are possible. The focus groups provided a roadmap of opportunities that will play a role in taking action to jumpstart progress in these areas.

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**APPENDIX A: NORTH DAKOTA SEAT BELT AND DUI CONVICTION  
NUMBERS AND STATISTICS (2004-2006)**

<b>Table 2 of age by Sex</b>			
<b>Controlling for Conviction_type=Safety Belt violation</b>			
<b>age</b>	<b>Sex</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	
<b>14-20 yrs</b>	825	1490	2315
	4.57	8.26	12.84
	35.64	64.36	
	16.05	11.55	
<b>21-27 yrs</b>	1293	2811	4104
	7.17	15.59	22.76
	31.51	68.49	
	25.16	21.8	
<b>28-34 yrs</b>	648	1753	2401
	3.59	9.72	13.31
	26.99	73.01	
	12.61	13.59	
<b>35-41 yrs</b>	612	1495	2107
	3.39	8.29	11.68
	29.05	70.95	
	11.91	11.59	
<b>42-48 yrs</b>	681	1769	2450
	3.78	9.81	13.58
	27.8	72.2	
	13.25	13.72	
<b>49-55 yrs</b>	502	1556	2058
	2.78	8.63	11.41
	24.39	75.61	
	9.77	12.07	
<b>56 or older</b>	578	2022	2600
	3.2	11.21	14.42
	22.23	77.77	
	11.25	15.68	
<b>Total</b>	5139	12896	18035
	28.49	71.51	100

<b>Statistic</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Prob</b>
<b>Chi-Square</b>	6	146.8638	<.0001

Sample size=18,035

<b>Table of Age by Sex - DUI</b>			
<b>Age</b>	<b>Sex</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	
<b>14-20 yrs</b>	390 3.04 28.59 12.4	974 7.58 71.41 10.04	1364 10.62
<b>21-27 yrs</b>	1110 8.64 24.33 35.31	3453 26.89 75.67 35.6	4563 35.53
<b>28-34 yrs</b>	475 3.7 22.55 15.11	1631 12.7 77.45 16.82	2106 16.4
<b>35-41 yrs</b>	461 3.59 27.05 14.66	1243 9.68 72.95 12.82	1704 13.27
<b>42-48 yrs</b>	435 3.39 27.43 13.84	1151 8.96 72.57 11.87	1586 12.35
<b>49-55 yrs</b>	185 1.44 20.56 5.88	715 5.57 79.44 7.37	900 7.01
<b>56 or older</b>	88 0.69 14.19 2.8	532 4.14 85.81 5.49	620 4.83
<b>Total</b>	3144 24.48	9699 75.52	12843 100

<b>Statistic</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Prob</b>
<b>Chi-Square</b>	6	73.3013	<.0001

Sample size = 12,843

## **APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE**

# TRAFFIC SAFETY ISSUES IN NORTH DAKOTA

## Discussion Guide

*Rural Transportation Safety and Security Center,  
Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, NDSU  
September 28, 2007*

### DISCUSSION GUIDE

#### I. Introduction and Explanation

a. Moderator -Tamara VanWechel, UGPTI/NDSU

b. Informed Consent

1. Title: Traffic Safety Issues in North Dakota, Male Driver Focus Groups
2. This project is being done for the North Dakota Department of Transportation. We are coordinating with the NDDOT to collect statewide data on driver knowledge, attitude, behavior and beliefs regarding traffic safety issues. The NDDOT wants to know how they can reduce traffic fatalities, injuries, and crashes. We have decided to conduct several focus groups around the state to get this information.
3. Your participation in this project is voluntary – you can quit at any time.
4. We are simply going to have a discussion about driving. We want to know what you think about a couple of traffic safety issues. This should take approximately 1 hour of your time.
5. Lunch has been provided as a token of our appreciation. Thanks for participating in this project. Again – your participation today is greatly appreciated – as today’s discussion will be very useful for the DOT in addressing traffic safety in this region and in North Dakota as a whole.
6. Everything is completely confidential. Your identities and responses are confidential.
7. Lastly, you should feel free to contact me or the NDSU IRB Office with any questions you have. The contact information is on the handout provided.

c. Goal & Scope-

Focus group explanation - A focus group is a discussion with a group people of similar backgrounds referring to a specific topic. The discussion is led by a group facilitator who introduces the discussion topics and assists the group in moving forward with discussion.

The basics of today’s focus group:

- We are interested in what you think.
- This is a research project. There is no hidden agenda – we simply want to know about your viewpoints.

- You should feel free to discuss things among each other. You do not need to address me only.
- Everyone can talk – you don't need to raise your hand. Please try to talk in an orderly manner without interrupting.
- There are no right answers.
- It is ok to have an opinion that is different from the majority – just please be honest.
- Do not be shy!
- Any questions before we begin?

## 2. Seat Belt use – opinions

- Tell me what your views are on seat belt use in North Dakota. Do you think people generally use them, generally don't use them? Do you think there is a specific category of people that use them or don't?  
Explore – males, females, young, old
- Do you use seat belts?  
Explore – Where? When? How regularly?
- Are there certain situations when you always wear a seat belt?  
Explore – Traveling out-of-state, when with children, on the interstate?  
Speeding?
- Are there certain situations when you never wear a seat belt?  
Explore – Driving a short distance? On rural road?
- Describe the motions you go through when you get in your vehicle from the time you sit down until you start driving.
- Do you think wearing a seat belt is important (is it a health/safety issue)? Do you think it is beneficial for family members and friends to wear their seat belts?
- Why do you think people wear seat belts – motivation?  
Explore – Health? Safety? Habit? Children?
- Why do you think people do not wear seat belts?  
Explore – Forget? Not worth it? Annoying?
- Are there certain stereotypes attached to a male who wears a seat belt?  
Explore – Smart?, Silly? Nerd? Respected? Responsible?
- You get in your car with a friend, put on your seat belt – and your friend does not. Do you say anything?

## 3. Methods

- a. Have any of you heard or seen advertisements from the DOT or other organizations regarding use of seat belts? Example, “Click it or Ticket.” Or “Winners Buckle Up.”
  - b. Do you think they are effective?
  - c. What would be the best way to get information to males roughly your age about wearing seat belts?
  - d. What or who could motivate men to wear seat belts on a regular basis?  
Explore – Cops? Significant other? Law?
  - e. If you had to - how would you make your peers wear their seat belts regularly?
4. Drinking and Driving – opinions
- a. Do you think drinking and driving in North Dakota is a problem?  
Explore – Do more or less people drink in this state than others? Is it a “rural problem”?
  - b. Who do you think does drink and drive? Certain demographic characteristics?  
Explore – age, gender, ....
  - c. Do you think it is a regular practice for males ages 21-34? (Having a few too many and then thinking they are ok to drive)
  - d. Do you know men (friends, family, coworkers) that fall into roughly the same age category as you who have driven after having more alcohol than they should (above the legal limit)?
  - e. Why do you think it happens in this age group of males?  
Explore – Are there certain things that lead to drinking then driving? Parties, sports events?
  - f. Do you think there are things that would be helpful for getting young males home after they have been drinking?
  - g. Do you think there are guys that do this over and over?  
Discussion about 2 groups (1. “upstanding citizens” who may drink occasionally versus 2. guys that do it over and over).  
We are talking about 2 very different things.

## 5. Methods

- a. Have any of you heard or seen anti-drinking and driving media ads on the radio or TV? “Do Buckle, Don’t Booze” or “Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest.” or “Safe and Sober”
- b. Do you think they are effective?
- c. What would be the best way to get information to male about how serious the consequences can be from drinking and driving – if they don’t already “get it”?
- d. What are some things that would deter men from getting behind the wheel of a vehicle after consuming alcohol? – high fines, embarrassment, suspended license, loss of job
- e. What are your thoughts on these things we discussed about stopping drinking and driving? – would they work?
- f. If you were trying to motivate someone to not drink then drive, what would you do or say?

6. Closing remarks/Thanks

We have had a good discussion. I am going to wrap up the discussion – is there anything additional anyone would like to end with?

Thank you.

## APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE



13. Do you feel drinking and driving is a problem within your group of peers?   
Yes  No

14. Please rank the following from 1 (most effective for stopping drinking and driving) to 7 (least effective for stopping drinking and driving). Do not rank "other" if it is left blank.

___ Peer pressure	___ Media coverage such as TV, radio or billboard announcements
___ Law enforcement	___ Driving with children in car
___ Larger Fines	___ More points off driver's license
___ Low-cost AND readily available transportation home from drinking establishment	
___ Other _____	

15. Would stricter penalties (losing your license or large fines) force you to wear a seat belt all the time?  Yes  No  I already wear my seat belt all the time

16. Would stricter penalties (losing your license or large fines) force you to never drink and drive?  
 Yes  No  I never drink and drive