



# Minnesota County Engineers Association



## PRESIDENT

### DON THEISEN

County Engineer/Director  
**Washington County**  
11660 Myeron Road North  
Stillwater, MN 55082  
651-430-4304  
FAX 651-430-4350

[don.theisen@co.washington.mn.us](mailto:don.theisen@co.washington.mn.us)

## VICE PRESIDENT

### DAVE ROBLEY

County Engineer  
**Douglas County**  
509 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. W., PO Box 398  
Alexandria, MN 56308  
320-763-6001  
FAX 320-763-7955

[dave.robley@mail.co.douglas.mn.us](mailto:dave.robley@mail.co.douglas.mn.us)

## SECRETARY

### DAVID A. OLSONAWSKI

County Engineer  
**Hubbard County**  
101 Crocus Hill Street  
Park Rapids, MN 56470  
218-732-3302  
FAX 218-732-7640

[dolsonawski@co.hubbard.mn.us](mailto:dolsonawski@co.hubbard.mn.us)

## TREASURER

### DARRELL PETTIS

County Engineer  
**LeSueur County**  
88 S park Avenue  
LeCenter, MN 56057  
(507) 357-2251  
FAX (507) 357-4812

[dpettis@co.le-sueur.mn.us](mailto:dpettis@co.le-sueur.mn.us)

## PAST PRESIDENT

### DAVE ENBLOM

County Engineer  
**Cass County**  
P.O. Box 579  
Walker, MN 56484  
218-547-1211  
FAX 218-547-1099

[dave.enblom@co.cass.mn.us](mailto:dave.enblom@co.cass.mn.us)

ASSOCIATION OF



MINNESOTA COUNTIES

## Highway Safety - an Investment in Our Future.

**Dedicated Highway Safety Funding** is a very important means to achieving greater safety on our nation's highways, and the Minnesota County Engineers Association thanks you for giving us the opportunity to make this happen. SAFETEA-LU funds acquired through the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and High Risk Rural Road Program (H3RP) have already been



Cass County, MN -  
Paved shoulders and  
improved right way

responsible for many essential safety improvements, but additional funding is necessary in order to keep our momentum alive. We ask that safety on our rural highways continue to be an important focus of the next National Surface Transportation reauthorization and that additional SAFETEA-LU funds be designated for this purpose.

As you know, local governments are a vital component of our transportation system, owning about 75% of our nation's roads. Counties alone own about 1.77 million miles of highway, most of which are considered rural. Fatality rates on rural roads are about 2.5 times higher than on urban roads, resulting in over 25,000 rural deaths each

year. According to a US General Accounting Office report, rural local roads had the highest rate of fatalities per mile traveled of ALL types of roadways. Major rural collectors, which represent the greatest number of miles of county routes eligible for the federal-aid program, had a rate of 2.81 deaths per 100 million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). **That is 5,816 deaths per year!** These roads received \$1,600/lane mile in federal funding. Compare that to urban freeways and expressways, which had a fatality rate of 0.79 but received \$81,000 /lane mile in federal funding.



Crow Wing County, MN  
Installed offset turn lane

Minnesota county engineers have recognized that rural safety is our biggest challenge and have successfully initiated local traffic safety efforts that can be practiced throughout the entire transportation network. Rural safety is especially important to us, because fatalities in rural America are not just a statistic, they are the people we see frequently and whose lives and deaths impact us on a daily basis. They are our neighbors, our teachers, our Little League coaches, and our children.

SAFETEA-LU relies heavily on accurate data when allocating safety funds. Minnesota does an excellent job of collecting crash data on all public roads. As is the case in other states, most road fatalities in Minnesota occur on rural two-lane roads...roads that are under the watch of the county engineers. Many counties have already begun to develop and implement safety plans that can be phased in over time and that will concentrate on high priority areas while still making system-wide improvements, but money is needed in order to continue with this effort and produce successful results.



Freeborn County, MN  
Installed chevrons along  
horizontal curves

Minnesota has been creative in encouraging safety improvements on local roads with both federal and state money. Focused safety improvements include installation of center and edge line rumble stripes, elimination of blind intersections, retro-reflective sign improvements, and lighting at rural intersections. We would like to continue making safety improvements on our rural highways that will ultimately result in fewer deaths in our communities.

We appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and share our concerns for rural highway safety. We look forward to your continued funding support through the National Surface Transportation reauthorization as we work together to reduce fatal and life-changing crashes, and as we continue Minnesota's goal of Toward Zero Deaths.