Improving Traffic Crash Reporting on Tribal Lands in South Dakota

Mark Hoines
Planning Engineer
FHWA—SD Division

10th Annual National Tribal Transportation Conference
Golden, CO Nov 6-9, 2007
Research Motivation

- Motor vehicle crashes contribute significantly to Native American death and injury
- Crashes on Indian lands in South Dakota appear to be significantly underreported
- Complete and reliable crash data is needed to:
  - Identify and correct safety problems
  - Substantiate need and funding requests
  - Resolve insurance claims for motorists
  - Ultimately, save lives
Potentially Contributing Causes

- Lack of trained and experienced law enforcement staff
- Varying crash reporting policies among tribal administrations;
- Limited availability of electronic databases and technology
- Concern about ultimate uses of crash data
- Privacy concerns
- Unclear or misunderstood state reporting requirements
- Conflicting requirements by SD and BIA
- Different crash investigation and reporting protocols
- Poorly established networks of communication
- Inadequate institutional arrangements
Study Participants

**Memoranda of Understanding**
- Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe
- Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
- Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe
- Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate
- Yankton Sioux Tribe
- Rosebud Sioux Tribe
- Oglala Sioux Tribe
- Crow Creek Sioux Tribe
- Lower Brule Sioux Tribe
- SD Dept. of Transportation

**Partners**
- Indian Health Service
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
- Federal Highway Administration
- Northern Plains Tribal Technology Assistance Program
- SD Tribal Government Relations
- SD Dept. of Public Safety
- SD Highway Patrol
- ICF International
Study Goals

- Describe and evaluate current practices
- Identify barriers
- Recommend practical improvements
- Improve the completeness and quality of crash data reported to SD Department of Public Safety for calendar year 2005
- Facilitate agreements between tribal governments and the SD Department of Transportation on crash reporting
Field Visits
Other Input

- BIA Law Enforcement Meeting
- Montana – FHWA Division
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation
- Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona
- Navajo Nation
Findings Overview

■ Legal Framework
  • Tribal sovereignty
  • Tribal laws and codes
  • SD state statutes

■ Law Enforcement
  • Training on form
  • Tribes’ internal data systems
  • Staff shortage

■ Political
  • Lack of political support from tribal government
  • Use of personal identifiers (some tribes)
Findings

Crashes Reported for 2005
Within Reservation Boundaries (2000 Census)

- Cheyenne River Sioux
- Crow Creek Sioux
- Flandreau Santee Sioux
- Lower Brule Sioux
- Oglala Sioux/Pine Ridge
- Rosebud Sioux
- Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux
- Standing Rock Sioux
- Yankton Sioux

Legend:
- Blue: State, County, City
- Light Blue: Tribal/BIA Law Enforcement
- Yellow: Collected by Study
2005 Crash Data from Counties

Study Collected
Reported 2005
Purdue Predicted

Buffalo
Lyman
Bennett
Jackson
Shannon
Mellette
Todd
Roberts
Corson
Charles Mix
Dewey
Ziebach
Benefits of Collected Data

Traffic Crashes in Eagle Butte
Cheyenne River Indian Reservation

2005 Previously Collected Crashes
2005 Collected by Study
Findings

Tribal Crash Reporting Process

PRIMARY COLLECTION

- CRASH
- Dispatcher
- Dispatch Log
- Incident Report
- Full Crash Report
- Officer or Assistant in Office

DATA PROCESSING

- Officer On Scene
- Tribal Data System
- SD Accident Reporting System
- BIA Data System
### Tribe by Tribe: Crash Reporting Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribe</th>
<th>Full Crash Report</th>
<th>Law Enforcement Office Capacity</th>
<th>Tribal Data System</th>
<th>Data Sharing - South Dakota DPS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheyenne River</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Crow Creek</td>
<td>(sometimes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flandreau Santee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lower Brule</td>
<td>(sometimes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oglala Sioux</td>
<td>(sometimes)</td>
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<td>Rosebud Sioux</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sisseton-Wahpeton</td>
<td>(SDHP)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing Rock</td>
<td>(old)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yankton</td>
<td>(N/A)</td>
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</table>
Best Practices

- **Navajo Nation**
  - Agreements with three states to share crash reports

- **State of Montana**
  - Installing Cisco software at tribes

- **Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona (ITCA)**
  - Tribe-based highway safety and crash data efforts

- **State of Wisconsin**
  - Training to be offered to tribal law enforcement officers at tribal technical college
Best Practices

- South Dakota Tribes
  - Primary Collection Phase
    - Flandreau Santee Sioux
    - Rosebud Sioux
    - Indian Highway Safety officers
  - Data Processing Phase
    - Rosebud Sioux: Cisco software
    - Flandreau Santee Sioux: spreadsheet
    - Oglala Sioux: spreadsheet, dedicated staff
Pathways to Full Crash Reporting

- Paper-based system
- Specialized software systems
  - Cisco
  - Other software packages
- TRACS software system
  - Crash data input at roadside or office
  - Software provided by State of South Dakota
  - Electronic input to SD Accident Reporting System
Researchers’ Recommendations to Technical Panel

- **SDDPS:** Provide training tailored to tribal law enforcement
  - Face-to-face
  - Train-the-trainer
  - Software self-training

- **SDDOT/SDDPS:** Work with tribal councils and governments to establish crash reporting as a priority for tribal and BIA law enforcement
  - High-level consultation
  - Memorandum of Agreement
Researchers’ Recommendations to Technical Panel

- **SDDPS:** Provide funding opportunities for tribes to improve crash reporting & tracking
  - NHTSA 408 Data Improvement
  - Other NHTSA safety programs
  - Leverage with FHWA, BIA, IHS programs

- **SDDPS:** Make reporting as easy as possible for tribes
  - Electronic transfer from other systems
  - Assign personnel
Researchers’ Recommendations to Technical Panel

- SDDOT: Provide funding opportunities for hazard elimination on tribal lands
  - Motivate improvements to crash reporting
  - Address significant safety concerns
  - May need to dedicate a portion for rural locations

Bottom Line

Save Lives, Save Roads
For More Information

David Huft  
Research Program Manager  
South Dakota DOT  
605.773.3358  
dave.huft@state.sd.us  

Linda Bailey  
Senior Associate  
ICF International  
202.862.1171  
lbailey@icfi.com