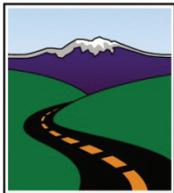


2010 Herman Goldstein Award Submission
for
Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing

Washington State Patrol
Yakama Nation
Outreach
Project Detail



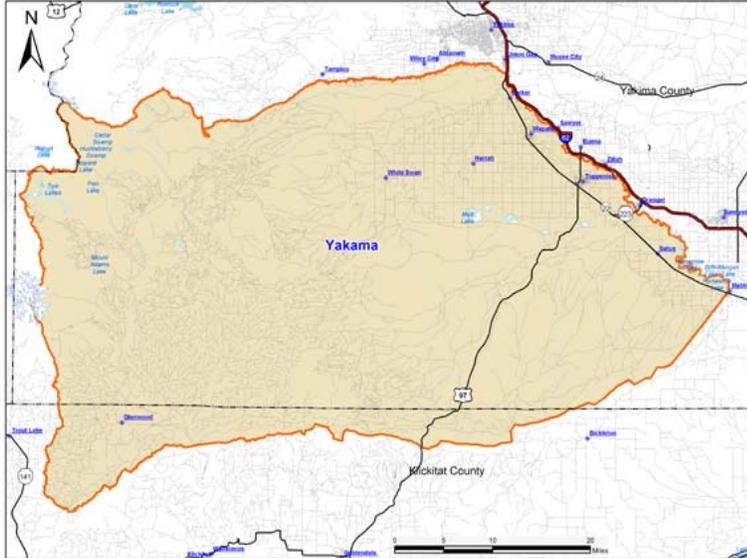
WASHINGTON
Traffic Safety
COMMISSION



September 2008 – October 2009

Background

The Yakama Nation Indian Reservation is the 1.1 million acre home of the Confederated Tribes of the Yakama Nation. The majority of the reservation lies within Yakima County, with a small



portion in Klickitat County. There are 10,000 enrolled tribal members and about 30,000 non-Native Americans living within the boundaries of the reservation. The Confederated Tribes of the Yakama Nation is a sovereign nation recognized by the federal government and managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Yakama Nation was created by the Treaty of 1855. Tribal members are governed by the elected Yakama Nation Tribal Council.

The Washington State Patrol's (WSP)

Yakima detachments are responsible for traffic law enforcement and traffic safety on the highways within the reservation. This includes U.S. Highway 97, a major north-south route through central Washington and Oregon, and State Route 22. In addition, through an agreement with the Yakima County Sheriff's Office, the WSP is responsible for investigating all fatality and serious injury collisions on the public roads within the reservation.

Yakama Nation Tribal members are not subject to civil traffic infractions for minor violations issued by non-tribal law enforcement while on tribal lands. This is a challenge, as non-tribal law enforcement officials attempt to influence driver behavior on the reservation through enforcement. Therefore, building partnerships between tribal and non-tribal governments and the community is the most effective way to bring about change in the driving behavior of tribal members on the reservation. It is also important to overcome historical stereotypes by building relationships between governments, including tribal members, law enforcement, tribal leaders, and all Yakima County residents.

The Yakama Tribal Police Department has ten officers providing law enforcement and public safety services to tribal members. They are also responsible for law enforcement on all lands held in trust by the federal government within the reservation. The Tribal Police Department is directly managed by the Law and Justice Council, which is a committee of the Yakama Nation Tribal Council. The fourteen-member Tribal Council generally holds its sessions behind closed doors and only allows outside

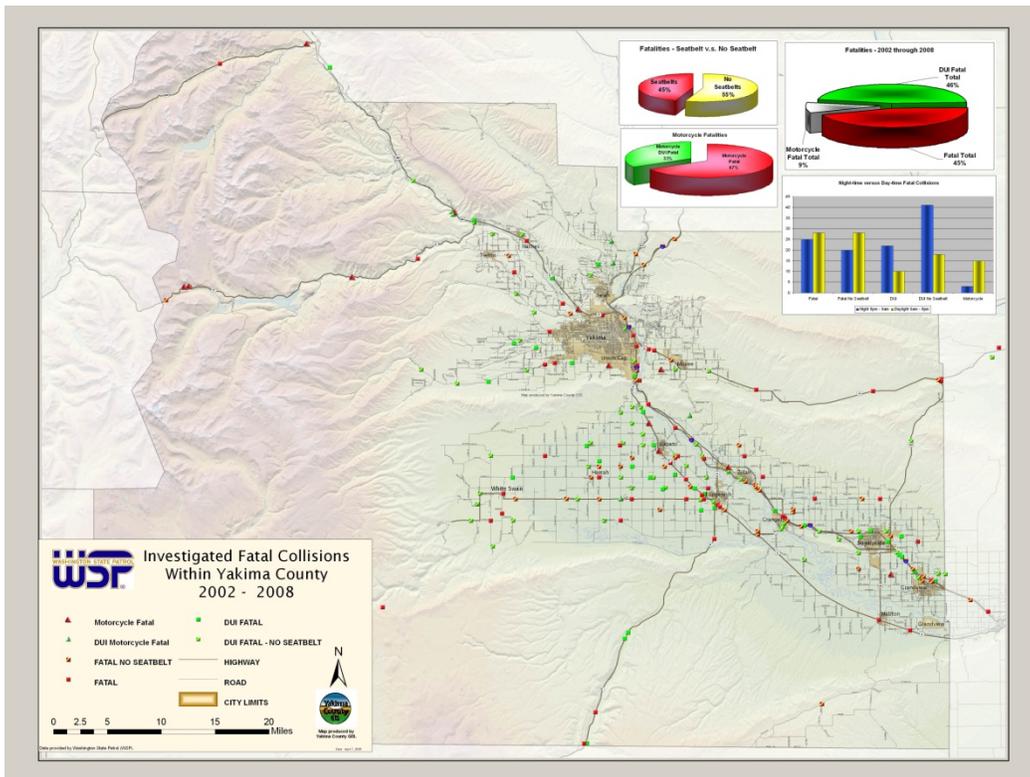


government visitors to approach after a majority vote. The WSP has not been before the council since the mid 1980s, when a Traffic Safety Corridor project was initiated on State Route 97.

Problem & Analysis

Since 2004 the WSP noticed a marked increase in the number of fatal vehicle collisions occurring within the Yakama Reservation. The number of fatality collisions on the reservation rose from six in 2004 to seventeen in 2007. Fifty-three percent of those fatal collisions involved alcohol. A 2004 nationwide study found the number of fatal crashes on all Indian reservation roads increased 52.5%, compared to a 2.2% decrease in fatality crashes on all other roads. Fatal crash data indicates that Native Americans are killed in traffic crashes at a rate three to five times higher than other racial groups.

However, the WSP observed that Yakama Nation tribal members have a death rate six times that of surrounding Yakima County.¹ In 2007, 59% of the fatal collisions on the reservation involved Yakama tribal members, even though they only represented 25% of the reservation population. Between October 2007 and September 2008, there were 16 fatality collisions on the Yakama Reservation. Thirteen (81%) involved a tribal member. Over 50% of the fatality collisions occurring on the reservation were alcohol-related, compared to about 35% nationally. In about 60% of the fatality collisions, the victim was not wearing a seat belt. Yakama Nation Native Americans continue to be significantly over-represented in fatal vehicle collisions occurring on the reservation compared to other residents of Yakima County. They were dying at a rate far exceeding the rest of the population. This was not acceptable.



The primary goal of the WSP is to make Washington roadways safe for the efficient transit of people and goods.ⁱⁱ This goal is linked locally to the Yakima district's objective of reducing fatality and injury collisions on interstate and state routes by 4%.

Response

The project had a very clear objective: Reduce the number of fatal collisions occurring within the Yakama Indian Reservation involving Yakama Nation tribal members.

The concept for the Yakama Nation Outreach Project came about through a health and wellness presentation by the WSP in August 2008 at the tribe's annual Treaty Days celebration. The WSP display included a large map indicating the location of all fatality collisions in Yakima County, including the Yakama Nation Reservation, over the past five years. During the presentation, Yakama Nation Tribal Council members Washines and Shields were surprised to learn how over-represented Yakama tribal members were in fatality collisions on the reservation. This contact led to the WSP being invited to make a presentation to the full Tribal Council.



On November 4, 2008, Captain Shawn Berry, Lieutenant Jim Keightley, Sergeant Ed McAvoy, and Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC) Director Lowell Porter made a compelling and emotional presentation to the Yakama Tribal Council. This historic presentation gave the Yakama Tribal Council an overview of the traffic safety issues on tribal lands. The cultural differences, including the distrust of non-tribal law enforcement among many tribal members, cannot be over-emphasized. This presentation in front of the Yakama Tribal Council was a major step toward fostering the positive partnership now enjoyed between the WSP and the Yakama Nation.

The relationship created with tribal leadership and the better understanding and awareness of the traffic safety issues led to an improved partnership with the Tribal Police, Tribal Health, and the White Swan Arts and Recreation Community Coalition.

Working together with these groups and the WTSC, a three-pronged approach was developed and a Problem Oriented Public Safety (POPS) project was initiated. The project included a multi-faceted media campaign, enhanced traffic law enforcement, and education through public outreach and presentation efforts. A 12-month data baseline was developed from October 2007 through September 2008.

In the fall of 2008, an additional \$25,000 was requested as an annex to the WTSC annual block grant to the WSP. The grant annex was funded by the WTSC specifically to support the Yakama Nation Outreach Project.

Media

The initial media effort was the creation and placement of a full-size billboard advertisement (*below*) targeting DUI awareness. The billboard photo highlighted the partnership between the Yakama Nation Tribal Police and the WSP in our combined efforts against impaired driving. The billboard was placed in the heart of the reservation along State Route 97. The same photo was also placed as a newspaper public safety advertisement in the Yakama Nation owned and operated newspaper “Yakama Nation Review.”



Next was a newspaper advertisement targeting occupant protection, specifically the use of child restraints. The message was designed to focus directly at tribal members and the Yakama Nation’s own seat belt and child restraint laws. The advertisement was titled “Buckle-Up, It’s Our Law Too!”



The media campaign continued to expand with the creation of a public service announcement (PSA) for radio. The radio PSA idea was first introduced in the state of New Mexico. The campaign slogan was “*Save a Life, Save a Nation.*” The PSA contained a unique and specific message and it read:

There is an enemy among us; it takes away the lives of our loved ones. It shatters our families; it consumes our dreams and destroys our future. It has taken more of our people than war, disease, or crime. The time has come to be strong. The time has come to fight back. Save a life, save a nation. Don't drink and drive.



Working closely with the Tribal Council, Council Chairman Ralph Sampson agreed to read the first PSA. Ms. Eleanor Davis, a tribal elder and White Swan Arts and Recreation Community Coalition member, agreed to read a second PSA. Both PSAs were created with Native American music in the background. The resulting PSAs were powerful and moving. The cooperation we received from tribal leadership in the development of this PSA was exceptional. Recently, the PSA was updated once more using the voice of the current Tribal Chairman, Harry Smiskin.

The radio PSAs were produced by our local Gap-West Broadcasting affiliate at no charge. They ran the “*Save a Life, Save a Nation*” PSA during prime-time on five of their radio stations from July through October 2009. Gap-West Broadcasting also ran the PSA within their standard allotted PSA schedule as an in-kind donation.

The radio spot has also aired regularly on the Yakama Nation’s own AM radio station KYNR. KYNR is played in their government offices and is listened to by tribal members for tribal-related news and information. KYNR aired the PSA beginning in July 2009 and continued through

December 2009 with in-kind support. The radio spot continues to be aired on both the Gap-West stations and KYNR using grant funds provided by the WTSC.

Enforcement

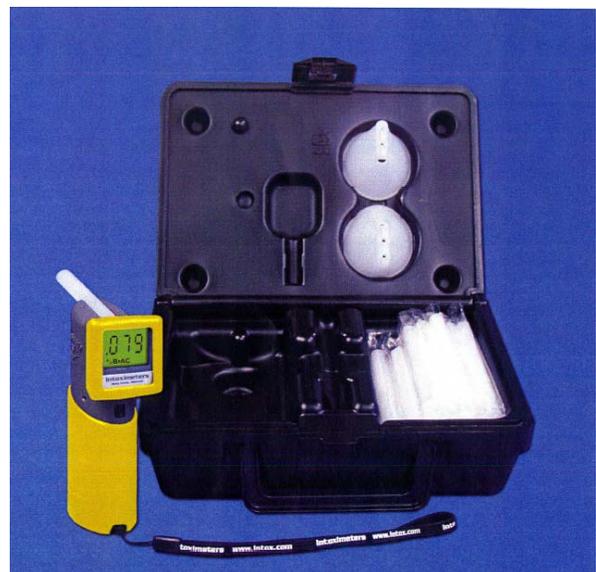
As part of the problem identification and analysis, a large display map of Yakima County was created with the assistance of the Yakima County Geographic Information Services (GIS) office. The map graphically identified the locations of all fatality and felony collisions in Yakima County over a five-year period. The map indicates a substantial number of fatality collisions within the boundaries of the Yakama Nation. A copy of the map was posted in the Yakima WSP office for troopers to review and utilize the information in their enforcement efforts on the reservation. Troopers and sergeants used the information to identify specific problem areas on the Yakama Reservation for deployment of directed enforcement activities. The GIS fatality map was also used in many community presentations.

Troopers’ enforcement activity on the Yakama Reservation was analyzed for the period of October 2007 through September 2008 and compared to October 2008 through September 2009. The total number of drivers contacted by the WSP increased 24%. DUI and speed enforcement increased 10%.ⁱⁱⁱ

Enforcement	2009	2008	
Total Contacts	12,935	10,426	+24%
DUI Arrests	220	200	+10%
Speed Arrests	2424	2113	+10%

The Yakima County Target Zero Task Force, sponsored by the WTSC, utilized the data created by this project to direct multi-agency DUI emphasis patrols onto the reservation to target the same problem areas. WSP detachment sergeants currently use the data to direct nighttime seat belt enforcement campaigns and DUI and speed saturation patrols, including patrols in partnership with the Tribal Police.

In partnership with the Target Zero Task Force, the WSP and Tribal Police requested and received two grants from the WTSC. The first was a \$5,000 grant used to purchase portable breath testing instruments (PBTs) for Yakama Nation Tribal



police officers. The WSP provided training to ten tribal officers in the use of the PBTs. Two of the officers were also instructed in maintaining the certification for each of the instruments.

The second grant was used to purchase speed measuring devices (radars) for Tribal Police. This grant request was incorporated with a school zone implementation project designed to put in place a reduced speed zone for the White Swan Middle and High School complex. (See *Public Outreach*)

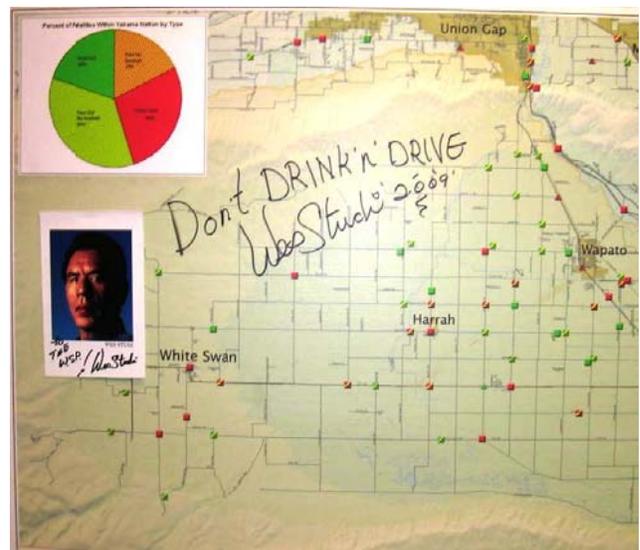


Public Outreach

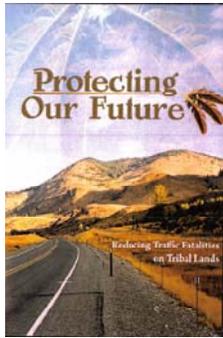
One of the more mutually beneficial partnerships established during the course of this project was between the WSP and the White Swan Arts and Recreation Community Coalition. White Swan is a small community representing the heart of the Yakama Reservation and is central to many tribal events. Troopers, along with tribal officers, were involved in the White Swan “Spring Jam.” It is a week-long event celebrating Native American culture and is aimed at providing activities for area school children while they are on spring break.

The 2009 event involved a joint traffic safety display by the WSP and Tribal Police, reaching over 1,000 attendees. Actor Wes Studi was the event’s special guest. Studi is a Native American actor/celebrity who has starred in films such as *Last of the Mohicans* and *Dances With Wolves*.

In addition to Spring Jam, troopers have attended many community events held on the reservation, such as safe neighborhood night out, Tribal Health Fairs, Tribal Housing Fairs, various high school safety fairs, and the Yakama Nation Treaty Days celebration in Toppenish. Treaty Days is a major annual event reaching all tribal members. To support our involvement in these events, WTSC funds were used to purchase lanyards and promotional items as handouts at these events. The lanyards featured the Yakama Outreach Program and the WSP and tribal logos. Other lanyards featured similar information with the phrase “Buckle-Up, It’s Our Law Too!”



On May 27 and 28, 2009, the WTSC held a traffic safety summit directed at traffic safety on all Washington State reservations. The summit brought together tribes from across the state to participate in open discussion regarding Target Zero and how it applies to tribal governments.^{iv} Yakama Tribal elder Ms. Eleanor Davis was featured in a short video presentation, “Protecting Our



Future, Reducing Traffic Fatalities on Tribal Lands.” Ms. Davis told the tragic story of losing her grandchild who was killed in a collision involving a drunk driver.

The White Swan Arts and Recreation Coalition is a critical program for the rural Native American tribe. Our partnership with them has helped provide a foot hold in obtaining grant funding for “Safe Neighborhoods” and “Coalition on Underage Drinking.” The WSP played a vital role in developing a law enforcement workgroup for this coalition. This workgroup has members from the Yakima County Sheriff’s Office, Yakama Nation Tribal Police, WSP, and community members. The group recently attended a national underage drinking seminar in Dallas, Texas, sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The WSP facilitated the creation of a strategic plan, which was adopted by the Coalition and will be included in future grant requests.

A new project partnership was created when the Yakima County Road Department was contacted regarding improving the school zone in front of the White Swan Middle/High School. The WSP facilitated a grant request for \$10,500. The request outlined the need for a reduced-speed school zone, including signage equipment and speed-measuring devices for the Yakama Nation Tribal Police. The WSP worked closely with the White Swan Arts and Recreation



Coalition and the WTSC to develop the grant request. The partnership with the Yakima County Road Department brought about the creation of a county road department project to revitalize and improve the roadway, shoulders, and parking area located in front of the school complex. The total estimated cost to the county for the improvements is \$300,000 - \$400,000.

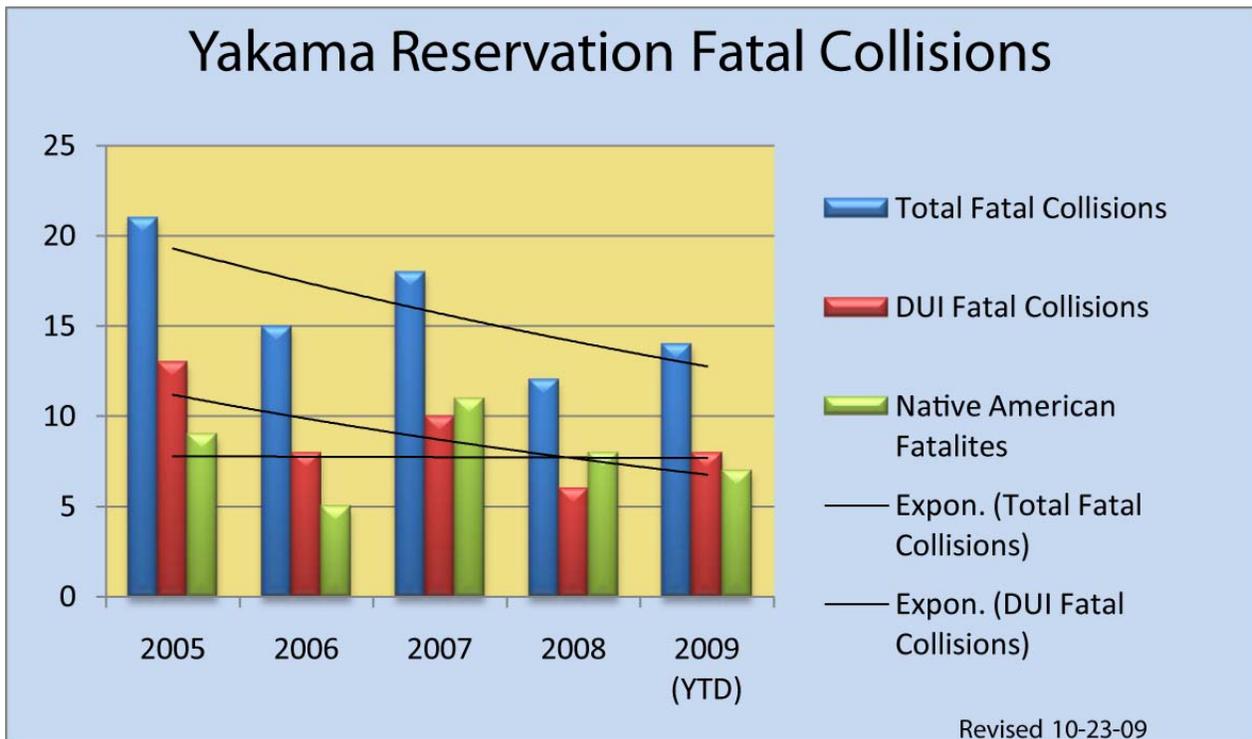
In September 2009, the WSTC conducted quarterly hearings in Yakima. The focus of the hearing was traffic safety and related issues on rural roads. The WSP, WTSC, Yakama Nation Tribal Police, and the Yakima County Target Zero Task Force made a presentation to the Commission on current issues and projects targeting rural road traffic safety. The WSP highlighted the Yakama Nation Outreach Program.

Assessment

When assessing the success of a project directed at reducing fatality collisions, outcomes can be measured in lives saved.

Fatal Collisions

After seeing tribal members' over-representation in reservation fatalities in 2007, it was encouraging to see a reversal of this trend develop in 2008 and continue into 2009. Fewer tribal members were involved in fatalities, even with an increase in total fatal collisions within the reservation.



From October 2008 through September 2009, there were 28 fatality collisions in Yakima County. Fifteen of those occurred on the Yakama Reservation. Of these 15 fatal collisions, only five (33%) involved a tribal member. Ten of the 15 (66%) involved DUI. As compared to the 12-month project baseline, the involvement of Yakama Nation tribal members killed in reservation collisions plummeted from 81% to 33%.

ⁱ Yakama Nation Tribe (native spelling of Yakama is used by the tribe. City and County of Yakima spells with an "i")

ⁱⁱ Washington State Patrol Field Operations Bureau Operational Plan; Goal 1

ⁱⁱⁱ Washington State Patrol Time & Activity System (TAS) data

^{iv} Target Zero, adopted by the Washington State strategic highway plan