

The Crossroads

News, law, and events for everyone working in highway & traffic safety across Missouri

ISSUE NO. 1 · Q3 2026 · JULY 1, 2026

PUBLISHED BY MODSEA

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the first issue of *The Crossroads*, a shared briefing for everyone with a stake in highway and traffic safety — educators and driving schools, high schools, MoDOT and coalition partners, law enforcement and first responders, traffic engineers and planners, fleet and commercial operators, public health and advocacy groups, and the families they all serve. The 2026 legislative session just wrapped, summer travel is ramping up, and there's a lot to pass along. Here's where things stand.

01 Legislative Updates

DRIVER EDUCATION IN THE 2026 SESSION

This year we made more progress in bringing driver education to Missouri legislators. In a contentious final week of session, the Missouri Integrated Safe Driving Program language was removed from SB 1421 and SB 1408 during conference committee — meaning no driver education language made it across the finish line this year.

While not the outcome we were hoping for, we made tangible progress in keeping driver education part of the legislative conversation — a strong foundation on which we can build. To our knowledge, this is the furthest driver education language has advanced in recent history, coming down to the final week, and that is largely due to the commitment and work of many of our MODEC members.

Thanks are also due to all our bill sponsors and the folks who worked so hard in Jefferson City and elsewhere to continue making progress toward our goal of making driver education accessible to all.

Across the broader session: the 103rd General Assembly adjourned on May 15, 2026, passing roughly 100 bills — the most in any session since 2019. The Governor has until July 15 to act, and most new laws take effect **August 28, 2026** unless they carry an emergency clause. A few items matter directly for road safety.

NEW LAW · SB 1408

Rural highway speed limit may rise to 75 mph

Passed the House 93–46 · Effective Aug. 28, 2026

This bill gives state officials the authority to raise the posted limit from 70 to 75 mph on rural, divided highways. It is enabling legislation — the higher limit is permitted where conditions warrant, not applied automatically to every road.

Why it matters for instructors: Higher posted speeds change stopping distances and following-distance math. Worth folding into highway-driving lessons and any "rules of the road" refreshers this fall.

NEW LAW · SB 1135

"Bentley and Mason's Law" — child support after a deadly DWI

Senate 29–0 · near-unanimous House vote

Courts will be required to order child-maintenance payments from anyone convicted of a DWI crash that kills a child's parent or guardian. Payments begin within one year of the offender's release, with amounts based on the child's needs and the caregiver's circumstances. The law is named for two boys whose parents were killed by an impaired driver in 2021. **Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)** backed the measure, noting that offenders too often move on while survivors live with the loss every day.

Why it matters: A concrete, memorable consequence to add to impaired-driving conversations with teen drivers and parents.

ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

Hands-Free Law: three years in, distraction is dropping

Siddens-Bening Hands-Free Law · enforced since Jan. 1, 2025

Holding or supporting a phone while driving remains illegal statewide. The Highway Patrol has issued more than 4,000 citations and warnings since enforcement began, and AAA reports distracted driving in Missouri has fallen roughly 16% since the law passed.

Classroom hook: The data shows the law is working — a useful, encouraging stat for student and parent audiences.

ON THE RADAR

Worth watching going forward

Several transportation and public-safety measures moved through committee this session, including proposals on ignition interlocks for impaired drivers, child car-seat requirements, and new state vehicle-registration designations. We'll track which become law once the Governor finishes acting on bills in July, and report back next issue.

02 Upcoming Events & Observances

AUG

5

Missouri Driver Education Coalition (MODEC) meeting

MODEC's next meeting is August 5 at 11:00 a.m. EST. A standing forum for driver-education stakeholders across the state to coordinate, share updates, and align on priorities. Newcomers welcome. To register, email

Chabarria.Nicholas@ace.aaa.com.

Now-
Labor
Day

The "100 Deadliest Days" for teen drivers

The stretch between Memorial Day and Labor Day is consistently the most dangerous of the year for teen drivers nationwide. A timely moment for schools and driving programs to push refresher messaging on passengers, nighttime driving, and phones.

JUL-AUG
2026

First Impact — free parent GDL sessions

First Impact, a ThinkFirst Missouri program, offers free 90-minute sessions teaching parents of teens (ages 14–19) how Missouri's Graduated Driver License law works and how to lower their teen's crash risk. Upcoming sessions across the state — register for any of these at [first-impact events](#):

JULY

Jul 9 New Haven Library · 6–7:30 PM

Jul 15 Union Library · 6–7:30 PM

Jul 25 Warrenton Library · 1–2:30 PM

Jul 29 Howell County Health Department · 6–7:30 PM

AUGUST

Aug 3 Sullivan Library · 6–7:30 PM

Aug 12 Creve Coeur Police Department · 6–7:30 PM

Aug 18 Pacific Library · 6–7:30 PM

Aug 22 Owensville Library · 1–2:30 PM

Mar–
Oct

Trailnet group rides & walks

Trailnet hosts rides across the St. Louis region for all experience levels through October, plus ongoing safe-streets advocacy. Full schedule and registration at trailnet.org/calendar.

JUN–JUL
2026

FIFA World Cup traffic — plan ahead

With Kansas City serving as a host city, MoDOT is advising drivers to expect sharply heavier traffic statewide during match windows. Build extra travel time into any group outings or lesson scheduling.

OCT
30

Buckle Up Phone Down Day

MoDOT and the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety's annual statewide push, with a goal of zero fatalities for the day. Schools and businesses can sign the pledge and order materials through modot.org/buckleupphonedown.

FALL
2026

AAA Buckle Up Phone Down High School Showdown

A statewide competition where high schools recruit pledge signatures against distracted driving (67 schools competed last year; the top school won \$5,000). A natural fit for student-led safety clubs.

JUN
27

B.R.A.K.E.S. Teen Pro-Active Driving School — Bridgeton

A free, hands-on advanced driving program (not driver's ed) for teens 15–19 who have a permit or license and 30+ hours of experience. Founded by Doug Herbert, it covers panic braking, skid recovery, distraction, and crash avoidance — and graduates are about 64% less likely to crash in their first three years. **June 27–28 at Manheim, 13813 St. Charles Rock Rd.** Register at registration.putonthebrakes.org.

JUL
12–15

ADTSEA 2026 National Conference — Cary, NC

The American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association's national gathering of driver-ed and traffic-safety leaders, July 12–15, 2026, at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Raleigh in Cary, North Carolina. Sessions provide professional-development contact hours. Details and registration at adtsea.org.

JUL

19-25

Traction Annual Conference

Missouri Traction's annual training conference, offered at two locations: **Cape Girardeau, July 19-21** at the Drury Plaza Hotel & Conference Center, and **Springfield, July 23-25** at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Springfield. Details and registration at motraction.com.

FEB 17

2027

MODSEA Annual Conference — February 17, 2027

Our own annual conference returns February 17, 2027, at the MoDOT Transportation Center, bringing together driver educators, driving schools, and safety partners for professional development, new products and services, and recognition of excellence in the field. More details to come — watch modsea.org and future issues.

JUL

11-14
2027

Looking ahead: ADTSEA 2027 National Conference — St. Louis!

It's coming home to Missouri! The American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association's national conference will be held July 11-14, 2027, at the Hilton St. Louis Frontenac. A rare chance to host driver-ed and traffic-safety leaders from across the country right here in our state — start planning now. Details at adtsea.org.

03 By the Numbers

Missouri's roadway snapshot

The state's *Show-Me Zero* plan holds to one standard: zero fatalities is the only acceptable goal. A few figures behind the work —

~16%

drop in distracted driving since the Hands-Free Law passed

63%

of vehicle occupants killed in recent years were unbuckled

4,000+

hands-free citations & warnings issued since enforcement began

04 Field Notes & Resources

First Impact

Missouri's Graduated Driver License system phases new drivers in over four stages. A quick reminder for the intermediate-license window: passenger and nighttime restrictions exist because both sharply raise crash risk for new drivers. Reinforce them with parents, not just students. Learn more about [understanding the GDL law](#) and find [upcoming First Impact events](#).

Work Zone Season

Summer construction is in full swing. Whenever workers are present – long-term closures, moving operations, or shoulder work – driver focus is what keeps everyone safe. A good seasonal topic for lessons and refresher courses. Resources at workzonesafe.com.

Free Materials

MoDOT and the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety offer free pledges, posters, and classroom resources through savemolives.com. Order early for fall campaigns.

Tell Us Your Event

Hosting a safety night, ride, fair, or pledge drive? Send the details and we'll feature it in the next issue so partners across the network can amplify it.

05 Partner Network & Resources

The organizations behind safer Missouri roads. Bookmark these, and reach out — most welcome schools, agencies, employers, and community partners.

MODEC

The Missouri Driver Education Coalition — a statewide forum where driver-education stakeholders coordinate, share updates, and align on priorities. Next meeting: August 5 at 11 a.m. EST.

MADD

Mothers Against Drunk Driving — advocacy, victim support, and impaired-driving prevention, and a key backer of Missouri's new Bentley and Mason's Law. madd.org/missouri

B.R.A.K.E.S.

Be Responsible And Keep Everyone Safe — free, hands-on advanced teen driver training that complements classroom driver's ed. putonthebrakes.org

MoDOT & the Coalition

The Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety and its *Show-Me Zero* plan coordinate statewide safety efforts and free materials. savemolives.com

Trailnet

St. Louis-area advocacy for safe biking, walking, and transit, plus a full season of group rides. trailnet.org

Missouri DESE

The state education department's driver-education resources for schools, students, and parents. dese.mo.gov

TYREDD

Tyler Raising Education for Drowsy Driving — a nonprofit founded in memory of Tyler Warne that raises awareness and educates students about the dangers of drowsy driving. tyredd.org

ThinkFirst Missouri

MU School of Medicine's injury-prevention program working to prevent traumatic injuries, including teen-driving safety — and the home of First Impact. medicine.missouri.edu

First Impact

A ThinkFirst Missouri program offering free sessions that teach parents how Missouri's GDL law works and how to lower their teen's crash risk. [medicine.missouri.edu](https://www.medicine.missouri.edu)

Missouri Gift of Life

Promotes organ and tissue donation and donor registration across Missouri — a cause closely tied to the driver-licensing process. [giftdonor.org](https://www.giftdonor.org)

Traction

Missouri Traction provides traffic-safety training and hosts annual conferences for driver-education and safety professionals. [motraction.com](https://www.motraction.com)

The Crossroads

Published by the Missouri Driver Safety Education Association (MODSEA) — promoting excellence among driver education and traffic safety professionals since 1954. Learn more at [modsea.org](https://www.modsea.org). Compiled from public reporting and state safety sources; this newsletter is informational and is not legal advice. Always confirm current statute and effective dates before relying on them.

MODSEA is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. To subscribe, contribute an event, or unsubscribe, send a message to info@modsea.org. © 2026 MODSEA.