

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY CAREER PATHWAY SPOTLIGHT



John P. Miller

Organization:
Missouri Department of
Transportation (MoDOT)

Job Title:
Traffic Liaison Engineer

Training/Education:
University of Missouri-Columbia

Degree/Certification:
B.S. in Civil Engineering
B.S. in Agricultural Economics

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Why a career in transportation and transportation safety?

Rural road safety is very important to me and is a critical part of our effort to drive down roadway fatalities. Growing up on a farm in rural Missouri allowed me to understand dedication, devotion, commitment, and community as well as the importance of a vast transportation system. This transportation system allowed my family to attend a very special occasion – my grandmother celebrated her 106th birthday.

My family has always been very close and much of this is directly tied to our rural upbringing. This transportation system has also involved a fatality of a cousin on a rural Missouri road. It also has changed the life of another due to a drinking involved crash. Rural roadway safety is very important, and everyone plays a role.

Career pathway:

My work in the Traffic Division of MoDOT has led me down this career path. My first experience in safety was related to the reviewing of traffic crash reports and determining corrective action. Eventually I was given an opportunity to manage the traffic and safety areas of our Transportation Management Systems (TMS). TMS is a data system that ties our crash, roadway, bridge, roadsides, and other data elements by a common referencing system. This system has allowed us to make decisions based on what the data is telling us, and it has allowed me to have a better understanding of safety. I believe it is a vital element in any safety professional's career to have a data background.

Prior to my current position, I served as the state's Traffic Safety Engineer. This leadership position involved a great deal of public involvement and speaking opportunities at both the state and national level. It involved moving numerous safety initiatives forward using systemic safety analysis to determine opportunity locations for implementation. It involved being a team player while serving on numerous teams including as a "Data Driven Safety Analysis" member for the Federal Highways Administration, the Missouri Local Technical Assistance Program Advisory Committee, the AASHTO Subcommittee on Safety Management, and various NCHRP research initiatives. The position also involved implementation of the Highway Safety Manual (HSM) within MoDOT.

How do professional activities make a positive impact on society?

My current position involves management of the safety section (which includes the Traffic Safety Engineer position) as well as signing, marking, access and other various areas in the office of Highway Safety and Traffic. I am also involved with behavioral safety issues working closely with the Highway Safety Director – changing traffic safety culture is vital to bringing down roadway fatalities.

Ultimately, it will take everyone of us to get to zero fatalities. You cannot do this alone, so reach out to your peers and share your ideas and countermeasures that are working. And finally, live safety by changing your own culture. If you speed, slow down. If you talk on the phone, stop (even using Bluetooth). If you aren't using a seatbelt... well, I'll just stop there.