

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY CAREER PATHWAY SPOTLIGHT

Career Pathway:

Marie began her professional career in the environmental engineering field and was involved with the environmental auditing and systems management field nationally before moving to the Louisiana Department of Environment Quality. Marie's link to the LTAP program evolved through her work with the East Baton Rouge (EBR) City Parish in the Quality and Employee Development Department. She was familiar with the LTAP Program through her work with the EBR Public Works, where they had often hosted LTAP classes in their training facility. Marie was fortunate enough to hear about the Director position and was hired at LTAP 2004.



Marie B. Walsh

Organization:
Louisiana Local Technical Assistance Program at Louisiana Transportation Research Center

Job Title:
Director

Degree/Certification:

- M.S. in Environmental Engineering
- PhD in Human Resource Education and Workforce Development

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Becoming Involved In Safety:

After attending her first TRB meeting in 2004, Marie began to question why Louisiana did not have a local roads safety program and why Louisiana LTAP didn't teach road safety classes or offer safety technical assistance.

"When hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated Louisiana in 2005 the LA DOTD was working on the first comprehensive Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). LTAP represented the locals at the SHSP meetings. When the Local Road Safety Program was proposed for inclusion in the SHSP a leader was needed. Seeing the opportunity I volunteered and committed LTAP resources as well. My safety focus really began here."

"My work with our DOT safety office led to my participation in TRB and AASHTO Safety Committees and I am currently a member of the TRB ANB10 Transportation Safety Management Committee and chair its Towards Zero Death Subcommittee. I've participated in the national TZD Steering Committee as the NLTAPA Representative and also been the NLTAPA liaison to the AASHTO Safety Committees. When I was elected President of NLTAPA I promoted increased participation by all LTAPs in safety and made it a central focus of my leadership efforts."

How do professional activities make a positive impact on society?

The Louisiana Local Road Safety Program in partnership with the DOT Safety Office has implemented processes to improve the quantity, quality and accessibility of local road crash, roadway characteristic and volume data. While not finished, excellent crash data is available in almost every part of the state and they are working on the other components. Using the data that is available they have prepared Crash Data Profiles for all 64 parishes.

Concentrating on the top twenty (out of 64) parishes, where the vast majority of serious and fatal road crashes occur, they conducted training with the locals on the use of the parish profiles to identify priorities and develop road safety projects for application for funding or local implementation. These profiles are the basis for local road safety plans and are consistent with the process to select projects in the HSIP which is important for sustainability.

Marie leaves us with some practical thoughts- "Do what you can, where you are, with what you have. It's amazing what you can do in safety if you just get started."



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