PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PROJECT NUMBER:
99461

PROJECT TITLE:
Southeastern Fatal Crash Study

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS:
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PROJECT OBJECTIVE:
This project will search for possible reasons why the highway fatality rate is higher in the southeast than in most of the remaining states. It is a pooled effort being conducted by a group of southeastern universities.

PROJECT ABSTRACT:
The highway fatality rate in rural areas in the southeast has been the highest of all regions in the nation, almost since the first records were kept. While this rate has been reduced significantly in the past 20 years, it has not dropped as rapidly as other regions and it appears to have reached a plateau. This project will address factors that might influence the rate, such as: alcohol and drug involvement, occupant restraint, level of enforcement in rural areas, speeding, the environment of 2-land rural roads, pedestrian accidents, driver behavior (driving errors, inattention, etc.), expenditures for roadway/traffic safety, driver education programs, heavy truck involved accident programs, and others.

The goal is to determine the factors (that are different from the rest of the nation) that cause the higher rates, and the extent to which these factors can be adjusted or countermeasures applied to reduce the fatality rate.
PROJECT TASK DESCRIPTIONS:
1. Meet with other institutions involved in the study to prepare a thorough research plan.
2. Assign specific research responsibilities to each institution.
3. Investigate relationships between potential causal factors and fatality rates – in Alabama this will involve studies using the Critical Analysis Reporting Environment (CARE) software.
4. Compile the results, draw conclusions, and prepare recommendations.
5. Prepare a final report.

MILESTONES AND DATES:
• Sep 18, 1998 – Initiate project.
  A more detailed plan of milestones and dates will be developed during the first work task.
• Sep 18, 2000 – Conclude project.

TOTAL BUDGET:
Two-year project: National Highway Transportation Safety Administration $57,658 (subcontract to Auburn University).

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT:
One graduate student will be employed on this project.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER RESEARCH PROJECTS:
This project is not related to any other UTCA project.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER ACTIVITIES:
No technology transfer activities are anticipated, except for production of a final report by the prime contracting university.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT:
The difficulty situation of higher fatality rates in the southeast might be unlocked by the results of this project. If a key reason (or reasons) can be identified, it will allow targeted interventions to reduce the number of collisions, fatalities and injuries.

TRB KEYWORDS:
Traffic safety, fatal crash rate, regional crash rates