

Communicating and Connecting Safety Messages to Native American Communities

THURSDAY, AUGUST 10, 2023 | 1:00PM–2:45PM ET | LIVE ON ZOOM

Biographies

MODERATOR



Nicholas Worrell
Chief, Safety Advocacy Division
National Transportation Safety Board

Nicholas Worrell has served as the Director of the Office of Safety Advocacy for the NTSB since June 2015. Over his 25-year career with the NTSB, he has held positions as a Public Affairs Officer and safety advocate. Prior to joining the NTSB, Mr. Worrell proudly served for eight years in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Recognized as an expert on transportation safety issues and advisory strategies, Mr. Worrell regularly addresses local, state, and international governments; private industry; various organizations; youth safety leaders; and educators instructing on NTSB safety investigations and the adoption of safety regulations throughout the private and government sectors.

In 2019, Mr. Worrell spoke before the Nigerian, Kenyan and South African government on Effective Safety Advocacy, and Creating Positive Change in Transportation Safety in Kenya as part of the Safer Skies Program, and coordinated safety efforts throughout the Caribbean region, including in Jamaica, Guyana, Trinidad, and Barbados. In 2017, 2018 and 2019, he also addressed the International Road Federation's Caribbean Regional Congress and offered a U.S. perspective at the U.K.'s National Safer Roads Partnerships Conference.

Among other key accomplishments, Mr. Worrell coordinated the development of the agency's Core Values and its Most Wanted List, which provides the top safety recommendations for the transportation industry. Additionally, he assembled a coalition of transportation safety experts from multiple interagency partners, which has become the premier platform from which transportation communicators can plan and speak with a single, credible voice.

Mr. Worrell was born in Bridgetown, Barbados, where he attended the school formerly known as St. James Secondary School. He graduated from The Master's University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science. He also has earned two Masters degrees: one from Howard University in Public Policy/Public Administration, and the other from George Washington University in Strategic Public Relations. He has also attended the John C. Maxwell Leadership Center and became a certified speaker/coach/trainer in 2018. Mr. Worrell recently completed his Leadership Coaching for Organizational Performance at American University. In 2022 he received NTSB's highest award, which is granted in recognition of long-term and substantial contributions to the mission of the NTSB or to the improved efficiency/effectiveness of NTSB operations.

PANELISTS



Cody Beers
Senior Public Relations Specialist
Wyoming Department of Transportation

Cody Beers has been a senior public relations specialist with the Wyoming Department of Transportation for 19 years. He handles public meetings, media relations, news releases, social media, photography for northwest Wyoming. He is WYDOT's tribal liaison to the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes on the Wind River Reservation in central Wyoming. He is also the radio voice of the Wyoming Indian Chiefs and Lady Chiefs basketball teams on the Wind River Reservation. Prior to WYDOT, Beers spent 9 years as associate editor of Wyoming Wildlife Magazine in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Beers also worked as a Wyoming newspaper editor/reporter/photographer for 6 years. Beers is active in his Riverton, Wyoming, community, as a baseball coach, baseball umpire, volunteer, Boys and Girls Club Advisory Group board member, and president of the Fremont County Library Foundation. Beers and his wife have been married for 32 years. They have two grown sons.



Mary D. Gunnels, Ph.D., M.S.
Regional Administrator, NHTSA Region 6
National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration

Dr. Maggi Gunnels is Regional Administrator for NHTSA's Region 6, overseeing the Federal highway safety programs in Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and the Indian Nations. She came to the US Department of Transportation in 2002, after working more than 15 years in clinical care, emergency and trauma program administration, and in academia, in Texas and Oregon. Dr. Gunnels served more than a decade in the Federal Senior Executive Service, most recently as the Associate Administrator for the NHTSA Office of Regional Operations and Program Delivery.

Dr. Gunnels is a recipient of the Secretary of Transportation's Gold Medal for Outstanding Achievement for her work on the surface transportation authorization team in 2016. In 2020, she received the Secretary's Transportation Safety Award for her work on the NHTSA Tribal Safety Team. An enthusiastic advocate for student programs, she received an Outstanding Mentor Award for the U.S. DOT Student Transportation Internship Program for Diverse Groups program.

Maggi resides in Texas with her family, and she enjoys wildlife photography and outdoor adventure. In 2020, Dr. Gunnels received her certification as a Texas Master Naturalist, volunteering in conservation efforts across the State of Texas.



Tosheena Nez, MPH
Multicultural Communications Manager
ICF NEXT

Tosheena Nez is a Diné (Navajo) communications specialist with more than 5 years of experience in multicultural communication and advocacy for Native American and Alaska Native audiences.

She is experienced in public health and is committed to advocating for the health and well-being of Native people.



Laura Sonderup
Managing Director and Senior Strategist
Heinrich Marketing

Laura Sonderup is the managing director and senior strategist at Heinrich Marketing, Inc., a full-service advertising agency headquartered in Denver, Colorado.

She is a nationally recognized ethnic marketing expert and frequent keynote speaker at conferences, including traffic safety presentations delivered at Lifesavers National Conference on Highway Safety Priorities, Governor's Highway Safety Association (GHSA), the National Tribal Transportation Conference, National Tribal Symposium to Advance Transportation, Maryland DOT Traffic Safety Summit, and DRIVE SMART Virginia. Her writings on multicultural marketing have been featured in USA Today, Denver Business Journal, Rocky Mountain News, American Bar Association Journal, and several other publications. She is also the author of the popular book, "Hispanic Marketing in the Heartland: A Hands-on Guide."

In addition to her writing, Laura has been the primary strategic point person on social norming and behavior modification campaigns for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (R8), Colorado Department of Transportation, Wyoming Department of Transportation, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Colorado Department of Human Services, Wyoming Department of Health, Utah Department of Public Safety, and the U.S. Department of Justice.

In 2020, Laura's expertise within the traffic safety community was recognized by MADD and CDOT with the Dr. Robert E. Weltzer Outstanding Dedication to Traffic Safety award and in 2022, she was appointed to the National Research Council's Behavioral Traffic Safety Program Panel.

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