Final Project Report
South Dakota Office of Highway Safety
2012 Department of Public Safety
Driver Survey

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Prepared by:

Government Research Bureau

W. O. Farber Center for Civic Leadership

University of South Dakota

Dr. Shane Nordyke, Project Director

Darren Hedlund, Research Assistant

UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH DAKOTA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND DATA HIGHLIGHTS

The *2012 Department of Public Safety Driver Survey,* a telephone-based questionnaire designed through collaboration between the South Dakota Department of Public Safety and the University of South Dakota (USD) Government Research Bureau (GRB), was deployed from July 18 to 23, 2012, via the Clark Research calling center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. This surveying effort generated a total sample of 761 licensed drivers and state identification (ID) card holders ages 16 and over. Data analysis was conducted in July and August 2012 by USD GRB personnel, under the direction of Dr. Shane Nordyke.

As described in this report, the ensuing analysis of survey data produced a number of key observations:

- Overall, 80.0% of respondents reported driving almost every day, while an additional 12.9% reported driving at least several times per week. Combined, these categories decreased 2.3% from 2011. However, it appears that the motorists who drive most regularly tend also to be those who report more frequent undesirable driving habits.
- Basic awareness of South Dakota's state seat belt law is high, though drivers tend to lack knowledge of the law's finer points. According to survey results, 71.6% claimed to wear seat belts "all of the time," with another 15.2% reporting seat belt use "most of the time."
- Speeding may be seen as a problematic area. Of the respondents, 63.1% reported driving more than 35 miles per hour (mph) in 30-mph speed zones at least occasionally, while 49.8% admitted to occasionally driving more than 70 mph in 65-mph zones. Altogether, 56.5% of respondents reported driving more than five miles per hour over the posted speed limit within the last year. Despite this, South Dakotans appear to agree overwhelmingly that South Dakota's speed limits are optimal.
- When asked to reflect directly on the frequency with which they drive after drinking, 19.4% of respondents reported doing so on at least a rare basis, though only 0.5% claimed to do so most or all of the time. Participants also tend to agree strongly that impaired driving is likely to result in an arrest.
- In general, South Dakotans tend to view the enforcement of highway safety initiatives as an essential activity. According to the survey, 80.3% of participants agreed that enforcing seat belt laws is important, and 95.7% said the same of speed limit laws. As was the case in 2011, a staggering 97.8% agreed that enforcing laws against impaired driving is an important undertaking.
- Support for a law to ban texting while driving remains very high. An overwhelming 89.4% of those surveyed would support a law that bans texting while driving.

The remainder of this report provides an analytical and interpretive exploration of data collected through the above surveying effort. After a concise presentation of demographic data describing the survey sample, the report will move to a detailed, item-by-item examination of findings. The central purpose of this analysis is to supply the South Dakota Office of Highway Safety with a firm, empirical basis for understanding citizen attitudes, preferences, and behaviors with respect to various aspects of highway safety.

SECTION I:
RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS AND DRIVING FREQUENCY

As a preface to the main body of the report, the following tables provide an overview of the demographic characteristics of the complete participant group.[1] Output for these survey items serves as the organizing basis for a number of data cross-tabulations presented throughout this report.

Table 1

Q30. In what year were you born? _____[2]

	n	%
<=30	69	9.1%
31-40	62	8.2%
41-50	114	15.1%
51-60	186	24.6%
61-70	155	20.5%
> 70	162	21.5%
Don't know/Refused to answer	7	0.9%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Table 2

Q32. Which of the following best describes where you live?

	n	%
Own a single-family home	641	84.2%
Own a condominium	8	1.1%
Rent an apartment or home	80	10.5%
Other (specify):_____	22	2.9%
Don't know	5	0.7%
Refused to answer	5	0.7%
(Total)	761	100.0%

[1] Although presented at the outset of this report, data regarding participants' demographic characteristics was collected at the end of the actual survey instrument. Through the entirety of this document, all tables and figures referencing specific survey items are notated with a "Q ___." at the head of the embedded title.

[2] The question on the survey asks respondents the year in which they were born. Using the current year, we convert the response into an age and create these categories from that data.

Table 3

Q33. What race/ethnicity best describes you?

	n	%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	23	3.0%
Asian	2	0.3%
Black/African American	3	0.4%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	2	0.3
White	706	92.8%
Other (Specify)	9	1.2%
Refused to answer	13	1.7%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Table 4

Q34. Please identify your annual pre-tax household income based upon the following categories:

	n	%
< $10,000	24	3.2%
$10,000 to $14,999	37	4.9%
$15,000 to $24,999	61	8.0%
$25,000 to $34,999	81	10.6%
$35,000 to $49,999	98	12.9%
$50,000 to $74,999	134	17.6%
$75,000 to $99,999	76	10.0%
$100,000 to $149,999	52	6.8%
$150,000 to $199,999	23	3.0%
$200,000 or more	12	1.6%
Don't know	28	3.7%
Refused to answer	135	17.7%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Table 5

Q35. Gender

	n	%
Male	362	47.6%
Female	399	52.4%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Table 6

Q36. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

	n	%
Unemployed, seeking work	8	1.1%
Unemployed, not seeking work	13	1.7%
Employed part time	79	10.4%
Employed full time	329	43.2%
Retired	279	36.7%
Other	1	0.1%
Don't know	2	0.3%
Refused to answer	7	0.9%
Self-employed	21	2.8%
Disabled	11	1.4%
Homemaker	6	0.8%
Student	5	0.7%
(Total)	761	100%

Table 7

Q37. Which of the following best describes your current marital status?

	n	%
Single, never married	69	9.1%
Single, divorced	52	6.8%
Single, living with someone	12	1.6%
Married	534	70.2%
Widowed	82	10.8%
Other (specify)	3	0.4%
Refused to answer	9	1.2%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Table 8

Q38. What is the highest grade or year of school you have completed?

	n	%
8th grade or less	15	2.0%
9th grade	10	1.3%
10th grade	4	0.5%
11th grade	13	1.7%
12th grade/GED	190	25.0%
Some college	216	28.4%
College graduate or higher	301	39.6%
Don't know	2	0.3%
Refused to answer	10	1.3%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Table 9

Q39. Including yourself, how many persons aged 16 or older are living in your household at least half of the time or consider it their primary residence?

	n	%
0	24	3.2%
1	159	20.9%
2	419	55.1%
3	97	12.7%
4	40	5.3%
5	10	1.3%
6 or more	4	0.5%
Refused to answer	8	1.1%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Table 10

Q40. Of those members of your household, how many are legally licensed drivers?

	n	%
0	31	4.1%
1	164	21.6%
2	426	56.0%
3	88	11.6%
4	34	4.5%
5	8	1.1%
6 or more	3	0.4%
Refused to answer	7	0.9%
(Total)	761	100.00%

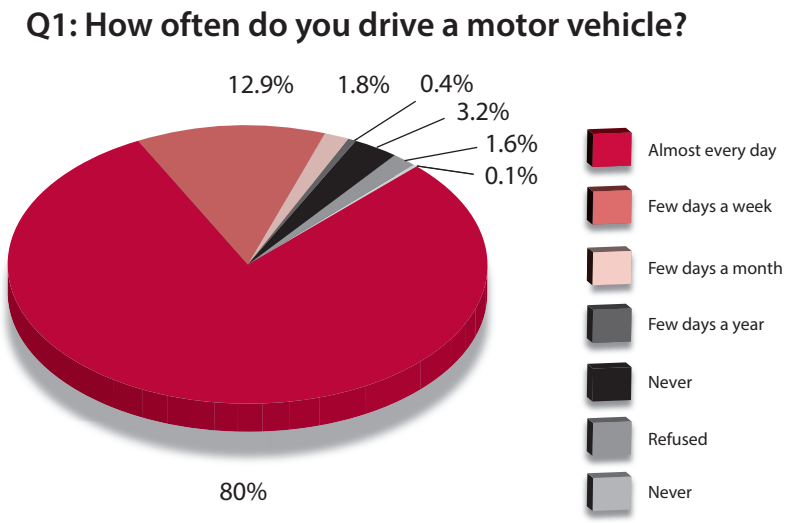
Table 11

Q41. How many children aged 15 or younger are living in your household at least half of the time or consider it their primary residence?

	n	%
0	604	79.4%
1	62	8.1%
2	52	6.8%
3	27	3.5%
4	2	0.3%
5	1	0.1%
6 or more	4	0.5%
Don't know	1	0.1%
Refused to answer	8	1.1%
(Total)	761	100.0%

To begin the survey, all participants were asked to reflect on the frequency with which they drive a motor vehicle. The following figure presents the resulting response distribution in percentage format. It can be seen that 80.0% of respondents reported driving almost every day, while an additional 12.9% reported driving at least several times per week. Frequency of motor vehicle driving tended to rise somewhat with increasing education and household income level. Female respondents and single respondents showed lower rates of driving frequency.

Figure 1



When cross-tabulating the results of item Q1 with those of several later questions, a number of troubling tendencies emerge. Of participants who reported wearing a seat belt "all of the time" when driving (item Q2), 81.2% reported driving almost every day; the analogous figure for participants who reported wearing seat belts only "some of the time" when driving was 88.7%. Put another way, less diligent seat belt users tend to report driving more frequently. The following table shows that similarly undesirable patterns can be found by examining several other cross-tabulations.

Table 12

% Responding "Almost Every Day" to Q1 ("How often do you drive a motor vehicle?")

(Figure in parentheses is the analogous percentage for all drivers.)

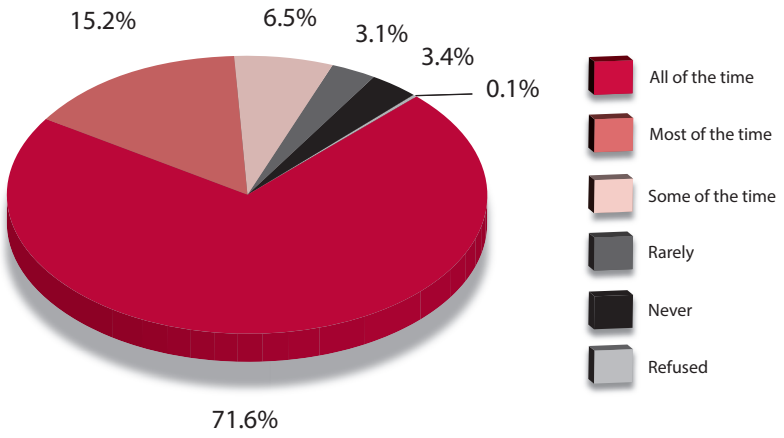
	All of the time	**Some of the time**
Q2. When driving, how often do you wear a seat belt?	70.4% *(71.6%)*	14.1% *(6.5%)*
	All/Most of the time	**Never**
Q12. On a local road with a speed limit of 30 mph, how often do you drive faster than 35 mph?	10.8% *(10.2%)*	23.6% *(26.7%)*
	All/Most of the time	**Never**
Q13. On a road with a speed limit of 65 mph, how often do you drive faster than 70 mph?	19.5% *(6.7%)*	38.8% *(43.5%)*
	0	**1 or more**
Q21. In the past 60 days, how many times have you driven a motor vehicle within 2 hours after drinking alcoholic beverages?	81.3% *(83.4%)*	15.6% *(13.4%)*

SECTION II: SEAT BELTS

Participants were asked to respond to a series of survey items related to the use of seat belts in motor vehicles, survey items that encompassed both attitudinal and behavioral aspects of seat belt use. Results for these items are presented and discussed below. It is important to note that, due to the use of "skip logic" in the survey design, fewer than 761 responses are reported for some survey items. For example, item Q2 ("When driving, how often do you wear your seat belt?") was not asked of the 24 participants who reported no driving activity in item Q1.

Figure 2

Q2: When driving, how often do you wear a seat belt?



As seen in the table above, survey data suggests that South Dakotans report being meticulous seat belt users. Of the respondents, 71.6% claim to wear seat belts "all of the time," with another 15.2% reporting seat belt use "most of the time." Regular seat belt use, as measured by "all of the time" responses, tends to be more common among drivers in the higher income households; 77.3% of those reporting income between $75,000 and $100,000 per year, 75% of those reporting incomes between $50,000 and $75,000 and near 65% for those reporting income between $25,000 and $50,000. However those in the highest and lowest income categories are an exception to this trend. 73.5% of wage those earning between $10,000 and $25,000 and those earning more than $100,000 per year reported wearing their seat belt all of the time. College degree holders (76.4%, compared to 64.9% of respondents with less than a high school diploma), and females (82.0%, in contrast to 60.3% of males) also report more consistent seat belt use. It should be pointed out, however, that rates of self-reported seat belt use are likely to be inflated estimates of *actual* seat belt use. The following table provides additional detail regarding the frequency of seat belt use by participants. Oddly, when the question is asked in the form "When was the last time you did NOT wear your seat belt?", only 45.2% (up slightly from 45.0% reported in 2011) of respondents stated that "I always wear it."

Table 13

Q3. When was the last time you did NOT wear your seat belt when driving?

	n	%
Within the past day	143	19.4%
Within the past week	80	10.9%
Within the past month	54	7.3%
Within the past year	26	3.5%
I always wear it	333	45.2%
Don't know	98	13.3%
Refused to answer	3	0.4%
(Total)	761	100%

Survey items Q4 through Q6b focus on respondents' knowledge and views of the seat belt law. As seen in the responses to item Q4, 89.2% reported awareness of mandated seat belt use in the state. In general, this high level of awareness was found to be relatively consistent across demographic groups and similar to analogous figures from last year.

Table 14

Q4. Does South Dakota have a law requiring seat belt use by adults?

	n	%
Yes	679	89.2%
No	32	4.2%
Don't know	49	6.4%
Refused to answer	1	0.1%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Despite the apparent level of basic statutory familiarity on the part of respondents (as demonstrated in item Q4), answers to item Q5 suggest that South Dakota drivers lack nuanced knowledge of the law's details. The following table shows that only 40.4% of respondents observed correctly that South Dakota seat belt laws define failure to wear a seat belt as a secondary offense. While 40.9% stated that a seat belt violation constitutes a primary offense, a sizable 18.7% reported not knowing.

Table 15

Q5. According to South Dakota law, can police stop a vehicle if they observe a seat belt violation, or do they have to observe some other offense first in order to stop the vehicle?

	n	%
Can stop just for seat belt violation	278	40.9%
Must observe another offense first	274	40.4%
Don't know	127	18.7%
(Total)	761	100%

In survey item Q6 the questionnaire asked respondents to reflect on whether or not police should be allowed to stop a vehicle if they observe a seat belt violation when no other traffic laws are being broken. 55.6% of participants stated that traffic stops should be warranted by seat belt violations alone.

Table 16

Q6. In your opinion, SHOULD police be allowed to stop a vehicle if they observe a seat belt violation when no other traffic laws are being broken?

	n	%
Should be allowed to stop	423	55.6%
Should not be allowed to stop	291	38.2%
Don't know	43	5.7%
Refused to answer	4	0.5%
(Total)	761	100%

Items Q9a and Q9b relate to respondents' impressions of seat belt efficacy. Overall, only 25.9% of participants agreed that seat belts are as likely to cause harm as to prevent it, up slightly from 23.2% last year. However, this figure was drastically higher (41.0%) among the lowest wage earners (those with a reported household income of $10,000 to $24,999), those with less than a high school diploma (50.0%), and those under the age of 30 (30.4%). Not surprisingly, those respondents who reported frequent use of seat belts were far more likely to disagree with the statement posed in item Q9a.[3] The generally favorable impression of seat belt efficacy reflected in item Q9a is further advanced by results from item Q9b, which show that a staggering 91.7% of respondents would want to be wearing a seat belt in the event of a traffic crash.

[3] Disagreement (any level) was indicated by 76.9% of participants who also reported wearing seat belts "all of the time"; the analogous figure among respondents reporting seat belt use "some of the time" was only 37.1%.

Table 17

Q9a. Seat belts are just as likely to harm you as help you.

	n	%
Net agree	197	25.9%
Strongly agree	84	11.0%
Somewhat agree	113	14.8%
Net disagree	527	69.3%
Somewhat disagree	189	24.8%
Strongly disagree	338	44.4%
Don't know	37	4.9%
(Total)	761	100%[4]

Table 18

Q9b. If I were in an accident, I would want to have my seat belt on.

	n	%
Net agree	698	91.7%
Strongly agree	646	84.9%
Somewhat agree	52	6.8%
Net disagree	33	4.3%
Somewhat disagree	20	2.6%
Strongly disagree	13	1.7%
Don't know	30	3.9%
(Total)	761	100.0%

The following tables provide respondent feedback regarding experiences with seat belt enforcement. In item Q7, respondents were asked to estimate the likelihood of receiving a citation as a consequence of failing to wear a seat belt. Overall, 55.6% of respondents found it likely that a ticket would be issued, with 24.8% estimating that such an outcome would be "very likely." Looking at demographic cross-tabulations, "very likely" and "somewhat likely" responses were most frequent among participants without a high school degree, and young participants.[5] Results for item Q7 were relatively consistent across all categories of reported seat belt use.

[4] In this and subsequent tables, response category sub-components (e.g., strongly agree, somewhat agree) may sum to slightly more or slightly less than "net" figures (e.g., net agree) due to rounding. Column totals refer to net agree plus net disagree plus other (don't know, refused, etc.).

[5] It is plausible that a large degree of overlap exists between these demographic categories.

Table 19

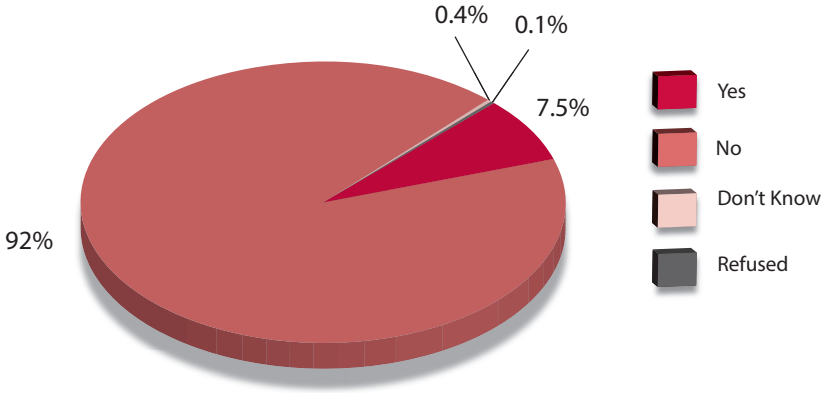
Q7. What do you think the chances are of getting a ticket if you don't wear your seat belt?

	n	%
Net likely	423	55.6%
Very likely	189	24.8%
Somewhat likely	234	30.7%
Net unlikely	297	39.0%
Somewhat unlikely	172	22.6%
Very unlikely	125	16.4%
Don't know	40	5.3%
Refused to answer	1	0.1%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Respondents were also asked to report whether they ever had been issued a traffic ticket for failing to wear a seat belt. The following figure presents the results of this item (Q8) and shows that a vast majority of respondents have never received any such citation; however, in 2012 there was a 2011 to there has been a slight increase in citations from 2011 (7.5% compared to 6.3%).

Figure 3

Q8. Have you ever received a ticket for not wearing a seat belt?



The final items dealing explicitly with seat belts (Q9c and Q9d) focus on respondents' appraisals of the resoluteness and necessity of seat belt enforcement in South Dakota. Troublingly, results from survey item Q9c suggest that a plurality of participants agreed that local police "generally will not bother to write tickets for seat belt violations" (39.2%); however, this number had decreased slightly (the analogous figure from 2011 was only 43.1%). At the same time, output from item Q9d shows that 80.3% of participants agreed that enforcing seat belt laws is an important law enforcement activity, with 57.2% indicating strong agreement. This figure is consistent across most demographic groups, though females (87.0%) were especially likely to support seat belt law enforcement.

Table 20

Q9c. Police in my community generally will not bother to write tickets for seat belt violations.

	n	%
Net agree	298	39.2%
Strongly agree	153	20.1%
Somewhat agree	145	19.1%
Net disagree	239	31.4%
Somewhat disagree	112	14.7%
Strongly disagree	127	16.7%
Don't know	224	29.4%
(Total)	761	100%

Table 21

Q9d. It is important for police to enforce seat belt laws.

	n	%
Net agree	611	80.3%
Strongly agree	435	57.2%
Somewhat agree	176	23.1%
Net disagree	129	17.0%
Somewhat disagree	71	9.3%
Strongly disagree	58	7.6%
Don't know	21	2.8%
(Total)	761	100.0%

SECTION III: SPEEDING

In the next section of the survey, respondents were presented with a series of questions that focus on various dimensions of the broad topic of motor vehicle speeding. First among these questions were several items centered on respondents' own driving habits. Items Q12 and Q13 prompted participants to rate their relative frequency of driving over the speed limit under two different speed zone conditions. Item Q12 asked respondents to estimate the regularity with which they drive more than 35 mph in 30-mph speed zones, while item Q13 posed a parallel question about driving more than 70 mph in 65-mph speed zones. It can be seen from the following table that to the first question only 10.2% responded with "all of the time" or "most of the time." Reflecting on item Q13, only 6.7% gave the same responses. Q12 shows an increase from the analogous 2011 figure (8.3%), while Q13 shows a slight decrease (5.8%). For both questions, female respondents, single respondents, and low-income respondents tended to select "never" more often.

Table 22: Question 12 & 13 Comparison

Q12/Q13. On a local road with a speed limit of 30/65 mph, how often do you drive faster than 35/70 mph?

	"30" / "35"		"65" / "70"	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**
All of the time	27	3.5%	12	1.6%
Most of the time	51	6.7%	39	5.1%
Some of the time	153	20.1%	87	11.4%
Rarely	327	43.0%	292	38.4%
Never	203	26.7%	331	43.5%
(Total)	761	100.0%	761	100.0%

Results from survey item Q12 provide another means of examining the speeding-related driving behavior of respondents. Altogether, 44.1% of participants reported driving more than 5 mph over the posted speed limit at least once within the last year, 13.3% in the last week alone. Again, cross-tabulations suggest that female participants (12.3%), participants over 70 years old (18.5%), participants with a household income of $25,000 to $34,999, (12.3%), single participants (14.3%), and participants without a high school degree (16.7%) provided the highest incidence of "never" responses.

Table 23

Q14. When was the last time you drove more than 5 mph over the speed limit?

	n	%
Within the past day	97	12.7%
Within the past week	101	13.3%
Within the past month	138	18.1%
Within the past year	96	12.6%
A year or more ago	161	21.2%
Don't know	81	10.6%
Refused	4	0.5%
Never	83	10.9%
(Total)	750	100.0%

Respondents' self-reporting of speeding behavior seems to contrast with their own negative views of speeding itself. Figures presented in the following tables show that 87.5% of respondents agreed that driving over the speed limit increases the risk of an accident occurring. Further, an astonishing 95.7% of respondents agreed that the enforcement of speed limit laws is an important undertaking. Across both survey items, male respondents were somewhat less inclined to agree.[6]

Table 24

Q17a. Driving over the speed limit increases the risk of an accident.

	n	%
Net agree	666	87.5%
Strongly agree	496	65.2%
Somewhat agree	170	22.3%
Net disagree	70	9.2%
Somewhat disagree	41	5.4%
Strongly disagree	29	3.8%
Don't know	25	3.3%
(Total)	761	100.0%

[6] Of male respondents, 12.7% (compared to 6.0% of females) disagreed that driving over the speed limit increases the risk of an accident occurring, while 4.1% (compared to 3.5% of female respondents) disagreed that it is important for police to enforce speed limit laws..

Table 25

Q17d. It is important for police to enforce the speed limit laws.

	n	%
Net agree	761	95.7%
Strongly agree	583	76.6%
Somewhat agree	145	19.1%
Net disagree	29	3.8%
Somewhat disagree	21	2.8%
Strongly disagree	8	1.1%
Don't know	4	0.5%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Further, when cross-tabulated with survey items Q12 and Q13, an inverse relationship appears to exist between speeding frequency and negative attitudes toward speeding. Put another way, drivers who self-reported frequent speeding also tended to be less likely to agree with the statements posed in items Q17a and Q17d (see the following table).

Table 26: Cross Tabulationon Questions 12 & 13 with Question 1 Responders in Categories: All/Most of the Time & Never

% Responding to Q12 ("On a local road with a speed limit of 30 mph, how often do you drive faster than 35 mph?")

	All/Most of the time	Never
Q14a. Driving over the speed limit increases the risk of an accident. ***(Agree)***	74.4%	89.7%
Q14d. It is important for police to enforce the speed limit laws. ***(Agree)***	87.2%	96.6%

% Responding to Q13 ("On a road with a speed limit of 65 mph, how often do you drive faster than 70 mph?")

	All/Most of the time	Never
Q14a. Driving over the speed limit increases the risk of an accident. ***(Agree)***	74.6%	90.3%
Q14d. It is important for police to enforce the speed limit laws. ***(Agree)***	91.3%	96.1%

Results from item Q17d strongly imply that South Dakotans value the enforcement of speeding laws. Concurrently, tabular output for items Q13 and Q17b suggests that respondents tend to view law enforcement officials as performing relatively well in this regard. Over three-quarters (76.5%) of respondents estimated the chances of being ticketed as a consequence of driving over the speed limit as either "very likely" or "somewhat likely," slightly up from the same figure reported in 2011 (72.9%). Further, a plurality of respondents (45.5%) disagreed with the proposition that local police "generally will not bother to write tickets for speeding violations if they are less than 10 mph over the speed limit" (almost one in five respondents did not offer a response to this item).

Table 27

Q15. What do you think the chances are of getting a ticket if you drive over the speed limit?

	n	%
Net likely	582	76.5%
Very likely	262	34.4%
Somewhat likely	320	42.0%
Net unlikely	152	20.0%
Somewhat unlikely	103	13.5%
Very unlikely	49	6.4%
Don't know	25	3.3%
Refused to answer	2	0.3%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Table 28

Q17b. Police in my community generally will not bother to write tickets for speeding violations if they are less than 10 mph over the limit.

	n	%
Net agree	272	35.7%
Strongly agree	126	16.6%
Somewhat agree	146	19.2%
Net disagree	346	45.5%
Somewhat disagree	157	20.6%
Strongly disagree	189	24.8%
Don't know	143	18.8%
(Total)	761	100.0%

The response patterns for the final two survey items in this series (Q17e and Q17f) are remarkable in their level of similarity. The following table shows that 82.0% of respondents disagreed with a statement suggesting that speed limits in South Dakota are too low; a similar proportion (84.5%) disagreed with a parallel statement proposing that the state's speed limits are too high. These results are consistent with the answers reported in 2011. Careful inspection shows that the response distribution for each of these items is nearly indistinguishable from the other. The book-matched properties of these distributions paired with strong evidence of a shared negative valence suggest that South Dakotans are of firm mind that the state's speed limits are optimal. Yet, it should perhaps come as no surprise that those respondents who in item Q13 indicated driving more than 70 mph in 65-mph zones on a regular basis were drastically more likely to view the state's speed limits as being too low.[7]

Table 29

Q17e/Q17f. In general, I believe the speed limits in South Dakota are too low/too high.

	"...too low"		"...too high"	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**
Net agree	116	15.2%	97	12.7%
Strongly agree	50	6.6%	36	4.7%
Somewhat agree	66	8.7%	61	8.0%
Net disagree	624	82.0%	643	84.5%
Somewhat disagree	253	33.2%	243	31.9%
Strongly disagree	371	48.8%	400	52.6%
Don't know	21	2.8%	21	2.8%
(Total)	761	100.0%	761	100.0%

[7] Of respondents who reported a speeding frequency of "all of the time" or "most of the time" in these speed zones, 23.2% expressed agreement that speed limits are generally too low.0By contrast, of those who reporting a speeding frequency of "never" in these zones, only 12.1% view the state's speed limits as unsatisfactorily low.0

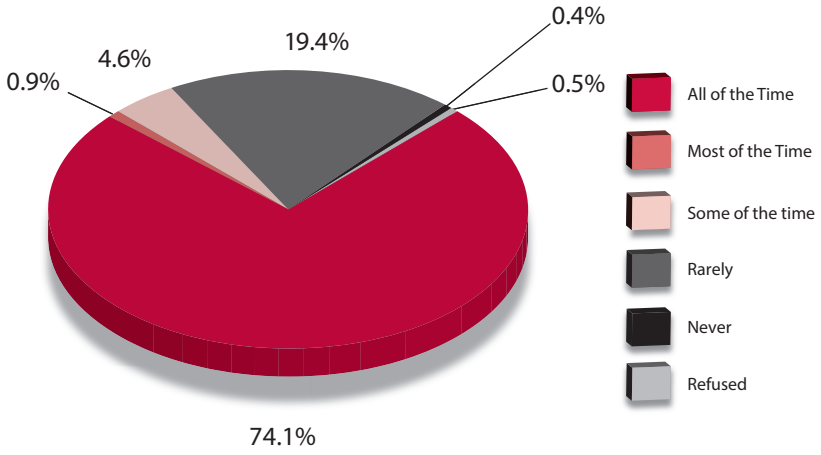
SECTION IV: IMPAIRED DRIVING

The ensuing section of the survey asked participants to consider an assortment of survey items related to alcohol- and drug-impaired driving and enforcement. As in preceding sections, participants were first prompted to respond to several self-reported behavioral measures related to the topic of interest. One potential qualifier is in order at this point. It is possible, or even likely, that given the particularly sensitive nature of this line of questioning, social desirability bias may have led to systematic underreporting of impaired driving behaviors. In this light, estimates of impaired driving behaviors reported here are likely to underestimate actual incidence.

While the following three tables may not go so far as to suggest that impaired driving among South Dakotans is rampant, the proportion of drivers who admit to drinking and driving is nonetheless unsettling. The first behavioral survey item asked respondents to reflect directly on the frequency with which they drive after drinking. Overall, 25.4% reported doing so with some level of frequency, though only 1.4% claimed to do so "all" or "most of the time." Demographic cross-tabulations show evidence of several strong patterns existing in the data for this item.0Rates of "never" responses can be seen to vary by age (88.9% of respondents over the age of 70, compared to an overall rate of 74.1%), gender (83.5% of women, in contrast with 63.8% of men), income (81.1% of respondents in the $10,000 to $24,999 category, compared to 60.0% in the >$100,000 category), and education level (83.3% of respondents with less than a high school diploma, compared to 67.8% of those with a college degree).

Figure 4

Q20: When driving, how often do you drive within 2 hours after drinking alcoholic beverags?



Results for items Q21 and Q22 provide additional detail regarding the self-reported incidence of alcohol-impaired driving among South Dakota motorists. In item Q21, 83.4% of participants reported that they had not driven after drinking within the most recent 60-day period. Likewise, results for item Q22 show that only 7.1% of respondents admitted to driving after drinking within the last month. However, comparisons of the output for these survey items may lead us to raise doubts about the consistency of the behavioral accounts presented by respondents.0It seems curious, for example, that while a robust 74.1% of participants

in item Q20 reported "never" driving within two hours of drinking alcoholic beverages, a vastly reduced 53.2% claimed the same in item Q22 (when asked about their most recent impaired driving incident). These somewhat incongruent findings likely suggest either that respondents may not be able to accurately recall impaired driving experiences or that their reporting is vulnerable to response editing effects due to the nature of the research topic.

Figure 5

Q21: In the past 60 days, how many times have you driven a motor vehicle within 2 hours after drinking alcoholic beverags?

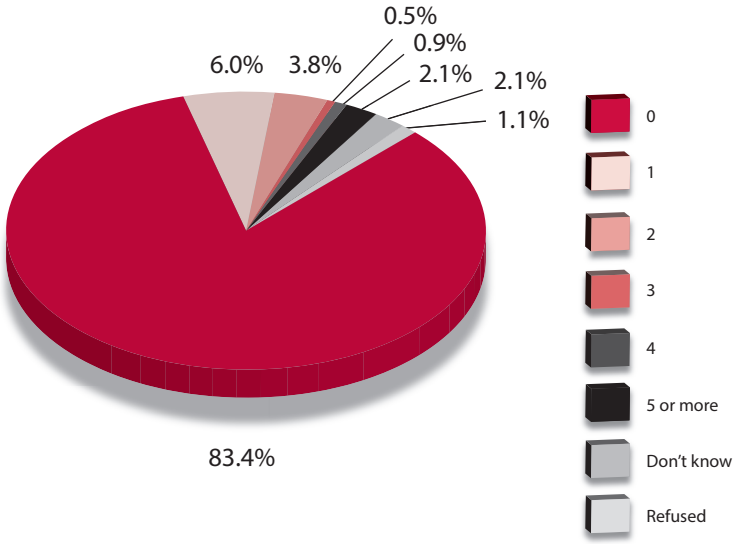


Table 30

Q22. When was the last time you drove a motor vehicle within 2 hours after drinking alcoholic beverages?

	n	%
Within the past day	8	1.1%
Within the past week	34	4.5%
Within the past month	54	7.1%
Within the past year	51	6.7%
A year or more ago	172	22.6%
Don't know	33	4.3%
Refused to answer	4	0.5%
Never	405	53.2%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Survey items Q25a and Q25b asked participants to offer their impressions of impaired driving itself by considering the consequences of intoxicated driving revealing responses similar to those provided in 2011. Results for item Q25a show that 72.1% of respondents disagreed with the idea that their own capacity to drive safely is unaffected by the consumption of two to three alcoholic drinks, with 53.4% disagreeing strongly. Similarly, 83.2% of respondents agreed in item Q25b that driving immediately after consuming alcohol elevates the likelihood of a traffic accident.

Table 31

Q25a. I can still drive safely even if I have had 2 or 3 drinks.

	n	%
Net agree	153	20.1%
Strongly agree	45	5.9%
Somewhat agree	108	14.2%
Net disagree	549	72.1%
Somewhat disagree	143	18.8%
Strongly disagree	406	53.4%
Don't know	59	7.8%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Table 32

Q25b. Driving within 2 hours after consuming alcohol increases the chance of an accident.

	n	%
Net agree	633	83.2%
Strongly agree	468	61.5%
Somewhat agree	165	21.7%
Net disagree	70	9.2%
Somewhat disagree	38	5.0%
Strongly disagree	32	4.2%
Don't know	58	7.6%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Examining these results in the context of respondent age reveals that no less likely to agree that consumption of alcohol generally increases the chance of an accident, younger drivers are more likely in to affirm their own ability to drive safely despite having recently consumed alcohol (30.4%). This finding, presented in the table below, certainly seems to suggest the invincibility mentality popularly thought to dominate the worldview of many young drivers.

Table 33

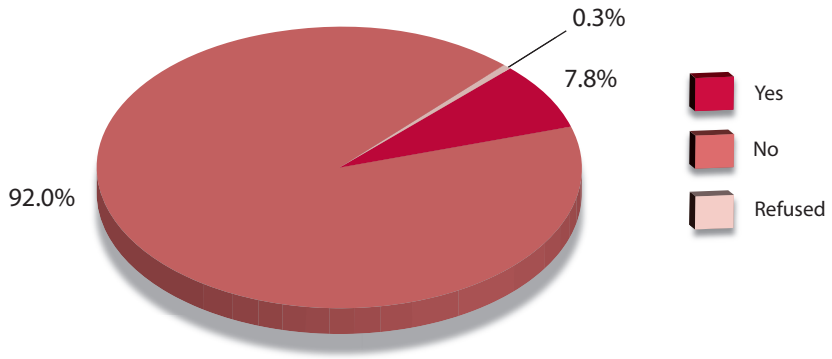
Q25a and Q25b by Age Group

	≤30	31– 40	41– 50	51– 60	61–70	>70
Q25a. "I can still drive safely even if I have had 2 or 3 drinks." ***(Agree)***	30.4%	21%	24.6%	19.4%	17.4%	16.0%
Q25b."Driving within 2 hours after consuming alcohol increases the chance of an accident." ***(Agree)***	88.4%	83.9%	81.6%	86.0%	80.6%	80.9%

The balance of this section's survey items deals primarily with impaired driving enforcement. To gain perspective of drivers' experiences with law enforcement, the survey asked respondents to indicate whether they had ever been arrested for driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. As seen in the table for item Q24, only 7.8% of participants answered "yes," with male participants (13.3%) and those in the <30 age group (13.0%) indicating especially high rates of impaired driving arrests.

Figure 6

Q24: Have you ever been arrested for operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated or under the influence of drugs or alcohol?



Covering related territory, items Q23a and Q23b prompted respondents to estimate the odds of being arrested as a consequence of driving while intoxicated. Item Q23a asked participants to rate the probability of a hypothetical "someone" being arrested, while item Q23b asked the same question about the respondent himself/herself. Each item was administered to half of the overall survey sample for the purpose of identifying differences between the split-sample groups. As the following table indicates, the response distributions for these items are slightly different, with a greater level of agreement for when "someone" is included (79.7%) in the question rather than "you" (75.3%).

Table 34

Q23a/Q23b. What do you think the chances are of someone/you getting arrested if they/you drive after drinking?

	"Someone"		"You"	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**
Net likely	294	79.7%	295	75.3%
Very likely	150	40.7%	161	41.1%
Somewhat likely	144	39.0%	134	34.2%
Net unlikely	54	14.6%	75	19.1%
Somewhat unlikely	40	10.8%	37	9.4%
Very unlikely	14	3.8%	38	9.7%
Don't know	20	5.4%	20	5.1%
Refused to answer	1	0.3%	2	0.5%
(Total)	369	100.0%	392	100.0%

Survey participants were also asked to consider the earnestness of local enforcement efforts with respect to impaired driving. Overall, 80.6% of respondents expressed disagreement with the idea that local police show little interest in making impaired driving arrests. Cross-tabulations show that an even higher analogous figure (88.2%) was generated among drivers who in item Q21 had themselves reported driving while intoxicated one or more times in the last 60 days. It seems plausible that this response pattern may stem from the drivers' personal experiences with impaired driving arrests. At the same time, this finding is somewhat surprising in light of data from items Q23a and Q23b, which suggest that this same subset of respondents tended to supply slightly lower estimates of arrest probability. [8]

Table 35

Q25c. Police in my community generally will not bother to make arrests for drunk driving.

	n	**%**
Net agree	92	12.1%
Strongly agree	50	6.6%
Somewhat agree	42	5.5%
Net disagree	613	80.6%
Somewhat disagree	107	14.1%
Strongly disagree	506	66.5%
Don't know	56	7.4%
(Total)	761	100.0%

[8] Of participants who indicated in item Q16 at least one recent intoxicated driving experience, 79.5% also estimated in item Q18a that the likelihood of someone being arrested as a consequence of impaired driving is likely, compared to 80.0% of respondents with no recent intoxicated driving experiences.0

Finally, item Q25d solicited respondents' views regarding the ongoing need for impaired driving enforcement. Altogether, an extraordinary figure of 97.8% agreement was recorded for the entire sample. Figures for this item were exceptionally high across all demographic groups and categories, and even received 98.0% support from respondents who earlier in the survey (item Q21) had reported driving while intoxicated one or more times in the last 60 days.

Table 36

Q25d. It is important for police to enforce drunk driving laws.

	n	%
Net agree	744	97.8%
Strongly agree	703	92.4%
Somewhat agree	41	5.4%
Net disagree	12	1.6%
Somewhat disagree	4	0.5%
Strongly disagree	8	1.1%
Don't know	5	0.7%
(Total)	761	100.0%

SECTION V: DISTRACTED DRIVING

With the recent proliferation of cell phones and mobile electronic devices, there has been a nationwide increase in the number of crashes attributed to distracted driving, particularly from texting while driving. In 2010 alone, over 3,000 people were killed in distracted driving crashes.[9] To assess distracted driving behaviors in South Dakota we included in this year's survey questions concerning the use of those devices while driving. As in preceding sections, participants were promoted to respond to self-reported behavior measures related to the topic of interest. As in other sections, however, it is possible, that, given the nature of this line of questioning, social desirability bias may have led to systematic underreporting of sending or receiving text messages while driving. In this light, estimates of texting while driving reported here are likely to underestimate actual occurrences .[10]

The following three tables suggest that while drivers who frequently and habitually send or receive text message are perhaps rare, texting and driving does occur and gives some reason for concern. The first behavior survey item asked respondents to reflect directly on the frequency with which they text on a cell phone or mobile device while driving. Overall, 22.2% reported texting while driving at least rarely, while only 2.2% claimed to do so "all" or "most of the time." Demographic cross-tabulations show evidence of several strong patterns existing in the data for this item. For respondents under the age of 30, 31.8% report texting while driving "all,""most," or "some of the time," compared to an overall rate of 7.6%. Conversely, rates of "never" were more prominent as respondents for older; respondents over the age 70 had the highest rate with 92.0% compared to those under 30 with a rate of 40.6%. Respondents without children were also more likely to report never texting while driving (81.3% of respondents without children reported never texting while driving as compared to 61.5% of those with children); whereas those with children were more likely to report "some of the time" or "rarely" as compared to those without children (35.8% of those with children reported texting "some of the time" or "rarely" as compared to 16.2% of those without children).

Table 37

Q2ADD. When driving, how often do you text on a cell phone or mobile device?

	n	%
All of the time	6	.8%
Most of the time	11	1.4%
Some of the time	41	5.4%
Rarely	111	14.6%
Never	589	77.4%
Don't know	2	.3%
Refused	1	.1%
(Total)	761	100.0%

[9] http://www.distraction.gov/

[10] This underreporting may be further exacerbated by the age distribution of our sample and the patterns related to age that we see in the responses given.

The second behavior survey item asked respondents to reflect directly on the number of times in the last week they sent or answered a text message while driving. Here again, a strong pattern exists. Rates of texting can be seen to vary by age (33.3% of respondents under the age 30 reported having texted while driving five or more times in the last week, compared to an overall rate of 5.7%) and education (8.6% of those who have graduated college compared to 5.7% overall. Conversely, rates of "0" were more prominent as the age of respondent increased, 97.5% for respondents over 70 as compared with 53.6% for respondents under 30. Rates of "0" were also more prominent for those respondents without children in the household (88.6%) than those with children (75%)—again this difference could also point to differences in age. Conversely, rates of "5 or more" were more frequent with respondents with children (10.8%) than without children (4.5%).

Table 38

Q21ADD. In the past 7 days, how many times have you sent or answered a text while driving?

	n	%
0	652	85.7%
1	21	2.8%
2	15	2.0%
3	12	1.6%
4	5	.7%
5 or more	43	5.7%
Don't know	11	1.4%
Refused	2	.3%
(Total)	761	100.0%

The third behavior survey asked respondents whether or not they thought South Dakota has a law banning texting while driving. 68.7% of respondents knew that South Dakota does not have a law banning texting while driving, while 31.2% either thought there was a law or did not know. Rates of "no" were more prominent among the more educated (73.1% of college graduates compared to 50% of those without a high school education) and among those that are married (72.5% of those married compared to 58.6% of single individuals). Rates of "yes" were more prominent among those with children (19.6%) compared to those without (12.7%).

Table 39

Q4ADD. Does South Dakota have a law banning texting while driving?

	n	**%**
Yes	107	14.1%
No	523	68.7%
Don't know	130	17.1%
Refused to answer	1	0.1%
(Total)	761	100.0%

SECTION VI: POLICY QUESTIONS

Next, survey participants were invited to offer substantive preferences on a short sequence of policy-related items. The hypothetical policy questions raised by these items were selected on the basis of relevance to the broader research concerns of the survey and do not necessarily represent actual public policy measures currently under consideration by the State of South Dakota. Item Q29a prompted respondents to consider a statewide ban on the use of cell phones and other texting devices while driving. An overwhelming 89.4% expressed agreement that such a ban is desirable, down slightly from 2011 (93.1%). Younger respondents (≤ 30 year olds at 79.7%) demonstrated the lowest comparative rates of support for this measure.

Table 40

Q29a. The State of South Dakota should ban texting—or using a cell phone to send text messages—when driving.

	n	%
Net agree	680	89.4%
Strongly agree	607	79.8%
Somewhat agree	73	9.6%
Net disagree	65	8.5%
Somewhat disagree	27	3.5%
Strongly disagree	38	5.0%
Don't know	16	2.1%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Support was strong in item Q29c for a state law mandating that protective helmets be worn by motorcycle occupants. Of all respondents, 74.0% agreed that helmets should be required, with 23.4% disagreeing and 2.6% not offering an opinion. Support tended to be consistently high across all demographic groups, though agreement waned somewhat among males (61.0%).

Table 41

Q29c. The State of South Dakota should require motorcycle riders to wear helmets while riding in the state.

	n	%
Net agree	563	74.0%
Strongly agree	479	62.9%
Somewhat agree	84	11.0%
Net disagree	178	23.4%
Somewhat disagree	63	8.3%
Strongly disagree	115	15.1%
Don't know	20	2.6%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Respondents were also asked to offer judgment on the question of whether the state should raise the minimum driving age from 14 to 16 years. Overall, 55.8% of respondents agreed with this point. Parents of school-aged children were more likely to favor the current law, given that respondents with children under the age of 16 agreed at a rate of only 46.6%. Females indicated greater agreement (60.9%) compared to male respondents (50.3%). Generally, support for establishing age 16 as the new minimum driving age decreased with level of education and income, though those earning between $10<25k indicated the highest level of agreement at 69.7%.

Table 42

Q29d. The State of South Dakota should increase its minimum driving age from 14 to 16 years.

	n	%
Net agree	425	55.8%
Strongly agree	316	41.5%
Somewhat agree	109	14.3%
Net disagree	299	39.3%
Somewhat disagree	139	18.3%
Strongly disagree	160	21.0%
Don't know	37	4.9%
(Total)	761	100%

SECTION VII: MEDIA RECALL

The closing section of the survey entailed a series of questions whose aim was to gauge the population coverage achieved by various public messaging efforts undertaken by the State of South Dakota. The sequence of items was designed to probe respondents' recall of specific television, radio, and print media campaigns. All items were constructed with a simple "yes-no" response option format.

One condition is crucial to the inferences that might be made from this data. Because "yes" responses in these sections required both an encounter with and a recall of particular message types, "no" responses may not constitute a lack of coverage but a lack of salience. Put another way, the state's media efforts may be reaching a larger population share than is indicated in these results but may be underreported here due to a lack of audience attentiveness or a perceived lack of message importance.

The following table provides data regarding participants' recall of a number of ***specific*** media campaigns.

Table 43: Questions 28A–28L +(Did not recall any)

Do you recall hearing or seeing the following slogans in the past 30 days?

Q28A. Friends don't let friends drive drunk.

	n	%
Yes	628	82.5%
No	127	16.7%
Don't know	5	0.7%
Refused	1	0.1%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Q28B. Click it or ticket.

	n	%
Yes	504	56.1%
No	250	43.9%
Don't know	6	0.8%
Refused	1	0.1%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Q28C. Buckle up America.

	n	%
Yes	348	45.7%
No	398	52.3%
Don't know	14	1.8%
Refused	1	0.1%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Q28H. Feed the habit, buckle up.

	n	%
Yes	335	44.0%
No	416	54.7%
Don't know	9	1.2%
Refused	1	0.1%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Q28I. Act civilized.

	n	%
Yes	115	15.1%
No	639	84.0%
Don't know	6	0.8%
Refused	1	0.1%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Q28J. Wear protective gear.

	n	%
Yes	203	26.7%
No	552	72.5%
Don't know	5	0.7%
Refused	1	0.1%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Q28D. Children in back.

	n	%
Yes	179	23.5%
No	574	75.4%
Don't know	7	0.9%
Refused	1	0.1%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Q28E. You drink, you drive, you lose.

	n	%
Yes	491	64.5%
No	255	33.5%
Don't know	14	1.8%
Refused	1	0.1%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Q28F. Didn't see it coming? No one ever does.

	n	%
Yes	207	27.2%
No	537	70.6%
Don't know	16	2.1%
Refused	1	0.1%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Q28G. Get the keys.

	n	%
Yes	251	33.0%
No	500	65.7%
Don't know	9	1.2%
Refused	2	0.1%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Q28K. Parents matter, talk to your kids.

	n	%
Yes	507	66.6%
No	244	32.1%
Don't know	8	1.1%
Refused	2	0.3%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Q28L. Alive at 25.

	n	%
Yes	148	19.4%
No	599	78.7%
Don't know	13	1.7%
Refused	1	0.1%
(Total)	761	100.0%

[Did not recall any.]

	n	%
Yes	37	4.9%
No	724	95.1%
(Total)	761	100.0%

Survey items Q22A through Q22L asked respondents to state which media slogans could be recalled from the most recent 30-day period. As seen above, the most frequently recalled messaging campaigns were "Friends don't let friends drive drunk" (82.5%), "Parents matter, talk to your kids" (66.6%) and "You drink, you drive, you lose." (64.5%). "Click it or ticket." was also recognized by more than half of the survey sample (56.1%). Respondents were especially unlikely to recall "Act civilized" (15.1%), "Alive at 25" (19.4%), "Children in back" (23.5%), and "Didn't see it coming? No one ever does" (27.2%). Overall, 90.1% of participants recalled at least one of the media slogans presented in this section. For every slogan, with one exception (Act civilized) respondents recall was higher in 2012 than in 2011.

Cross-tabulations show few significant points of demographic variation. While variation exists on recall of individual slogans, no demographic patterns exist across all slogans.

CLOSING SUMMARY

Altogether, data generated from the 2012 Department of Public Safety Driver Survey would seem to contain a mix of good news and bad news for the department's policy planners and no dramatic changes from 2011. Policy planners should still be encouraged by respondents' stated attitudes toward risky driving practices. 80.3% of respondents reported that it is important for police to enforce seat belt laws, while 95.6% said the same of speed limit laws. A remarkable 97.8% still concurred that impaired driving enforcement is important. Basic knowledge of the state's seat belt law is high (89.2%), and 91.7% of respondents reported desiring to be secured by a seat belt in the event of an accident. Only 20.1% of participants profess the ability to drive safely after drinking multiple alcoholic beverages, and 83.2% agree that doing so raises the chance of an accident occurring.

However, analysis also reveals a level of dissonance between respondents' stated attitudes and actual driving behavior. For example, despite the perceived importance of speeding enforcement, 56.7% of respondents admitted to driving more than five miles per hour above the speed limit within the last year. Almost one in five respondents (19.4%) reported driving after drinking at least occasionally, despite the marked prevalence of negative views toward the act of intoxicated driving. Also, even though a robust 71.6% of drivers claim to wear seat belts at all times, cross-tabulation indicates that seat belt usage is relatively less consistent among the state's most frequent drivers. Such findings underscore a vital challenge faced by highway safety personnel, namely, overcoming the apparent disconnect between drivers' ideal and real driving practices. However, it appears that respondents were more receptive to or had a higher recall of specific slogans addressed in the survey when compared to the 2011 results. Since we are still only looking at a few years of data it is premature to read too much into various comparisons made throughout the report, however with future iterations of the survey we will continue to track changes and evaluate potential trends.

UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH DAKOTA

Government Research Bureau
W. O. Farber Center for Civic Leadership
University of South Dakota
414 East Clark Street
Vermillion, South Dakota 57069
www.usd.edu/grb
grb@usd.edu