

2023 Highway Safety Awards – Ceremony Script

The Fletcher Brush Educational Outreach Award

This award is presented to an individual for outstanding educational outreach in the promotion of highway safety priorities for Vermont citizens. This annual award honors Fletcher “Buster” Brush, who exemplified the notion of “service above self.”

The winner is: Joseph Barch, of the Vermont Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association

Joseph “Joe” Barch teaches Driver and Traffic Safety in the Mount Mansfield Union High School community and has done so for over 26 of his 30 years of teaching.

For over six years Joe has also operated his own driving school, “802 Driving School.” Joe recognized that high school programs lacked the capacity for all students and wanted to ensure all students had access to a driver education class.

Joe has been a Driver and Traffic Safety Educator, a leader of the Vermont Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association, and President of the American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association. The American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association hosts national conferences, develops drivers' education materials, issues credentials to drivers ed instructors, and provides consultative services for driving schools.

Joe has testified in the VT Legislature on Driver and Traffic Safety Issues. He has been an important leader in the promotion of safe and responsible driving for teen and young adult drivers in Vermont.

Joe is an instructor of In-Vehicle Training and has developed online and video lessons to support student learning.

Joe has been an advocate for highway safety, speaking at State Highway Safety Office Press Conferences to help educate on the dangers of Distracted Driving, where he was quoted as saying, "We're looking for the older drivers, the more experienced drivers, to set a more positive role model for our students and young adults to follow."

Joe believes that the most important thing that he teaches students in driver education is to look ahead and plan ahead on the road. At VTrans we could not agree with you more.

The Fletcher Brush Educational Outreach Award is presented to Joseph Barch in recognition of his dedication and commitment to highway safety through education to young and new drivers in our state.

The Rising Star Enforcement Award

This award is presented to an officer in the first five years of their career who has shown exemplary work and passion for traffic law enforcement, while demonstrating teamwork and strong support for fellow officers and the community.

The winner is: Deputy First Class Gregory Ricketts, of the Rutland County Sheriff's Department

Deputy Ricketts has been employed by the Rutland County Sheriff's Department since June of 2021. He shows up every day with a smile and focuses on motor vehicle patrols during every shift. He frequently signs up for Highway Safety overtime and continues traffic work during his regular shifts. To date, Deputy Ricketts has conducted over 2,000 traffic stops in an effort to keep our roadways safer.

Deputy Ricketts is always looking for impaired drivers and in his short career he has made 19 DUI arrests. Ricketts' outstanding affidavit writing has been noted by his supervisor. His extremely well written accounts of the stops he conducts are succinct and include specific details of the accounts of the stop.

Deputy Ricketts is an incredibly hard worker and is continuously learning and improving. If he's in a situation where he's not sure of the answer, he leans on his superiors for advice and guidance. His willingness to learn and to collect constructive feedback is an admirable quality.

Deputy Ricketts began his Emergency Medical Services career in 2016. He is a nationally certified EMT for Wallingford Rescue, and has extensive experience with Regional Ambulance in Rutland. Deputy Ricketts has served several roles with Wallingford Rescue, including being on the board of directors, a training officer, serving as the vice president and now being on his second year as President. Greg is a certified CPR instructor as well as a "Stop the Bleed" instructor.

Deputy Ricketts often visits and speaks to elementary school students to teach them about his careers in law enforcement and EMS.

VTrans especially appreciates and recognizes the importance of the life saving post-crash care expertise that Deputy Ricketts brings to his enforcement work.

The Rising Star Award is presented to Deputy Ricketts in recognition of his exemplary work and passion for traffic law enforcement.

The Impaired Driving Prevention and Enforcement Award

This award is presented to an individual who has demonstrated commitment to education, enforcement, prosecution, and community engagement to help decrease incidents of impaired driving.

The winner is: Anisha Paul, Vermont Forensic Laboratory, Toxicology Section

Anisha Paul has been a forensic toxicologist at the Department of Public Safety's Forensic Laboratory since 2017. In her nearly six years with the State, she has worked tirelessly to expand Vermont's blood testing program from just testing for alcohol to testing for nearly all impairing drugs that are routinely encountered.

The Vermont Forensic Lab now meets or exceeds nearly all of the national recommendations for Driving Under the Influence of Drugs blood testing, and this is thanks in very large part to the validation work done by Anisha. Not only has she worked extremely hard in the lab, she has also worked outside the lab to expand her own personal knowledge to become an indispensable tool for the State.

Anisha has attended nearly every training, workshop, conference, webinar, or seminar related to drug impairment that has been offered in the last six years. Amanda Bolduc states, "Anisha has become our leading expert on drug impairment thanks to her tireless thirst for knowledge." Anisha has passed the American Board of Forensic Toxicology exam and is a member of the National Safety Council Cannabis Division, the National Safety Council Alcohol, Drugs and Impairment Division, the Council of Forensic Science Educators, the International Alliance of Clinical and Forensic Toxicologists, the Society of Forensic Toxicologists, and is on the board of directors for the Northeastern Association of Forensic Scientists.

Anisha is regularly asked to speak and provide trainings to others in her field and to our partners in impaired driving prevention and enforcement. She has given lectures to the forensic science community, law enforcement, lawyers, students and more. She has consulted on numerous cases to help explain testing results, what they mean, and what the implications are for the case. She is a leader in the toxicology field and an enormous asset to the State of Vermont. Without her work in the lab, Vermont would not have a robust and reliable blood drug testing program. Her knowledge and expertise regarding drug impairment make her a critical asset to successful prosecution of Driving Under the Influence of Drugs cases.

The Impaired Driving Prevention and Enforcement Award is presented to Anisha Paul in recognition of her efforts and commitment in supporting the enforcement and prosecution of Vermont's impaired driving offenses in Vermont.

The Drug Recognition Expert Award

This award is presented to an individual member of the DRE Program who has demonstrated a commitment to education, enforcement, and community engagement to help decrease incidents of impaired driving.

The winner is: Officer Bradley Miller, Williston Police Department

Officer Bradley “Brad” Miller became a certified Drug Recognition Expert in 2017. Over the span of six years Brad has completed over 130 drug impairment evaluations and has completed more than twenty in 2023. Officer Miller has also arrested hundreds of alcohol impaired drivers over his law enforcement career.

In 2019, Officer Miller completed the Standardized Field Sobriety Testing Instructor Course and has become active in teaching SFST classes at the Vermont Police Academy.

In 2023, Officer Miller completed the Drug Recognition Expert Instructor Course in the State of Maine and attended the VT field certification class to assist with new DRE students.

During Officer Miller’s recent training in Maine, the coordinator praised him in a letter by stating, “Brad was very impressive during the DRE Instructor school, and he received high praise from our DRE candidates’ daily critiques during the classroom portion. Brad was truly exceptional at the field certifications. His experience, knowledge and encouraging coaching style were readily apparent and were instrumental for the 11 DRE candidates to finish their field certifications. All 11 passed their Final Knowledge Exam and are now certified. You should be very proud of Brad; he was a shining example of the high-quality Drug Evaluation and Classification program that the State of Vermont is very well known for.”

Officer Miller’s drug evaluations are consistently thorough and timely. In addition, his duties as an instructor include reviewing approximately two enforcement evaluations per week.

Officer Miller has recently worked closely with Vermont’s Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutors to increase efficacy of DRE Direct Examination. He is often reaching out to others to sharpen his own testimony and case preparation to improve his skills.

Officer Miller has shown dedication, passion, and commitment to Education, Enforcement and Community Engagement to help decrease the incidence of Impaired Driving.

The Drug Recognition Expert Award is presented to Officer Bradley Miller in recognition of his efforts and commitment to serving as a Drug Recognition Expert in Vermont. Through these efforts, he has helped make our roadways safer for all users.

The Operations and Safety Bureau Directors' Award

This award is presented to an individual for their distinguished work in the field of Highway Safety within the Operations and Safety Bureau at the Agency of Transportation. Individuals are recognized for their sustained, outstanding leadership in endeavors that significantly improve highway safety.

The winner is: Kristin Driscoll, Vermont Agency of Transportation.

Kristin has worked for the Agency since 2011, working in Utilities and Permits, Municipal Assistance, and District 7 before joining the Traffic Operations team in 2019.

Kristin came to Traffic Operations as a working supervisor, serving as Northeast Region Traffic Investigator and overseeing the Traffic Investigators for the other regions. Since that time, she has quickly progressed to serving as Traffic Operations Manager, overseeing not only the team of Traffic Investigators but also the Official Business Directional Sign program and inventory program.

Nearly all the work Kristin and her team do is directly tied to improving or maintaining safety on highways across Vermont. In addition to leading her team while they review, upgrade and revise sign layouts throughout the State, some of the critical safety-related tasks Kristin has worked on include:

- Leading efforts to standardize and improve signage at locations where trails cross state highways, providing consistent signage to warn drivers.
- Helping develop parameters for review locations where ATV use of highways is being considered, and reviewing locations throughout the State for safety of all users; and
- Conducting and reviewing engineering studies to present to the Traffic Committee, focusing on recommending appropriate speed limits and no parking zones

Kristin also draws on her past Agency experience, particularly her work in Utilities and Permits and as a District Technician, to help navigate complex issues that touch multiple parts of our Agency.

Kristin's tireless efforts to provide clear, effective, and safe traffic control devices consistently and appropriately throughout the State help make roads safer for all users across Vermont.

The Highway Safety Directors' Award is presented to Kristin Driscoll in recognition of her dedication and commitment to highway safety through her distinguished work efforts within the Operations and Safety Bureau.

The Ruby Rainault Occupant Protection Award

This award is presented to an individual who has demonstrated commitment to education, enforcement, and community engagement in helping to increase occupant protection use. Late Deputy Sheriff Ruby Rainault was killed in the line of duty in 2003 while on patrol conducting Occupant Protection safety checks. This award is given in her name to an individual who best emulates Ruby's willingness to "do what it takes to help."

The winner is: Deputy Laurna Noyes, Essex County Sheriff's Department

Deputy Laurna Noyes worked with Ruby in her early years as an officer. The day of Ruby's crash, Laurna was supposed to be with Ruby, but fate had other plans.

Laurna had a passion for working with children and a dedication to parent and child education.

In Sheriff Colby's nomination, he wrote, "When I became Sheriff in 2011, I hired Laurna as a Deputy and Office Administrator. At my first meeting with the deputies, I asked what they wanted to see for the department. Laurna said she wanted to see us become more active with the schools and actively engaged in highway education. Soon after hiring Laurna, she wanted to be trained and certified as a seat belt technician, a role she fulfilled for us for many years. Laurna always participated in the education activities we hosted through the years under the highway safety grant programs. We traveled to all of the elementary and high schools within the county, several fairs, and the Moose Festival with the rollover cart. Laurna also traveled with the driving simulator we sponsored for educating operators on the dangers of texting and driving, as well as DUI education.

Laurna could always be found handing out stickers, keychains, pens, coloring books and other highway safety materials at these events. These were all items Laurna thoughtfully purchased each year for these events. I still have an incredibly yellow Buckle Up t-shirt purchased by Laurna for all the officers to wear while we were running the events at the fairs.

Laurna was not only active with the kids; she also assisted in writing and managing grants for the department. Laurna worked diligently to ensure the grants were in compliance and she maintained all of the records so that we could continue with patrols for Occupant Protection, DUI, and Distracted Driving.

Laurna's passion for the job was such that she kept working through several years of battling cancer. She had my daily recognition and appreciation for her service. I believe it would be a wonderful tribute to her to receive this recognition."

VTrans strongly agrees with Sheriff Colby's nomination of Laurna for this award. There is no way to quantify just how many lives Laurna saved throughout her nearly 20 years of highway safety education and enforcement support.

Sadly, Lurna passed away on August 23rd of this year after a long and courageous battle with cancer. Lurna shared the compassion for others, the care for families, and the dedication to make highways safer that Ruby embodied. Lurna will be missed.

The Ruby Rainault Occupant Protection Award is presented to Deputy Lurna Noyes in recognition of her commitment to highway safety through education of the state's occupant protection laws. Lurna's efforts helped to save lives.

The Sergeant Michael Johnson Life Saver Award

Sergeant Michael Johnson was a driven and natural leader. He did not lead by dictating rhetoric; he led by doing. He led by example. He would never ask his Troopers to do anything that he would not do himself or that he had not already done. Sergeant Johnson was able to use his motivational skills to enhance the abilities of the Troopers that served with him. He possessed the ability to raise people's expectations of themselves and taught them to fulfill those expectations.

Sgt. Michael Johnson was a 16-year veteran of the Vermont State Police when he tragically lost his life in the line of duty on June 15, 2003. Sgt. Johnson was deploying spike strips in an attempt to stop a suspect fleeing from Troopers in a motor vehicle pursuit when the suspect struck Sgt. Johnson with their vehicle and killed him. This award is presented to an individual who, like SGT. Johnson, has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to highway safety.

The winner is: Trooper Christopher Hein, Vermont State Police

Trooper Chris Hein joined the Vermont State Police in January 2016. His duty assignment since 2020 has been with the Vermont State Police Special Operations Unit where he has served as a full-time crash reconstructionist. During this period, Trooper Hein has investigated over 70 major collisions involving serious bodily injury and/or death throughout the State of Vermont. He has responded to – and has been a secondary investigator in – significantly more.

Trooper Hein has worked tirelessly to take a deep dive into the root causes of Vermont's crashes. Once these underlying factors are understood, Trooper Hein works closely with surviving family members so that they can understand the story behind the sudden loss of their loved ones, helping to bring them peace.

Trooper Hein was instrumental in piecing together a complicated fatal crash scene this past summer that involved a habitual motor vehicle offender who crashed into – and killed – a motorcyclist. The level of care, attention, and capability that Trooper Hein brought to this investigation directly resulted in the offender being sentenced to 7 to 25 years in prison. There is no doubt that his efforts that led to this resolution has saved future lives.

Trooper Hein has used his expansive knowledge, skills, and abilities to inform legislation related to the regulation of electric bicycles, mandated helmet use, and, most recently, an exhaustive review to directly improve Vermont's hands-free cell phone law.

Trooper Hein leads from the front during his continued proactive patrols and his Vermont Police Academy instruction of both new and in-service police officers in the field of crash investigation. Whether his students are police officers in training or veteran officers seeking an advanced investigation course, Trooper Hein sees the incredible value in ensuring a good foundation in Vermont's officer's abilities to fully investigate even the most basic crashes.

Despite Trooper Hein's immense caseload, he can often be heard on the radio and seen roadside engaging operators during his hundreds of motor vehicle stops every year. He continues to commit himself to seeking out and stopping the violation before a tragedy occurs.

Trooper Hein has expressed that correctly identifying dangerous behavior early – whether that be during motor vehicle enforcement or at the scene of a “minor” collision – directly contributes to a safer Vermont highway system tomorrow.

The Sergeant Michael Johnson Life Saver Award is presented to Trooper Christopher Hein in recognition of his tireless dedication and commitment to making Vermont's roadways safer for all users.

The Highway Safety Achievement Award

This award is presented to an individual who has shown a lifetime of exemplary work and passion for highway safety, while demonstrating teamwork and strong support for their fellow professionals and community over the course of their career.

The winner is: Ted Minall

Ted Minall's service to the State of Vermont spans over 20 years. However, we would be remiss if we did not mention his service to the United States Marine Corp with combat service in the Republic of Vietnam.

Ted worked for the New York City Police Department for 24 years, including four years as a lieutenant in the NYPD Narcotics Division. After Ted's retirement from the NYPD, he became the Chief of Police in the City of Vergennes, Vermont, where he was an avid supporter of highway safety initiatives.

Ted was one of the founders of Vermont's Drug Evaluation and Classification Program. Ted, along with Lieutenant William O'Leary of the Vermont State Police, began the long process of getting Vermont recognized as a Drug Evaluation and Classification (DEC) state. After much effort and work, Vermont trained its first Drug Recognition Experts in 2005, and in 2006 Vermont was recognized as the 43rd DEC state.

Ted has continued to support and provide oversight for the Vermont DEC program and was Vermont's first State Coordinator, serving in that role for 9 years.

Ted's support for the Drug Evaluation and Classification Program did not stop with Vermont, and Ted was instrumental in the establishment of the DEC program in Connecticut, as well as the rebirth of the program in Rhode Island.

In 2011, Ted accepted the position of Chief of Vermont's Highway Safety Office (formerly known as the Governor's Highway Safety Program) and remained in that position until 2014. Ted's knowledge and expertise is still being used today in our Highway Safety Office practices, as the current Administrator worked with him during his state service.

Ted's article "Welcome to Driving Without Thinking" on the dangers of Distracted Driving was published in 2013 by [The Huffington Post](#)

Ted was a founding member of the Vermont Highway Safety Alliance and has participated on the board for over a decade.

In 2020 Ted received the International Association of Chiefs of Police Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) Ambassador Award at the annual International Association of Chiefs of Police Drugs, Alcohol, and Impaired Driving 2020 virtual conference. The DRE Ambassador is awarded to an

individual who is not a certified DRE, yet has made significant contributions to the Drug Evaluation and Classification Program.

Ted continues to be instrumental in the growth of the Drug Evaluation and Classification Program in Vermont and still serves on the Board of Directors.

Ted has served twice as the Regional Law Enforcement Liaison for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration from 2004-2011 and again from 2014-2023.

We thank Ted for a Lifetime of commitment to Highway Safety in Vermont.

The Highway Safety Achievement Award is presented to Ted Minall in recognition of his career dedicated to highway safety priorities, and his tireless dedication and commitment to making Vermont's roadways safer for all users.

Vermont Highway Safety Alliance Awards

The VHSA is a coalition of stakeholders, both private and public, who focuses on highway safety initiatives. Each year, the VHSA recognizes highway safety partners who have dedicated their time, resources, and expertise to highway safety, and who have been key stakeholders in the efforts to reduce crashes, serious injuries, and fatalities. It is due in part to the collaboration and contributions of individuals such as these that Vermont has made strides over the past ten years in improving safety on our roads. The tremendous efforts of these individuals are greatly appreciated, and Vermont is fortunate to have them as highway safety advocates.

VHSA Crossing Guard Award:

This award recognizes a guard's skill, responsibility, friendliness, reliability, dedication, and service as a vital part of their school communities.

The winner of the VHSA Crossing Guard Award is: Wayne King, Rutland City Public Schools

Wayne King was a Math teacher for 30 years in two different schools before his retirement in 1997. Since his retirement, Wayne has been working as a Crossing Guard with Rutland Public Schools.

Wayne worked for the Emergency Management Department with the City of Rutland as a crossing guard for Christ the King School in Rutland prior to combining crossing guard services.

Wayne has a special and important role in the lives of children who walk or bike to school. He helps keep children safe, while teaching them the importance of safely crossing the street. Crossing guards are often part of the first interactive experience that children have in the school day, and the last before returning home. It is an important role, and it leads to parents and kids alike feeling comfortable and secure. Wayne flourishes in this role.

Wayne's wife Marilyn came on board as a Crossing Guard in 2000. They make a great team covering multiple corners and neighborhoods over the years. They both love the children, parents, and teachers that they interact with on a daily basis. They both hardly miss a day of work.

Wayne is a very dedicated employee whom his Rutland community cherishes. Vermont is fortunate to have crossing guards such as Wayne who give so much of their time and energy to help keep Vermont children safe on the way to and from school.

VHSA Highway Safety Engineering Award.

This award recognizes a team or individual's contributions to communities in an exceptional way by improving infrastructure and engineering as it relates to highway safety in Vermont.

The winner is: Jennifer Conley, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, (VHB), Inc.

Jennifer "Jenn" Conley graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. She is a Civil Engineer, certified Professional Engineer and Professional Transportation Operations Engineer.

In addition to her experience at VHB, Jenn has worked as a traffic and safety engineer throughout her career, and has been President and owner of her own firm, Conley Associates, for 15 years. Jenn and her team at VHB work on a variety of transportation projects, from transportation master plans for public and private clients, to bicycle and pedestrian mobility planning, to the preparation of traffic impact studies and engineering design for traffic control devices and signalization.

Jenn is an active member of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), serving as the Vermont Chapter President and Treasurer for ITE's New England Section. She is also engaged with the Women's Transportation Seminar and serves on the Advisory Board for the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

Jenn has been working with the Operations and Safety Bureau at AOT for several years on projects, guiding the agency in initiatives straddling both the behavioral and engineering worlds of highway safety. She is an expert at bringing together partners to develop meaningful, results-oriented safety plans. Her expansive knowledge of data, data systems and traffic safety at the National, Regional, and Local Levels make her an invaluable resource.

Jenn was instrumental in organizing the update of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan by bringing together the many stakeholders needed to analyze crash data and identify strategies and priorities for highway safety initiatives for the next five years.

Jenn worked on an updated Work Zone Safety and Mobility document for AOT, which helps ensure Vermont work zones are designed and constructed for optimal safety, and more recently has taken a key role in the Agency's Highway Safety Improvement Program, a core Federal-Aid program that makes data-driven safety improvements to highways throughout Vermont.

Jenn and her team developed a new operations manual for the Highway Safety Improvement Plan. After completion and approval of the manual, Jenn and the VHB team transitioned into the role of implementing that Manual, acting as the Agency's Highway Safety Improvement Program Engineer. This work has included data analysis for project and countermeasure identification, financial tracking of projects, and setting up a new local granting program to help municipalities make safety improvements on local roads.