

# Hunterdon's HART pedestrian and bike safety campaign is saluted



HART Commuter Information Services is to receive honorable mention for the success of its "Let Yourself Be Seen"/Hazte Visible" pedestrian bicycle safety campaign.

The award will be presented by the Center for Advanced Infrastructure and Transportation (CAIT) at CAIT's Annual Traffic Safety Forum to be held on Oct. 19, at Mercer County Community College.

The Traffic Safety Excellence Award is an annual recognition of innovative and effective traffic safety campaigns across the "4Es" of traffic safety: Engineering, Enforcement, Education, and EMS. The awards, presented at CAIT's Annual Safety Forum, began five years ago as an instrument to showcase best practices and inspire professionals from all areas of traffic safety. The Traffic Safety Excellence Awards are open to both public and private entities.

HART's "Let Yourself Be Seen" campaign emphasizes the importance of pedestrians and bicyclists being seen by motorists by encouraging the wearing of reflective items, using lights and following the rules of the road, such as crossing at marked crosswalks or riding with the flow of traffic.

High risk groups, particularly those who rely on bicycling and walking as their primary mode of transportation and those who bike or walk early in the morning or late at night have been the target audience. "We've reached out to everyone from employees walking or bicycling home after a late shift, to pet owners walking their dog, to joggers

who are out in the early morning hours," says Tara Shepherd, executive director.

"Messaging has been offered in both English and Spanish to reach the broadest audience," says Shepherd. HART conducted workshops at local community centers, churches, through social services agencies and medical facilities, as well as engaging in a great deal of "one on one" interaction with bicyclists and pedestrians on the street. Approximately 1,400 individuals were educated over the past year.

Reflective items, such as vests, wristbands, belts and reflective tape for bicycles were distributed. "The importance of wearing reflective items cannot be over emphasized, says Shepherd. "According to the Federal Highway Administration, the use of reflectors has been shown to increase the visibility of pedestrians by a factor of five," she notes. "This is particularly important because over 60% of bicycle and pedestrian accidents occur in the dark," she adds. "Our goal is to give people the information they need to be safe when bicycling and walking," says Shepherd.

HART has also worked with local law enforcement to raise motorist awareness of New Jersey's "Stop for Pedestrians" crosswalk law and to increase awareness of the dangers of distracted driving. "Pedestrian and bicycle safety is about educating the motorists as much as it is about informing walkers and cyclists," notes Shepherd.

Approximately 27% of all traffic fatalities in New Jersey involve a pedestrian or bicycle fatality (National Highway Traffic Safety, 2009). In Hunterdon, bicycle and pedestrian crash "hot spots" include the Flemington/Raritan area (39%), Readington

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Township/Whitehouse-16%), Clinton Township (7%), and Lambertville (5%) (Percentage of All Pedestrian Crashes, Hunterdon County).

The "Let Yourself be Seen" program was funded through a \$20,000 grant from the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety. Based upon the success of the program this past year, the grant has been renewed to HART for 2011-12.

For more information, visit [harttma.com](http://harttma.com).