

RTZ Introductory Remarks for D Hersman
5 minutes

Thank you Deputy Administrator Jefferson.

I want to start by sharing a personal story.

BE SAFER SLIDE

CRASHED CAR SLIDE

WHY ARE WE HERE

WHY NOW

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE

How many of you think ZERO is possible?

I would offer that it is not impossible, it just hasn't been done yet.

When Kennedy said we would send a man to the moon in a decade, that sounded impossible, but we did it -- 50 years ago!!

Two decades ago the aviation industry set a goal to reduce fatal crashes by 80%.

Today in the US we go for years with ZERO fatalities in commercial aviation.

Some said it was impossible, but it just hadn't been done.

At the National Safety Council, our 13,500 member companies all have a goal when it comes to workplace fatalities. I bet you can guess what it is. Zero – because ZERO is the only acceptable number - and many thousands of companies achieve that goal regularly.

WHY ARE WE HERE?

Rosalyn Carter said, Good leaders take people where they want to go, but great leaders take people where they need to go.

Thank you to the leadership that made this happen. The great leadership is not only embodied in the people at the podium but it has been all of you, who have been working in the trenches to address these issues for years.

What needs to change is the way we work together. If we are going to get to ZERO it is going to take some GREAT LEADERSHIP in the form of commitment, concessions and cooperation from each of us in this room.

I will start by making a commitment of my own. The National Safety Council is dedicating \$1 million over the next three years to the Road to Zero... To manage the Coalition, support all of your efforts and administer the NHTSA grant money. This ensures that 100% of the grants will be made available to others in this room to get to ZERO.

We throw around the term leadership a lot – but real leadership, TRANSFORMATIVE leadership requires courage, it requires innovation, and vision. It means doing things differently, challenging the status quo and making the changes that we know need to be made.

WHY NOW? THIS IS EASY!

The four leaders before me have laid it out – it is clear as day – we are in the middle of a public health crisis and it isn't Zika.

Other countries have set their sights on ZERO. Many States and Cities here in the US have done the same. But collectively we have all been too passive in accepting the death toll on our nation's roadways.

I have been working in this field with so many of you for decades, why haven't we been more successful? The US is lagging behind our counterparts across the world. According to the CDC almost 20,000 lives could be saved each year if US crash deaths equaled the average rate of 19 other high-income countries.

We CAN do better, we just haven't done it yet.

Starting today, we will.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

ZERO – is almost unimaginable – today we lose 100 more – look around you, that is nearly everyone in this room on a today, tomorrow, and every day.

ZERO - is A BIG NUMBER – it IS overwhelming and it may seem impossible, but I offer that it just hasn't been done yet.

I believe ZERO is possible, just like in aviation and in workplaces...it is possible for each one of us, each one of our organizations to make a difference. You don't have to own the big number, you just have to own your number.

So what's your number?

Stand up if you are working on technology to stop impaired drivers from ever getting behind the wheel. Your number is 10,000 - 10,000 lives.

(JT)

Stand up if your work is committed to saving our teen drivers. That is a few thousand more.

(Anita, Elizabeth)

Who is addressing attentive driving? Your number is at least 3000.

What about the 50% of our fatalities who are unbelted? We must have state laws that require seat belt use in all seating positions!

Stand up if you are worried about speed limits – in cities and on open interstates – your number is made up of the 30% of all fatalities that involve speed.

And who's focused on our most vulnerable road users – pedestrians and cyclists who are dying because we aren't sharing the road safely? Your number is growing at an alarming rate.

Tick Tock -

If you are working on saving lives on our roadways – stand up – each of you plays an important role.

Look around – left – right – front – back

Give each other a fist bump, a high five.

The power of the Road to Zero Coalition is that you don't have to get to ZERO all by yourself. If we each solve for our own number, and we commit to supporting the work of others, we can get to ZERO together.

For years we have partnered where we can, and we have worked hard. But today we are committing to WORK TOGETHER and if we do that, ZERO is not only possible it's probable.