

Local

2015 bad year for local traffic

Sixteen killed in crashes

✎ By Steve Vied Messenger-Inquirer

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One glaring fact stands out in the 2015 Owensboro-Daviess County traffic collision report -- 16 fatalities, more than twice the number of fatalities in the previous year.

"It wasn't a good year," said Jennifer Alvey, a transportation planner with Green River Area Development District.

The annual "crash report" was presented during Tuesday's meeting of the Owensboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) meeting at City Hall. It includes an exhaustive listing of where all traffic accidents occurred in the city and county throughout 2015, along with data on wrecks involving bicycles, pedestrians, animals and trains.

Sixteen is a high number for traffic fatalities in Daviess County. Typically, the number is less than 10, Alvey said. In 2014, there were only seven traffic fatalities in Daviess County.

The 2015 total includes a triple-fatality accident in late August on Kentucky 56 near Sorgho when a sport utility vehicle left the road on the northbound shoulder and crashed, ejecting four children, ages 7, 10, 12 and 13, none of whom were wearing seat belts. The three older children were killed, and the 7-year-old was seriously injured. Four other passengers in the vehicle, including the driver, were wearing seat belts and were not injured.

The 2015 total also includes a double-fatality on U.S. 60 West. Single-fatality accidents occurred at Breckenridge Street and East 17th Street; Frederica Street and Southtown Boulevard; the 1000 block of Kentucky 140 West; Kentucky 81 and Kentucky 1207; the 10600 block of Lanham Road; Locust Street and West Fourth Street; Martin Way and West Second Street; the 1800 block of Reid Road, the 1700 block of U.S. 231; the 10600 block of U.S. 60 East, the 7000 block of U.S. 60 West and the 6800 block of the William H. Natcher Parkway.

The No. 1 collision location in the city and county in 2015 was not even a street or road. It was the parking lot at Wesleyan Park Plaza, with 61 wrecks, five more than the previous year, when that location was also at the top of the list. The second spot on the list was taken by Kentucky 54 and the signal at the eastbound off-ramp of U.S. 60. That highly congested location was the site of 53 crashes, up nine from the previous year. That spot was No. 2 on the 2014 list.

Coming in at No. 3 on the crash list was the parking areas of the Owensboro Regional Health Hospital, with 50 wrecks. The Kroger parking lot on Starlite Drive and Frederica Street at Southtown Boulevard tied for fourth-place on the report. Each location had 44 wrecks.

Almost half (45 percent) of all collisions in 2015 happened in parking lots.

Of the top 25 collision locations, Frederica Street was listed as the primary road in 13. Nine of the top 25 spots were parking lots. Both Wal-Marts are on the list, as were Towne Square Mall and Towne Square North.

Travel on Frederica Street from Time Drive to Southtown Boulevard was particularly hazardous, with 116 wrecks reported. Even more wrecks occurred on the Kentucky 54 stretch between Byers Avenue/Ragu Drive and Fairview Drive, where 135 collisions were reported.

Traffic accident totals were compiled from reports submitted by the Owensboro Police Department, Daviess County Sheriff's Department and the Kentucky State Police. There were 24 accidents involving collisions with bicycles, 19 involving collisions with pedestrians and 72 with animals, led by 14 on the Natcher Parkway. Three vehicles collided with trains.

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Top 5 crash sites in 2015

- No. 1. Wesleyan Park Plaza parking lot, 61 accidents
- No. 2. Kentucky 54-U.S. 60 signal at the eastbound off ramp, 53 accidents
- No. 3. Owensboro Regional Health Hospital parking lot, 50 accidents
- No. 4 (tie). Kroger (Starlite Drive) parking lot, 44 accidents
- No. 4 (tie). Frederica Street and Southtown Boulevard, 44 accidents