



Driving instructors and officers discuss technique on the course at the Risk Management Services Driver Training Seminar in Statesville.
Photo credit: Najuma Thorpe for the North Carolina League of Municipalities

Making Every Day a Training Day

Training's not like a pill you take then you're good. It's a complicated issue that needs to be reminded of over and over again throughout the year," Eric Peterson, Hillsborough town manager, said.

Despite his 20 years of racecar driving experience, Peterson has trained officers in Hillsborough to adopt a slower-is-faster mentality and strives for officers to have at least 5 minutes of training daily. The training can range from watching videos and sharing helpful articles to a check-ride system where supervisors ride with officers, said Police Chief Duane Hampton.

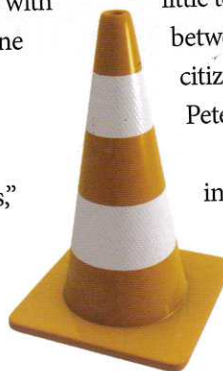
"We stress in training that in our profession, nobody is going to make us safer than us," Hampton said. "Someone has to step up, and we have to change our culture – our

bad habits – and we have to put in place the tools and teamwork to make everyone safer."

According to data acquisition monitors, similar to those used in Indy and NASCAR teams, drivers who go into a corner slower and have the car under control when they come out, not only have a bigger margin for error when they come out of the corner, but they're actually faster.

"In racing, there's very little penalty for mistake, but if you're a police officer and you go into corner a little too fast, that's the difference between hitting a curb, light pole, or citizen, and not having a collision," Peterson said.

It's that kind of risk that inspired the League to work with Peterson and others to develop the Slower is Faster training video in 2012. The



video emphasizes the importance of looking ahead, braking early and making good decisions. In May several leaders from police departments across the state were invited to a two-day training in Statesville.

It was the second annual training of its kind, consisting of one day of classroom instruction followed by a second day of in-car instruction where chiefs and other leaders learned techniques they can bring home to their officers.

Roxboro Sergeant James Cash attended the training and said he plans on sharing the information with not only his fellow officers but his family and friends, too.

"I feel that everyone deserves the right to share in this knowledge and has the right to be safe and act in a safer manner when operating a 2000-plus pound vehicle or motorcycle," Cash said.

The training goes beyond the basic driving around cones to pushing officers to think about the best way to handle a situation with trainers asking questions like "Are you looking above the hood of the car," "Is this an emergency situation," and "Are you braking as early as you should be?"

"Breaking early and looking ahead are in the basic curriculum for law enforcement training, but what we've heard for 15 years is that nobody is talking to students about basic driving. They're just making them drive through the cones," Peterson said. "A lot of

"This was an awesome course! Amazing that some of the stuff we were taught was never taught in Basic Law Enforcement Training!"

Kevin Dodson, Siler City Police Department

times it may be mentioned, but in 40 hours of Basic Law Enforcement Training, there's so much being thrown at them that it's like drinking from a fire hose."

He said the best learning opportunity of the training is when students are in the passenger seat while an instructor drives. This new perspective shows the officer where they should be looking and how early they should be braking.

The training also consists of decision stations where officers have to make a quick judgment call on the best way to proceed. Officers are encouraged to use situational awareness and ask themselves "Is it worth the pursuit," and "Is it worth driving fast?"

"We're not that different from other people driving cars. I think there are moments officers have in the car when they did something, and they're like 'I didn't even realize I was doing that,'" Hampton said. "We've taped up windshields so officers were forced to keep their vision up. It's amazing when the officers come out of the car and say 'I had no idea how much I don't get my eyes up off the hood of the car when I'm driving in a stressful situation.'"

It's those stressful situations that cause increased heart rate, narrowed vision, impaired judgment,



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Member Relations

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found in other states. The League and the School of Government are committed to providing local government officials with education, training, publications, research and networking opportunities. It's important for elected officials, as well as municipal staff, to seek educational opportunities and new ideas with people outside your community. Learning how other municipalities deal with similar issues can help address issues in your community. Visit www.nclm.org to learn about the many opportunities for education, training and networking through the League.

10. **Be Ethical.** North Carolina law (G.S. 160A-87) requires all members of local government governing boards to receive a minimum of two hours of ethics education within 12 months after initial election or appointment to office and again within 12 months after each subsequent election or appointment. The obligation to take the training and obtain verification of compliance with the law rests with the governing board member. **SC**

Talk of our Towns

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Through the program, participants gained insight into North Carolina's strengths and challenges and developed their own priorities for ways they can improve and empower their communities and the state as a whole. **SC**

Career Opportunities *continued from page 33*

dependent upon experience. Hiring rate: \$24,399 Minimum-\$25,619; Mid-Point- \$30,500. Job applications open until filled. Please submit résumé and/or completed application to: Town of Valdese, PO Box 339, Valdese NC 28690. Call Bryan Duckworth @ 828-879-2128 for further details.

OTHER

Human Resources Director – Concord.

Rapidly growing city adjacent to Charlotte with approximately 82,000 residents and 900+ coworkers seeks professional to oversee its full service human resource management function. Job requires overall management responsibility for recruitment, classification and compensation, benefits, wellness (including employee clinic), training, employee relations, and personnel records processing and maintenance functions. Successful applicant will become a key member of the city's management team and will be asked to provide consulting services to other department heads and coworkers to assist in achieving the City's mission through knowledge and promotion of its core values. Requires undergraduate degree in related field with a master's degree preferred, and extensive professional experience in public sector human resources management. The position offers a competitive compensation package that is negotiable depending upon experience and other qualifications. To apply, please visit concordnc.gov or concordcareers.silkroad.com. Employment applications must be submitted by midnight on Friday, August 22, 2014. The City of Concord is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Director of Community Development – The Town of Duck, a coastal community on the northern Outer Banks of North Carolina, is currently seeking candidates for the position of Director of Community Development. Join our dedicated team as a key staff member committed to maintaining high professional standards in support of the Town of Duck's 2022 Vision, <http://www.townofduck.com/2022-vision/>. The Director of Community Development is a leadership position serving in an advisory capacity to the Town Manager on special projects including the town's shoreline management initiative, development of town facilities including the town's park and boardwalk, the Town of Duck Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan, and general town policies and programs. This position is also responsible for all aspects of the town's planning and development activities including zoning administration, building inspections, coastal management, and the National Flood Insurance Program. Minimum requirements are a bachelor's degree in planning supplemented by at least five years progressively responsible experience. A Master's Degree and AICP designation are preferred. The desired candidate will possess strong analytical, oral and written communication skills. Consistency, fairness, and flexibility are also essential traits for this position. Salary DOQ, range \$67,958 - \$86,647 - \$110,475, hiring range is anticipated to be at the salary mid-point. If you would like to invest your community development skills to help preserve and guide a town with a very special sense of place, please submit your resume and letter of interest to Christopher Layton, Town Manager, Town of Duck, PO Box 8369, 1200 Duck Road, Duck, NC 27949. Position is open until filled; however, initial review of applications is expected to begin in early August. **SC**

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slower reactions times and auditory exclusion. According to Hampton, the best way to combat the negative effects of adrenaline in stressful situations is to train yourself on a daily basis to react and drive more calmly.

"What we're pushing is not just going out and driving on a course – that's a piece of it for maybe agencies that can do it – but we're pushing the agencies that don't have the facilities to do things like have conversations and watch videos of each others driving," Hampton said. "If we can build strong daily driving habits, it's going to transfer when we hit stressful situations."

Hampton and Peterson agree making police driver training a priority is a must-do from a financial and human safety standpoint. According to Hampton, more officers are dying from preventable accidents than gunshot wounds.

"We're losing officers that we shouldn't, and it's up to us to start making the changes," Hampton said. "I think we're really starting to head in the right direction." **SC**