



# MTEA NEWS

## Electric Cars in the Driver's Ed Program?

by: Lon Smith, Kalispell

Some of the ways we teach BTW may be changing when considering the emergence of electric vehicles (EV's) due to their regenerative braking feature. Regenerative Braking (RB) slows the vehicle down when the acceleration pedal is released lessening or even eliminating the need for braking. The electric car "regenerates" its battery as the propulsion of the wheels turn to charge the battery. This is similar to an alternator in a gas powered vehicle. This process is like driving an electric golf cart.

When the driver of the EV gets used to the RB feature they learn to drive with very little braking. Student or novice drivers learning to drive with EV's may have a difficult time transitioning to a traditional automobile due to the fact that they would be much less used to rotating their right foot from the gas to the brake pedal. The absence of braking in the EV and then switching to using brakes in a gas powered car obviously creates issues.

It is unlikely that school districts would invest in an electric vehicle. Charging issues in rural areas alone would be a major concern. The ability for an EV to sustain a charge throughout a rural drive that may consist of three or more hours would certainly pose problems. Lithium battery issues in areas that experience freezing temperatures also create complications. As EV's become more popular driver education programs and school districts will have to come up with a viable option to combat these problems.

One solution would be to obtain a loaner electric vehicle that could double as a promotion for the car dealer and the EV company. This could give students the chance to experience driving an EV and give those that learned on this type of vehicle the opportunity to continue driving in the automobile they are used to and be tested in a comfortable setting. To combat low battery problems, schools

could rotate the EV with other vehicles, which would create more charging opportunities.

Novice drivers that have learned to drive primarily in an EV should learn and be proficient in a gas powered car as well. The vast majority of automobiles on the road, especially in Montana are still gas fueled vehicles. Similar to several years ago when there were more manual transmission cars on the road, students were encouraged to know how to operate both types of transmissions in case they needed to drive the more foreign vehicle in an emergency.

We may be entering an era were students will need to understand how to operate an EV as well as a traditional gas powered vehicle.

## Roundabouts: A Short History and Effectiveness

by: Richard Ishman, Billings

Roundabouts, traffic circles, or rotaries. Wherever you drive in the world, you are going to find these traffic managers safely guiding drivers on their way. According to the US Department of Transportation, roundabouts reduce intersection fatalities by 90%, and a 76% reduction in serious injuries.

Roundabouts are circular intersections where vehicles travel counterclockwise around a central island and often will have multiple lanes of travel. Vehicles entering a roundabout must yield to circulating traffic. Roundabouts allow for higher speed merging and weaving of traffic when compared to traditional, regulated intersections.

History of: The first appearance of a Roundabout or Traffic Circle in the United States occurred in New York city at the very congested intersection of Broadway and West 59<sup>th</sup> Street where the world-famous Columbus Circle was created in 1905. Here in Montana you will find roundabouts in just about every city from Billings, to Bozeman, to Great Falls.

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## MTEA President's Message

### *MTEA President's Message: Riley Ramsey (2023-2024)*



Greetings to you as we drive into this new school year! I hope all of you had a great summer. I am the current president of the MTEA, and I appreciate the opportunity I have to serve alongside some great individuals who help bring Traffic Education to life and who work diligently to provide value to each instructor and school around Montana.

When I started to become increasingly more involved in the MTEA, I realized how much of a community, or family, this organization is to all those looking to better themselves in their profession. I not only appreciate the ways that I can improve my teaching and involvement, but more importantly, the communication from caring individuals has been priceless!

I want to encourage you to reach out to me or the other members of the MTEA Board if you have questions about Traffic Education in general, or want to find out how *you can become more involved*. *It is important for the integrity and future of the program that we bring in new members that have an interest in stepping up their knowledge, in sharing wisdom with one-another, and in taking part in the planning of the details and events that make this organization so valuable to everyone it serves.*

As a final note, and speaking of events, I cannot stress enough what a fabulous resource the annual MTEA Conference in April has proven to be. This past one was no exception! I find something at every workshop, discussion, and speech that happens there, that I can take home to improve my instruction in the classroom and behind the wheel with students. I have to tell you that I have attended several education seminars and conferences, small and large. This MTEA conference for Traffic Education teachers is unlike any of them, in my experience! It truly provides immediate, relevant, inspiring strategies and updates for our expansive scope of duties as instructors. I want to encourage you to begin the discussions now with your fellow instructors, as well as with your administrative team, on how to make it possible for you to attend this event. Many principals and superintendents understand how vital it is for the integrity of the program, that their Driver Education teachers are able to plan to be there, and to travel back with the current knowledge and vision for their students' success. Thank you for the roles you are taking on to help our students learn how to get a license and operate a vehicle safely! Keep your eyes up!

Riley Ramsey

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to Missoula. Many city planners now consider roundabouts a primary method of managing intersection traffic, before installing a signalized interchange because the infrastructure life-cycle of a roundabout is significantly longer than a traditional intersection.

So the next time you are timing your entrance and exit of your local roundabout, give thanks that your local municipality put a little circle in your life and not another intersection with traffic lights. Your commute is faster for it.

### **MTEA Executive Board Meeting**

#### **April 24, 2023 at Billings Conference**

- Minutes, financial reports, and correspondence were reviewed.
- An overview of the conference was provided, including the agenda, meals, awards, door prizes, and silent auction.
- Classification Meeting results were discussed.
- Preliminary planning for the 2024 conference took place.

The next meeting was tentatively planned for early fall. Anyone having items for discussion at any meeting should contact Riley Ramsey, President, or Jim Carroll, Executive Secretary, to be included on the agenda.

### **Retiring from teaching TE?**

If you are retiring from education / TE and have been an active MTEA member, we would like to honor you at the upcoming spring conference. In order to be recognized, please contact Jim Carroll, Executive Secretary, asap at 406-278-7856 so you can get your application form in immediately.

### ***A little humor.....***

One Driver Ed student said to the other, “My teacher talks to himself. Does yours?” “Yes,” the other student replied, “but he doesn’t realize it. He thinks we’re listening.”

Somebody actually complimented me on my driving today. When I came out from the store, they had left a little note. It said, “Parking Fine”.

### **License Plate Project**

Lynn Mason of Corvallis is working on a special project that involves Montana license plates from all 56 counties. If you have an expired plate you would like to share, e-mail him at [lynnm13@gmail.com](mailto:lynnm13@gmail.com) for more information and directions on how to get him the plates he is still looking for.



### **Instructor Class –Have 2023**

by: Kevin Kriskovich, Joliet

Having a group of passionate educators to work with is great. The “avalanche of information” that we begin with seems so daunting that it gets incredibly overwhelming. It is so much more than hopping into a car and telling them about how to drive.

Well over 500 laws related to driving, a state driver manual, a state curriculum, state common core standards, quizzing, testing, reference points, target points, lines of sight (LOS), path of travel (POT), KEYS for parents and students, MTEA, Montana DRIVE, insurance, and so much more are included in the basic instruction courses! It’s like eating a bowl of acronym soup.

Discussions with fellow educators and our instructors helped me realize we need ALL of this information to bring to the children of our society. It is our job to help parents bring their children to the point that they are able to function responsibly on our roads. Reducing crashes and fatalities drives our teaching as we prepare to enable children to take a potential weapon, weighing in at 2000 pounds minimal, into the public safely. Oh, right, we are also cueing them on being responsible pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists. Truly a daunting task to complete in a minimum of 25 days, 60 class hours, and 6 drives! With these dedicated individuals, we are better equipped to accomplish this great task.

**\*\*\* Nelson's News \*\*\***



**Dwight Nelson** MEd/MT Class III Admin Lic  
Traffic Education Director Montana DRIVE Supervisor  
(406) 422-3944 OPI Website: <http://opi.mt.gov>

Dwight Nelson's office sent out an important email on **9/19/2023** along with the following listed forms. **Please search for the original email with the attachments and the MVD memorandum** in your account.

**OPI is in the process of updating the TEDRS homepage which will include the following for easier access:**

1. **Driver Medical Evaluation Form**
2. **Examiner Testing Page**
3. **Application for Class D Driver License/Identification Card**
4. **Traffic Education Permit (TEP) for Restricted Instruction Form**
5. **TEDRS Forms Presentation**

**TEDRS Forms Presentation** created by LeAnn is a TEDRS tutorial Powerpoint for traffic education administrators, instructors, and clerks. Please distribute the tutorial to all who work with TEDRS.

**MEMORANDUM from MVD**



Montana Department of Justice  
Motor Vehicle Division  
302 N. Roberts  
Helena, MT 59620  
[www.dojmt.gov](http://www.dojmt.gov)

The Montana Motor Vehicle Division is dedicated to driving customer service. To this end, the department is implementing new technology to improve customer service for all Montana residents. These changes, which will roll-out on **November 13, 2023**, will have a direct impact on your agency. This memo is to notify you of the specific changes affecting your department. Please share this information with anyone within your agency that would benefit from having this information.

1. Students participating in CDTP can fill out a pre-application on e-Services to register themselves in CARS. Once the pre-application is complete, CARS runs a verification against the CARS system and SSOLV to check if the customer already exists in system. If the SSOLV check passes and no record exists, CARS will automatically create a driver record for the customer and issue a driver's license number. The customer can provide their driver's license and confirmation number to their driving schools to be used for issuing their permits.
2. Driving instructors' CDTP requirements will not change, however, students will now be able to complete a pre-application through MVD e-services. If they have completed this application, they will be assign a confirmation and license number. When completing the paper application for the class, students will be asked to provide the driver license and confirmation number they received during the pre-application process. Providing this information helps to ensure no duplicate records are created.

**“Move Over Montana” Law 2023**

by: Christy Peebles, Kalispell

The “Move-Over Montana” law has been helpful in preventing law enforcement from finding themselves in dangerous situations but it may not go far enough. Jerry Preet, the vice president of Move Over Montana non-profit, says that because this law is not covered in the Montana driver education curriculum, that our students are not learning it at age 15. But in the 2023

Legislative Session, Montana added some new requirements to the code that will make this law even more helpful!

When discussing this law in the Motor Vehicle Law class at MSU Northern, an online course required for the Traffic Education endorsement, we students could clearly see the flaw with the original code. Montana Code 61-8-346 says, *(continued on p. 5)*

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“On approaching and passing a stationary authorized emergency vehicle, law enforcement vehicle, or tow truck that is displaying visible signals of flashing or rotating amber, blue, red, or green lights or any temporary sign advising of an emergency scene or accident ahead, the operator of the approaching vehicle shall cautiously and in a careful manner reduce the vehicle's speed to a reasonably lower and safe speed appropriate to the road and visual conditions or to the temporarily posted speed limit, but to a careful and prudent speed if a temporarily posted speed has not been posted.

Our discussion for class centered around the fact that the word “reasonable” can have a different meaning for different people. If you are traveling at 75 miles per hour on the interstate and you come upon an emergency vehicle that is stopped with other vehicles on the right hand shoulder, most people realize that they are supposed to move to the far left lane as soon as they can and slow down. As our professor asked us, “What is reasonable?” Is 65 reasonable? Is 55 reasonable? Or should we be slowing down to 25 and putting on our hazard lights?

I spoke to Amanda Perry, a former law enforcement officer, who credits this law with most likely saving her life in a pull over incident that went awry. The woman passing the scene slowed down significantly and had time to react when suddenly, the officer found herself in the middle of the traffic lane.

Several bills introduced to the legislature this session dealt with these issues, including HB 470, which passed into law and will require reductions of speeds (not low enough in my opinion). House Bill 374 has passed also and would create new penalties for failing to yield to emergency vehicles or law enforcement using lights or sirens. And HB 320 passed and will add highway maintenance and utility service vehicles to the law.

There is great progress being made and while this law might not be specifically mentioned in the Montana Curriculum, we as driver education teachers know that we need to be making this a priority to teach to our students! Move Over Montana!!!

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### **Outstanding Traffic Education Teacher of the Year Award**

Since 1988, MTEA has routinely honored an outstanding Traffic Education teacher with an annual Teacher of the Year (TOY) award presented at MTEA's spring conference. Any active teacher who has devoted a good part of their teaching career to traffic education is eligible to apply for the award. Teachers can self-nominate or be nominated by someone who is familiar with their traffic education work. The deadline for the nomination form is March 1st, so don't delay!

Download the two-page nomination form from the website at [MTEAOnline.org](http://MTEAOnline.org) (which includes a section that is completed by the candidate). Members of the selection committee will then review the application. For more information, contact Jim Carroll, Executive Secretary.

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### **Outstanding Traffic Education Contributor of the Year Award**

MTEA recognizes companies, organizations, and individuals who make generous contributions of their time, energy, equipment and/or expertise to support and sustain the mission of the MTEA. To nominate a person or business for this honor, download the COY nomination form at [MTEAOnline.org](http://MTEAOnline.org) and submit to MTEA by the March 1st deadline. Members of the selection committee will then review the application.

The Outstanding Contributor/Sustainer of the Year will be recognized at MTEA's spring conference in April. Examples of outstanding contributors or sustainers are MVD driver examiners who have gone out of their way to assist driver education teachers with their CDTP requirements and needs; car dealerships who have loaned vehicles to local school districts for their traffic education programs, and local experts who have visited driver education classes to share their knowledge about various topics such as tire safety, distracted driving, or DUI prevention; as well as business development organizations that have funded materials, equipment and learning tools for your TE program. Contact Jim Carroll, Executive Secretary, with any questions.





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## 2024 Montana Traffic Education Conference April 28-30 - Great Falls Heritage Inn

Look for more detailed conference information in the spring newsletter and on the MTEA website at [www.mteaonline.org](http://www.mteaonline.org).

The 2024 ADTSEA conference will be held July 21-24 in Albany, New York. The conference will provide you with a wealth of information and an opportunity to network with other professionals from across the United States. Remember, MTEA has a scholarship program that will provide up to \$500 per member to offset conference costs. Even if you can't attend, at least consider joining your national organization. For more information, check it out at

**ADTSEA**  
American Driver & Traffic Safety Education Association

[www.adtsea.org](http://www.adtsea.org).