

Good morning everyone and welcome to what promises to be another day in paradise here in beautiful Hilton Head.

Before I begin, please join me in thanking the *Carolinas Chapter of ATSSA* for their extremely generous sponsorship during today's meeting breaks, and for the "welcome banner" in the registration area that welcomes all of us to South Carolina. Thank you.

The good news for y'all is Roger told me I have five minutes to say all I have to say. Five minutes Roger? I tell you what... I'll trade you. I'll take ten minutes here this morning, and then we can spend five minutes on your annual performance review, how does that sound to you?

As for Pete Speer, as Kathi Holst reminded me at this point in her presidency, you are next in the hot seat in exactly 224 days 10 hours and ohhhh 35 or 40 minutes or so, so buckle your seatbelt!

Seriously, as you can see on the big screen we do have a full agenda this morning – so I better get moving.

What you don't see at the top of this list is my presentation of ATSSA's 2006 Strategic Plan. In a few minutes I will show you the vision the Board of Directors has given to the ATSSA staff, as they prepare and budget for yet another year of hard work and commitment to you – the members of ATSSA.

But before I do that, I want to share with you one of my favorite quotes. It's something our friend, Congressman Jim Oberstar from Minnesota said during ATSSA's Opening General Session at Traffic Expo 2000.

Have we "*claimed our rightful place at the transportation policy-making table*" as an association some five-and-a-half years later? You bet we have.

You have delivered as the Congressman challenged each of us to do. As a result, ATSSA today is a well-known, trusted and respected organization on Capitol Hill and

elsewhere – and is the ONLY association whose sole purpose is to Advance Roadway Safety.

You may find this hard to believe, but shortly after Roger came to ATSSA he was told by one of the “old-timers,” I think it was probably Chip Sterndahl, that “ATSSA does not do government relations.”

Well, that old timer, I mean Chip, was right.

Back then, almost eight years ago, ATSSA didn’t do Government Relations. But, we saw the need, hired a government relations director, developed and executed a five-year strategic plan and look where we are today.

The list of elected officials who are friends and allies of ATSSA is long. ATSSA is now synonymous with A-A-R-P, or Triple-A. Names like Mineta, Petri, Oberstar, Inslee, Rahall, and Young are just a few of the elected officials, who have over the years, come to know you and have come to know ATSSA.

I hate to say this right now, but even though the transportation bill is signed and passed, there is no time to rest on our laurels. Believe it or not, the whole “reauthorization” phase that was just completed is already... old news.... – as reauthorization of the transportation bill happens again in 2009. We are in a four-year cycle of going back to square one and starting all over. It’s a continuous process and something each of us has to work on constantly.

There are huge opportunities at stake right now at the state and local levels that Rob will cover in detail here in a few minutes.

It is imperative that each of us makes sure that ATSSA members across the country work with state and local government officials to best utilize the abundant safety dollars available to save lives by making roadways safer.

If you haven't met your local DOT leaders, or your local elected officials, now is the time to introduce yourself and ATSSA.

We could not have accomplished our goals without the help of our volunteers.

I could stand here right now and name names, citing the "usual suspects," as well as all of the new faces who take time off from being with their families, or their jobs, to give their time, money, personal dedication and commitment each and every time they're asked to join ATSSA members on Capitol Hill to meet with their elected officials in both the House and Senate to talk ATSSA... and talk safety.

These ATSSA volunteers, without question, are the ones we should recognize and thank, not only for seeing to it that the transportation bill was passed – but more importantly, for leading the charge to see to it that all components of ATSSA's Roadway Safety Program – in particular – the CORE safety components directly related to what each of us do – were included in the bill **to the tune of five-billion dollars**.

Five billion dollars of new safety roadway safety funding. That's a huge, impressive accomplishment. I stand here today to commend you for your persistence and unwavering dedication to this association and more importantly, your dedication to the motoring public. Without your willingness to volunteer your time for "*the cause*" we would never have a bill so full of safety benefits that are direct business opportunities for everyone in this room.

Thanks to all of our volunteers.

For those who say, "I am just one person how can I possibly help?" I say to you that every person who volunteered in the effort had that same thought. They chose to act and brought home the largest roadway safety bill in our nation's history. Each of your individual efforts is crucial in our next phase of action. We have a national transportation bill and our next phase is to make sure that the safety dollars are spent locally. Remember that all politics are local. Now is the time to be political locally. So please, don't be afraid to get involved.

So here we are. There's a new bill, and with that new bill comes a work plan for ATSSA which starts on January 1, 2006.

Due to the impact that the new bill will have on virtually every road in this country, the Board of Directors reviewed the status of the existing strategic plan at the July meeting and made significant changes to the goals of ATSSA for the next three to five years that tackle the new bill head on. Remember, almost five years ago, the Board of Directors created the strategic plan that drove ATSSA's activities to our recent success.

Let me share with you now our new goals and objectives that will drive us to next successes.

As you can see, the 2006 strategic plan is designed to help our members move into the next phase of reauthorization, while helping to further define and develop new business opportunities at local levels for our members.

There are pages and pages of "strategies and tactics" associated with what I have just shown you. The total work plan took months of staffing, planning and development. Trust me when I say, the ATSSA staff – and each one of us – are in for a very busy year.

If you have a specific question regarding any components or strategies of the plan, or wonder why we are doing what we are doing, please see me, a board member or a staff member and we'll do our best to get you the answers you're looking for.

Now I have the great pleasure of introducing our first featured speaker. I have known this man for a long time. Probably much longer than he would probably care to admit. As a matter of fact, I have known him as long as anyone currently in our industry. I could tell you a great deal about him but in order not to embarrass him, I won't. I will tell you two of the most important things about him. First he is a father and gentleman. Second, has spent his career making South Carolina's roadways safe.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I present my friend Mr. Terry Rawls, Traffic Services Manager with the South Carolina Department of Transportation.