

**Remarks^{©2007} by
ATSSA President
Peter Speer
Sunday, Jan. 28, 2007
ATSSA's 37th Annual Convention
and Traffic Expo
Opening General Session
San Antonio, Texas**

Before we get to our featured guest speaker this morning, there are a few things I'd like to say.

First, and I am really excited about this...

Later on this morning, you're going to witness an "ATSSA 1st."

We're going to give away ten thousand dollars in cash to six lucky winners here in our audience.

Five names will be drawn "right here on this stage" – as Ed Sullivan used to say – each of them for one thousand dollars each.

Then, a sixth name will be drawn for a grand prize of five thousand dollars. You have to be present to win, so don't go anywhere. And since Vanna White isn't available today, we'll be asking President-Elect Henry Ross to come up here to assist in the drawings later on. So please, stick around for that. It promises to be a lot of fun.

Most of you have traveled very far to be here today. We're here together – in the middle of the country as one "force," one group with one purpose – "To Advance Roadway Safety," and trust me – your ATSSA member colleagues appreciate the fact that you have made the long journey this week.

And there are other journeys that we must make during this New Year.

Most of what needs to be done to advance our industry – not to mention our bottom line – takes place in Washington, D.C. at a magical place called "Capitol Hill."

"Left coast" guys like me have made that seemingly endless trip to D.C. many times, along with many of you here this morning. I can tell you from my own personal experiences – I know it's difficult to travel, to be away from your businesses, your families, your home, your routine.

But, to "Advance Roadway Safety" takes a large helping of personal sacrifice, commitment, time and as Tim said earlier – money.

The most important part of coming to Capitol Hill is, of course, meeting with our elected officials to explain to them just who ATSSA is – and then deliver to them a few short, concise messages – what we do, and what we're trying to achieve.

Here's a peek at last September's legislative visits.

(Video Runs)

We've made many friends on Capitol Hill, and we've also made significant impact on key decisions that many of our elected officials make.

Take a look at these pictures of Representative Jim Oberstar during our September visit as we presented to him ATSSA's Low Cost Local Road Safety Solutions book, as well as our two booklets on the Safe Routes to School program.

I'll talk about these two booklets in greater detail later – but first, you can see in these pictures the happiness and gratitude expressed by Mr. Oberstar.

He told us that he was genuinely thankful and appreciative for all of ATSSA's efforts to save lives on our roadways.

And we didn't hear praise just in his office. ATSSA members were thanked repeatedly by numerous elected officials throughout that same day for helping them advance roadway safety programs that not only benefit their own constituents, but benefit roadway users nationwide.

It's no secret that the Highway Safety Improvement funds included in the transportation bill were driven, in large part, by ATSSA members' hard work on "the Hill," as well as back home in their local districts. And guess what? It's time to start thinking – once again – about the reauthorization of the new transportation bill. Yes... here we go again.

As you know, "reauthorization" is a never-ending business, and we cannot – and will not – leave that business to others to take care of for us. We have to be involved. We have to be pro-active and participate in the process to ensure that our voice is heard. If we don't do it, who will take our message to the Hill? Some other association? Some other agency? No – it falls on us.

Reauthorization is a constant fight, and it is one worth fighting.

The centerpiece for ATSSA during the next round of reauthorization will be a goal of "Towards Zero Fatalities" on our nation's roadways.

"Towards Zero Fatalities" was discussed yesterday in several committee meetings, and will be the focus again in April when we travel to Washington, D.C. to visit with our elected officials.

The "Towards Zero Fatality" vision is a worthy one – and believe it or not, it is a vision that ATSSA has unofficially been working on since the beginning days of our association – we just didn't have a fancy name or a phrase to define it.

You see, we have always been – and always will be – seeking new and innovative ways to save lives. “Towards Zero Fatalities” is now part of that vision, and it’s a vision that your Board of Directors has officially embraced and endorsed.

And regarding your Board of Directors, please feel free – at any time – to call or e-mail any one of us with your comments, suggestions, compliments or complaints. And here’s why.

Some of you might know that prior to each ATSSA board meeting, your directors have an assignment. Each of them has to call a couple of ATSSA members to inquire about the key challenges they face in their businesses.

Then they individually report on these calls to the whole board in an exercise called “Heard on the Street,” which is an important – and fun – part of our meetings.

I will be honest – a few of these issues we hear about are quite entertaining. No, we can’t just fire Roger, but thank you for suggesting that... you shall remain nameless.

On a serious note – when we see something that has a potential impact on a group of members, something that affects your bottom line, or perhaps we discover a way to help you grow your business – we are going to bring those items to the attention of the entire membership.

Here’s a prime example.

A few months back, an ATSSA contractor member wanted to know if ATSSA could do something to help them find the right type of employees for their company.

This issue was brought to the attention of the board of directors, who, after a lengthy discussion – directed the ATSSA staff to hire a researcher to look into this issue and find ways to bring better blue-collar hires to ATSSA member companies nationwide.

As a result, ATSSA created an outstanding research guide titled, “Finding, Hiring, and Retaining the Best Workers: A Toolkit for Members of ATSSA.”

A look at the cover of this research guide is right here on the screen.

This is a great product. Very user-friendly, very helpful, and very informative. It’s a one-of-a-kind, and it was produced exclusively for ATSSA members.

I am happy to report that this book will be mailed tomorrow morning to our contractor members, and that it is available this week here in San Antonio for ATSSA members only. Committee members got an advance copy yesterday. Please stop by the ATSSA booth and ask for your complimentary copy this week.

And once you hire those new people, you'll want to put them to work to expand your businesses, and ATSSA is helping you do this as well.

Expanding business is an area we're putting additional emphasis on right now, because we "heard on the street" that this is especially important to our contractor members – those who are on the front lines making our roadways safer.

First, we recently expanded our website to include an area that specifically focuses on "expanding your businesses." You can see this new area here on the screens – please note the new orange tab on the top left side of the main page of "ATSSA dot com."

Once you're logged in as a "Member," you will find a wealth of information to help your business. This member-only information is updated on a regular basis.

And there are a couple of other things you will see just in time for April's activities in Washington, D.C.

After the Expo, we'll be working on a high-visibility awareness piece that will be designed to reach out to a wide range of audiences, to explain to them the lifesaving benefits of high-visibility apparel. This will include what types of garments to purchase, when to upgrade or replace existing apparel, how to maintain it, and so forth.

There's also an all-new video in development that explains how ATSSA member products save lives. This will be an updated re-make of the highly popular ATSSA Safety Solutions CD that we produced in 2002.

The plan this year is to have the new CD, as well as the new high-visibility awareness piece, included in a package for ATSSA members to present to their elected officials in April.

We also produced a couple of other significant items this past year. Print runs of these products were in the tens of thousands, so I know the majority of ATSSA members have seen these.

First, was our Low Cost Local Road Safety Solutions booklet released at this convention last year.

The Texas Transportation Institute provided multiple concise, easy-to-read case studies for inclusion in that book.

The book showed how ATSSA member products – such as wider edge lines, raised pavement markings, rumble strips, barriers, and other products and services – can help save lives in 16 unique roadway scenarios.

The booklets were released in partnership with our friends at NACE – the National Association of County Engineers – and are now in the hands of cities and counties nationwide, as well as in the offices of elected officials and of course, ATSSA members.

We also released two outstanding Safe Routes to School publications – one specifically for ATSSA members, the other for school administrators. The print runs on all of these were also significant, as was the nationwide distribution.

And I am also happy to report that in September, ATSSA was awarded a four-year, \$11.9 million grant from the Federal Highway Administration to provide roadway safety training not just locally – but nationally – for workers, law enforcement officers, emergency responders and others who make their livelihood on America's roadways.

ATSSA has always been recognized as the nation's leader in roadway safety training, and as a result of this grant, we plan on making affordable training available to everyone across the country to help save lives. Notice those key words – affordable training.

Congratulations to ATSSA for being selected as Federal Highway's "preferred trainer."

Without a doubt, it's been another great year for your association. I am very excited about what lies ahead in the New Year, and I hope you are too.

I am also excited about the next several days of fun, camaraderie, information exchange, and of course – those after hours "important official business meetings" on the Riverwalk.

So, welcome to your show ATSSA, and thanks for being here this morning.