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2010 Innovations Awards Application

DEADLINE EXTENDED: MARCH 15, 2010

ID # (assigned by CSG): **10-W-11NV**

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: **Nevada**

Assign Program Category (applicant): **Transportation** (Use list at end of application)

1. Program Name **Strategic Communications Alliance**
2. Administering Agency **Nevada Department of Transportation**
3. Contact Person (Name and Title) **Meg Ragonese**
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9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.

The alliance's mission is to reduce traffic deaths and severe injuries by developing and implementing a coordinated statewide traffic safety marketing and communications program among Nevada's public and private sector agencies and organizations involved with transportation safety. Essentially, the alliance provides the Nevada's Strategic Highway Safety Plan goal of saving lives by providing traffic safety education.

10. How long has this program been operational (month and year)? Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old on March 1, 2010 to be considered. The program began in September 2008, and has been operational for approximately one and a half years.

11. Why was the program created? What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address?

In 2006, Nevada traffic deaths rose to an all-time high of 431. Prior to this, Nevada's traffic safety groups did not have cohesive or complementary driving safety messages to educate the public about preventing traffic deaths and severe injuries. To help reduce traffic deaths and injuries, Nevada's Strategic Communications Alliance came together to implement coordinated traffic safety messages that would be seen and reinforced throughout the state.

12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.

Nevada's Strategic Communications Alliance undertakes the following activities:

- Develop and implement a statewide communication plan and calendar with timeframes for specific traffic safety messages
- Develop joint traffic safety messages and media campaigns targeted at Nevada's most pressing traffic safety issues, including impaired driving, lane departure, pedestrians, occupant protection and intersection safety
- Prioritize nearly \$1 million in Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) flexible funds for traffic safety activities such as public service announcements and free bus rides to reduce drunk driving during holidays
- Develop messaging and all informational materials for Nevada's new zero traffic fatalities goal

13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method?

Strong, joint messaging is vital to safety campaigns. In a time of limited funding, increased media messaging and continuing traffic fatalities, traffic safety messages must be leveraged for greatest impact.

The Nevada Strategic Communications Alliance has brought approximately 50 members together to develop the *nation's first* coordinated highway safety plan communications program that leverages opportunities for each agency and group to provide similar driving safety messages to citizens. Based on this success, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration will potentially replicate the program in other states.

14. What were the program's start-up costs? (Provide details about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other financial expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.) Consultants have been contracted to oversee certain staffing needs for Nevada's Strategic Highway Safety Plan, with portions of the consultant contract and funds being dedicated to the Strategic Communications Alliance.

15. What are the program's annual operational costs?

16. How is the program funded? The program is funded in part by federal safety funds.

17. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? If YES, please indicate the citation number. No

18. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program? N/A

19. To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator's name, present address, telephone number and e-mail address. Yes

20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ? No known similar programs in other states.

21. Has the program been fully implemented? Yes, this program has been fully implemented. If NO, what actions remain to be taken?

22. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples.

In early 2009, Nevada began installing centerline rumble strips as one way to help prevent run-off-the-road crashes and save lives. The Strategic Communications Alliance hosted a media event to raise awareness of rumble strips and what individual drivers can do to drive more safely on Nevada's rural roads. The media event generated coverage in newspaper outlets which together reach over 400,000 people across northeastern Nevada.

Alliance members voted on ways to utilize nearly \$1 million in federal highway safety flex funds for programs that most effectively address traffic safety issues. In just the first few months of implementation, these flex-funded programs have produced the following results:

- *Provided over 7,000 free bus rides to help prevent drunk driving crashes and injuries on New Year's Eve in the Reno area. No New Year's Eve road fatalities were reported in the greater Reno area, in part thanks to this program.*
- *Paid for multi-station broadcasts of television public service announcements that educated the public about the dangers of drunk driving during Super Bowl weekend.*

There is no greater evidence that the creative program is working than Nevada's recent reduction in traffic fatalities. Since the Strategic Highway Safety Plan's implementation, Nevada traffic fatalities have decreased by nearly one quarter, from a high of 431 in 2006 to 324 in 2008.

23. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

The program has grown from a networking and knowledge-sharing opportunity to a working group that will oversee public education and outreach pertaining to Nevada's new zero traffic fatality goal, including Web sites and other educational materials.

24. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?

Within any state, there are a myriad of different agencies, groups and individuals providing traffic safety education. In adopting a strategic communications alliance program, states may find it difficult to locate all individual traffic safety outreach activities being implemented and create a consensus on which activities are the most vital and worthy of being pursued by the group. Another obstacle comes in the form of locating funding for traffic safety education initiatives developed by the group.

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2010 Innovations Awards Application Program Categories and Subcategories

Use these as guidelines to determine the appropriate Program Category for your state's submission and list that program category on page one of this application. Choose only one.

Infrastructure and Economic Development

- Business/Commerce
- Economic Development
- Transportation

Government Operations and Technology

- Administration
- Elections
- Information Systems
- Public Information
- Revenue
- Telecommunications

Health & Human Services

- Aging
- Children & Families
- Health Services
- Housing
- Human Services

Human Resources/Education

- Education
- Labor
- Management
- Personnel
- Training and Development
- Workforce Development

Natural Resources

- Agriculture
- Energy
- Environment
- Environmental Protection
- Natural Resources
- Parks & Recreation
- Water Resources

Public Safety/Corrections

- Corrections
- Courts
- Criminal Justice
- Drugs
- Emergency Management
- Public Safety

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This application is also available at www.csg.org.