

Best Practices

Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives

2026

Traffic Safety Awards

Save a Life
Texas Department of Transportation

A project of the Texas Municipal Courts Education Center
in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation

MUNICIPAL TRAFFIC
SAFETY INITIATIVES

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MUNICIPAL TRAFFIC SAFETY INITIATIVES

Introduction

The Texas Municipal Courts Education Center (TMCEC) is pleased to present this year's Best Practices publication! Best Practices highlights those municipal courts that have demonstrated exemplary traffic safety outreach initiatives. Each court was formally recognized at the annual Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives (MTSI) Conference, which was held in Conroe from April 1-3, 2026. The Carrollton Municipal Court was honored with the Trailblazer Award, which is given to the court with the most innovative traffic safety initiative of the year. For more information about the awards, including how your city can apply in 2027 and a video showcasing the courts' safety initiatives, please visit tmcec.com/mtsi/mtsi-awards/.

From the President



Funded by a generous grant from the Texas Department of Transportation, the Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives Awards recognize Texas municipal courts that promote traffic safety education. The winning courts highlighted a wide variety of activities and presentations made within their communities in 2025 to reach pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, and passengers of all ages. Beginning with infants and toddlers, many courts held events to help parents obtain free child safety seats when needed or get their safety seat inspected to ensure proper quality and installation. Mock trials, art competitions, and bicycle safety fairs were conducted for school-aged children throughout the state. Teens and young adults participated in educational programs focused on the dangers of underage drinking as well as the health and criminal consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and vaping. Drivers of every age were warned against distracted, impaired, and aggressive driving. Pedestrian safety was also a focus given recent increases in pedestrian injuries and fatalities.

Seven low volume (serving fewer than 30,000 people), twelve medium volume (serving 30,000 to 149,999 people), five high volume (150,000+ people), and four new applicant courts were recognized this year. Another 17 courts were recognized as honorable mentions. Special congratulations to the Carrollton Municipal Court who received the 2026 Trailblazer Award program in recognition of the most innovative initiative of the year.

Texas data shows a slight reduction in the number of traffic collisions, including fatalities, during 2024 and the first few months of 2025. Despite this decrease, statistics show that a person is killed on a Texas roadway every 2 hours and 7 minutes, a person is injured from a crash every 2 minutes and 5 seconds, and a reportable crash occurs every 57 seconds. More than 45% of the persons killed in 2024 traffic accidents were not properly restrained by a seatbelt or child safety seat. 585 motorcyclists or their passengers were killed in a crash. 768 pedestrians lost their lives while walking on or near a Texas roadway. Distracted driving claimed the lives of an estimated 380 people and 1,053 persons were killed in a crash where a driver was impaired from alcohol or drugs. Preventing these types of tragedies is crucial and the primary reason to enforce traffic laws. The courts' efforts to promote traffic safety education also play a critical role in making Texas roadways safer for all of us. Congratulations to all the 2026 MTSI Award winners.

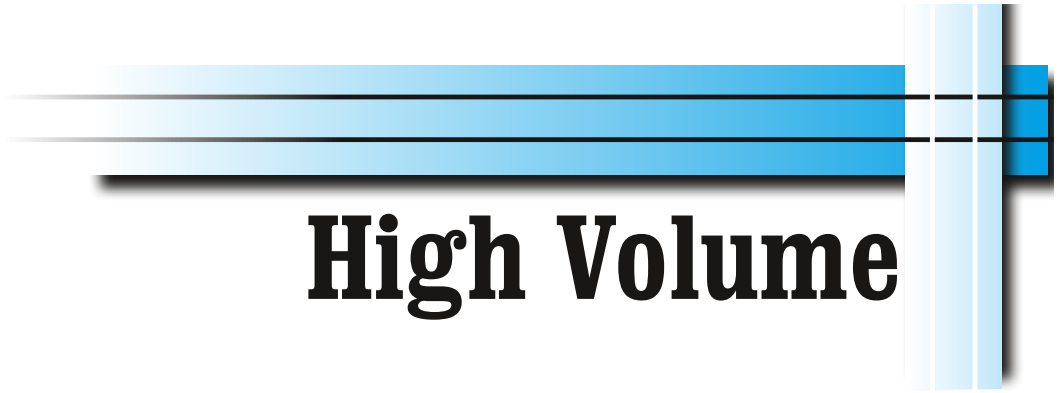
Judge Teresa Evans
President, Texas Municipal Courts Association

Trailblazer Award



Carrollton

The Carrollton Municipal Court engaged in numerous high-impact traffic safety initiatives in 2025, but it was the creation of Radiator Springs—based on Pixar's Cars franchise—that MTSI recognizes as the most innovate traffic safety initiative of the year. At Future Public Employee Day, the Court transformed their community room into a comprehensive traffic safety experience. Court staff made their very own Cars character figures and young participants chose their favorite before embarking on a traffic safety course based on Radiator Springs. Among the course's features were an impairment bean bag toss game and traffic sign trivia. At the finish line, participants spun the wheel to win various traffic safety school supplies. Everyone had a blast, and this initiative is truly deserving of the 2026 Trailblazer award. Congratulations to the Carrollton Municipal Court!



High Volume

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Austin

Each month, the Austin Municipal Court posts a National Safety Council *Traffic Tabloid* on its website. These tabloids cover various timely traffic safety topics, such as *Fans Don't Let Fans Drive Drunk* in February for the Superbowl and *Summer's Almost Over, But DUIs Stick Around* in August.





Corpus Christi

By direct engagement with the public, the Corpus Christi Municipal Court is an integral piece of the city's traffic safety puzzle. To address aggressive driving, the judge routinely ordered appropriate defendants to complete an approved Aggressive Driving Education Program as a condition of deferred disposition. The Court also participated in a safety event at Carroll High School where Sean Carter, who suffered a traumatic brain injury in a drunk driving crash, spoke to students about the life-altering dangers of impaired driving.



El Paso

It is quite possible that no municipal court in Texas is represented at more safety events than the El Paso Municipal Court. To name a few, the Court participated in a *Click It or Ticket* campaign, *TeenTober Fest*, Streetcar Ride & Treat, numerous career days, and a safety safari at the El Paso zoo. At these events, the Court addressed traffic safety in various ways, including *Distracted Cornhole* and a *Wheel of Knowledge* game. The Court has undoubtedly played a vital role in El Paso's significant crash reduction in recent years!

Houston

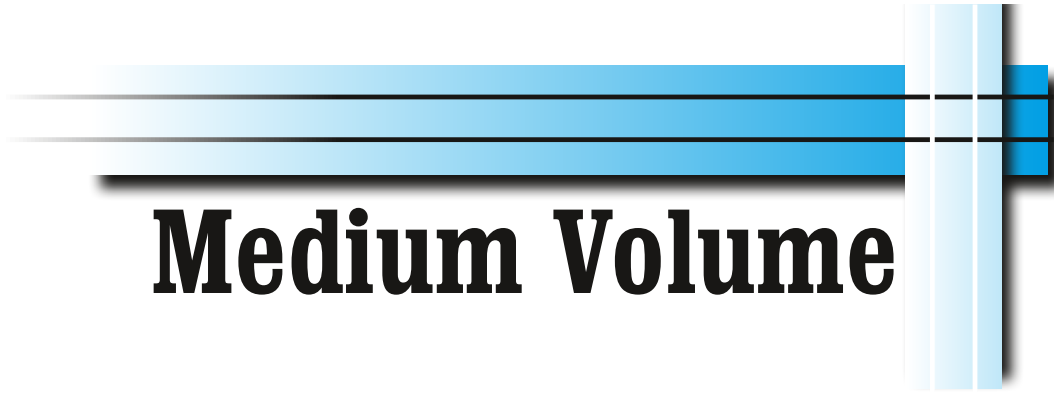
Someone loses their life every other day on Houston roads. Recognizing that many of these fatalities are caused by the commission of a Class C misdemeanor, the Houston Municipal Court takes its role in improving driver behavior very seriously, especially for younger drivers. To that end, the Court regularly shows traffic safety videos—such as *Allie's Way*—during school visits and invites the students to sign no texting pledges.



San Antonio

In 2025, the San Antonio Municipal Court's Drive SAfely Traffic Safety Team continued its mission to promote safer streets and save lives. Aligning with Distracted Driving Awareness Month, the San Antonio Municipal Court launched a new traffic safety campaign as part of Fiesta week. Judges and Clerks walked major Fiesta events—including Fiesta de Los Reyes and the St. Mary's Oyster Bake—to share traffic safety tips during one of San Antonio's busiest tourism weeks.





Medium Volume

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Baytown

Taking into account Henry Ford's words, "Coming together is the beginning; keeping together is progress; and working together is success," the Baytown Municipal Court staff worked together to continue offering one of the state's most innovative traffic safety outreach programs. In 2025, the Court conducted three traffic safety initiatives inspired by game shows, including *The Price is Right*, *Wheel of Fortune*, and *Family Feud*. Reimagining these iconic gameshows was a spectacular way to get kids fired up about safety!



Cedar Hill

At the Police Youth Summit, Cedar Hill Municipal Court staff played *Ticket or No Ticket*, an activity where students were presented with a driving scenario and moved to one side of the room depending whether they believed the behavior could or should result in a citation. This prompted lively discussions about traffic laws and safety.





College Station

The College Station Municipal Court leveraged YouTube to help inform the public about traffic safety and the judicial process. Their post about how to handle traffic citations has over 1,700 views. The video, narrated by the judge, conveys various options including trial, deferred disposition, and Driving Safety Courses. Utilizing this popular internet platform is a great way to encourage defendants to actively handle their traffic tickets without fearing their day in court!

Edinburg

During National Child Passenger Safety Week, the Edinburg Municipal Court hosted its second car seat inspection and installation event, which was bolstered by the Court's juvenile case managers, who are certified Child Passenger Safety technicians. Forty families signed up for a 30-minute time slot to have their seat inspected and, where appropriate, adjusted for maximum safety. In many cases, if a seat was deemed inoperable, the family left with a brand new 3-in-1 car seat—free of charge.



Best Practices

Georgetown



At the first ever Criminal Justice Field Day, the Georgetown Municipal Court set up a booth and gave local students a chance to play their newly created game: *Traffic Safety Feud*. A traffic safety question was asked by a court staff person and the students would push light-up buzzers to answer. Incorrect answers gave their opponent a chance to answer. Traffic Safety Feud was a huge hit and compelled many great discussions about traffic safety.

Harker Heights

The Harker Heights Municipal Court continued its strong dedication to traffic safety in 2025 by attending over twenty local events. At the Harker Heights Elementary School Job Fair, the Court set up a maze which compared safe drivers to drivers that drive too fast, distracted, or intoxicated. The Court also aligns its Facebook page with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration schedule to ensure that social media users receive timely, season-appropriate traffic safety education.



Harlingen



For Halloween, the Harlingen Municipal Court prepared traffic safety goodie bags for students at Harlingen Head Start. The bags included stickers, bookmarks, TxDOT coloring books, and drug awareness pamphlets. The students, in turn, presented the court staff with posters they created to express their gratitude for the role the Court plays in preserving public safety in Harlingen.

La Porte

Having received an award every year since 2009 for 18 total, the La Porte Municipal Court holds the distinction of having won the most MTSI Awards of any court in Texas. In April, the Court participated in a *Shattered Dreams* filming, which showed the deadly consequences of impaired driving in vivid detail. The film was showed during court juvenile dockets as well as in the court lobby. In preparation for Senior Prom, the Court set up a display with still shots from the *Shattered Dreams* video to go along with sober prom pledge cards.



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Mansfield

Choosing to focus on the dangers of distracted driving, the Mansfield Municipal Court distributed over 500 distracted driving toolkit brochures and *Eyes Off Me and On the Road* car air fresheners throughout the year. The materials were available in both English and Spanish to reach as many drivers as possible. The materials, which made a great conversation starter about safe driving, were given to both defendants and members of the public whenever an opportunity presented itself.



Midland

In collaboration with Texas A&M AgriLife, the Midland Municipal Court held two Toddler Time Story Hours at a local library. The Court's Community Service Coordinator read *Don't Monkey Around with Safety in Your Neighborhood* and parents were given traffic safety pamphlets to ensure that this event reached road users of all ages!





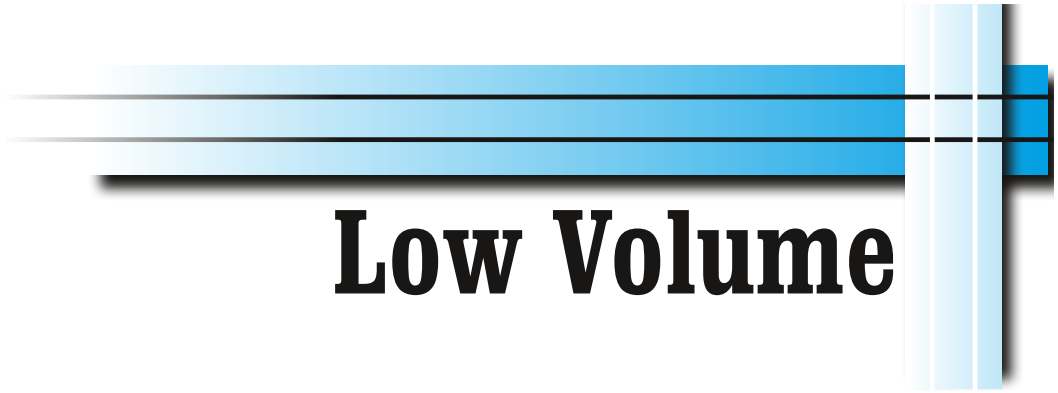
Temple

When someone visits the Temple Municipal Court, they immediately realize that the Court takes traffic safety seriously. Each clerk station displays a different traffic safety poster and traffic safety videos are played throughout the year in both the lobby and courtroom. The Court also introduced a traffic safety elf, Lieutenant Dew Wright, who made appearances in various places throughout the courthouse during the holiday season.

Victoria

The Victoria Municipal Court's Child Passenger Safety Program is truly exemplary. The Court regularly brings a car seat height chart to events as a way to engage young riders and parents in a conversation about passenger safety. The Court often finds itself emphasizing and providing education about the booster seat phase, which is frequently overlooked by families. The Court Administrator also attended the *Brace for Impact Parent Expo* and participated in a car seat safety presentation by the Texas A&M AgriLife Passenger Safety & KidSafe Initiative.





Low Volume

Alvin



In collaboration with the Alvin Fire Department, the Alvin Municipal Court hosted a hands-on fire extinguisher and emergency response training. The Court also hosted training related to bleeding control and the use of tourniquets. To complement Alvin's numerous events throughout the year designed to *prevent* traffic crashes, these trainings were designed to save lives *after* a crash, reflecting a very complete traffic safety initiative.



Bay City

The Bay City Municipal Court staff visited a local school to provide education to K-2 students. After reading *Bernard in the Backseat*, the students were given a car seat safety demonstration which included content about selecting the proper safety seat system based on a child's height and weight. Court staff also brought child-sized road signs and explained what each one signified.

Burnet



The Burnet Municipal Court maintains an extremely active Reality Education for Drivers (RED) program. At the beginning of each of the four RED events the Court held in 2025, speakers from different law enforcement and emergency response organizations described the consequences of unsafe driving behaviors through their first-hand experiences. Brandon Willard, who was paralyzed following an impaired driving crash, also presented his story at one of the Burnet Municipal Court's RED events.

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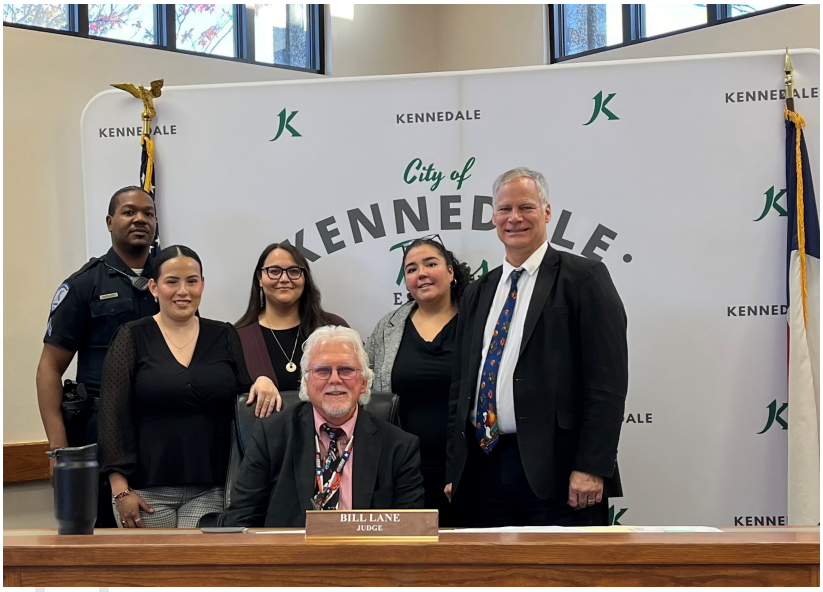
Freer

Leading up to graduation, the Freer Municipal Court conducted an initiative where students were removed from class to represent a traffic fatality. The students' faces were painted white and they were not permitted to speak for the remainder of the day. The parents of the "victim" were notified and, even though it was a fictional scenario, were devastated. Other students were shocked when their classmate was taken away in a hearse. Following the event, no Minor in Possession of Alcohol, Driving Under the Influence, or Public Intoxication offenses were reported during graduation.





Kennedale

The Kennedale Municipal Court organized an interactive, hands-on Bike Safety Day with the goal of teaching kids how to safely ride a bicycle. Local hospital staff assisted by measuring the kids' heads to ensure they had a properly fitting helmet. There were also demonstrations on safe riding techniques with an emphasis on intersections. At this event, the Court distributed free bike lights, helmets, and even bicycles to children in the community, which unsurprisingly led to many big smiles.



Lakeway

The Lakeway Municipal Court hosted a *Take a Stand to End Impaired Driving* education and awareness event in partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation's One Choice initiative. At this event, the Blessing family shared the story of when their daughter, Aspen, was killed in a wrong-way, alcohol-related crash. The event also featured impaired driving simulators and impairment simulation goggle activities.

Watauga

Along with many other initiatives, the Watauga Municipal Court places a particular focus on bicycle safety. For National Bicycle Safety Month in May, court staff distributed bike safety coloring books to various city facilities. Chick-fil-a sponsored this outreach in collaboration with the municipal court. If children returned a colored-in book to the municipal court, they got a certificate for a sweet treat from Chick-fil-a. In all, 56 children submitted coloring books to the Court!



New Applicants



Canyon

At the Canyon Municipal Court, the judge regularly engaged in meaningful conversations with defendants charged with No Driver's License. The judge inquired about their reason for not having a driver's license while prompting them to consider the impact unlicensed driving might have on public safety as well as the defendant personally. After recognizing many similar responses, the Court reached out to food banks, legal aid organizations, and the United Way to address these challenges and provide resources for both the public and defendants.

Fair Oaks Ranch

In conjunction with a local elementary school, the Fair Oaks Ranch Municipal Court implemented *Youth Court Day*, an interactive civic education initiative designed to engage fifth graders about traffic safety and community responsibility. For *Youth Court Day*, the Court conducted a mock trial for speeding in a school zone where fifth graders examined the evidence, questioned witnesses, and deliberated toward a verdict.



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Friendswood

The Friendswood Municipal Court created its own safety brochure as a means to both engage more meaningfully with the community and promote public safety. The brochure, which is regularly updated throughout the year to reflect current trends, covers topics such as traffic safety, teenage parties, and the effects of vaping, THC, and alcohol.



Garland

The Garland Municipal Court took advantage of National Night Out to, along with the police department, attend numerous neighborhood functions. The Court held a raffle in which a new car seat, two roadside emergency safety kits, and a front and back dashcam were donated. Great fun was had by all, and the Garland Municipal Court looks forward to bolstering its traffic safety initiatives in the future!



Honorable Mentions

Best Practices

Amarillo



Aransas Pass



Arlington



Azle





Balch Springs

Best Practices



Dallas



Denton

Dickinson





Eagle Lake

Best Practices



League City



Lewisville

Lufkin





Mesquite

Best Practices

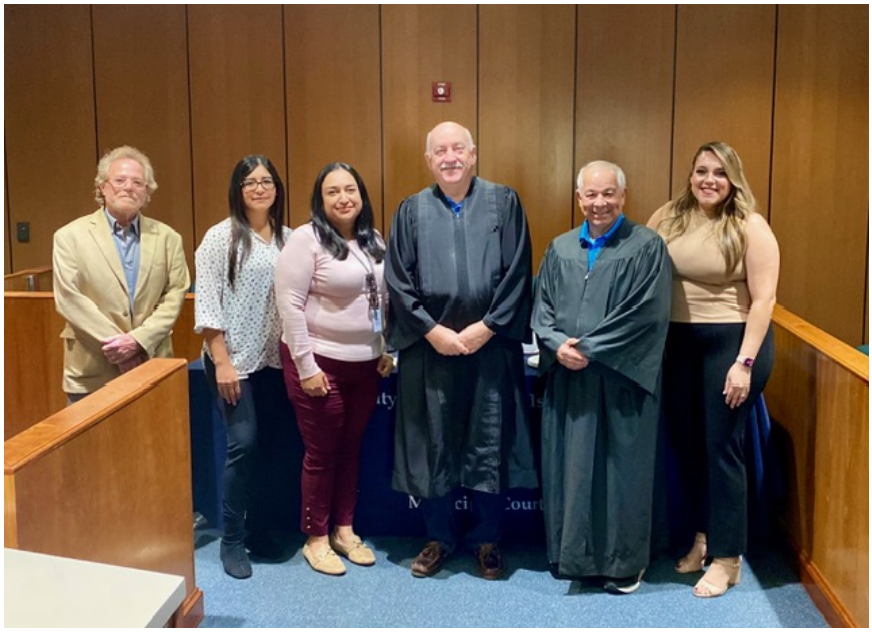
New Braunfels



Robinson



South Padre Island



Wink



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