

New Hampshire Department of Safety  
Biennial Report (1995 – 1997)

DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES

The Division of Motor Vehicles is under the supervision of Director Virginia C. Beecher who oversees motor vehicle and driver regulations including, but not limited to, driver licensing, vehicle registration, financial responsibility compliance, title issuance, and registration of commercial and private boats. The current term of office for Director Beecher runs through March 1998.

The Director of Motor Vehicles is supported by an Assistant Director who performs such duties as may be assigned by the Director.

New Hampshire Motor Vehicles Director Virginia C. Beecher is the first woman ever to hold that post in state government. She was sworn in to office on December 19, 1994 by Governor Stephen Merrill and assumed the duties of office on January 1, 1995.

At a national conference in California in March 1995, she was elected to sit on the governing body of the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) to serve on the Board of Directors, a body that provides international leadership in matters related to the administration and enforcement of laws pertaining to motor vehicles and their use.

Director Beecher was elected to the office of AAMVA President of Region One at the annual jurisdiction meeting held in Quebec, Canada in June 1996 and became responsible for a field staff in the states and provinces in north-eastern United States and eastern Canada that included Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Pennsylvania, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Rhode Island and Vermont.

The Division of Motor Vehicles was host to the 76th Annual Region One American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators Conference in June 1997 at the Mount Washington Hotel and Resort in Bretton Woods.

DMV Director Virginia C. Beecher welcomed more than 200 attendees from 18 states and provinces in the north-eastern United States and eastern Canada.

Regional conferences are held each year to discuss issues of specific concern based on geographic location.

A conference highlight was the unveiling of the new Division of Motor Vehicles Organ Donor Program. In assuming state leadership for the program, Director Beecher in early 1997 instructed the Division to formulate a plan and execute a state-wide public education campaign designed to raise the level of organ donation.

She invited nationally known Reg Green to the conference and together they introduced the Division's new organ donor program, developed in response to the critical shortage of organ and tissue donors.

The Green's seven-year-old son, Nicholas, was murdered in Italy in 1994 during a robbery while on a family vacation. His organs and tissue were donated to Italian patients waiting for transplants.

Reg Green and his wife travel around the world, ambassadors of The Nicholas Green Foundation, to encourage others to consider organ donation.

The conference agenda additionally included round table discussions on topics dealing with the growing problems involving young drivers and teen fatalities, how to detect fraudulent motor vehicle forms, stress in the workplace, privacy of motor vehicle records, privatisation, public employee security, and a host of other timely topics that highlighted goals, strategic direction and achievements of the association towards its contribution to serving the public good.

In October 1996, DMV Director Virginia C. Beecher placed into immediate effect the 'Original License' law, a little used law that was set aside in 1991. The law allows the DMV to suspend the original license issued to a new driver for misuse or abuse.

On a first offence the suspension is for 20 days, subsequent offences is for 45 days, and thereafter for 90 days.

Her tough stance was in response to an increase of teenagers involved in a high number of motor vehicle crashes and deaths in 1996 when in a nine month period, 22 young people ranging in ages 14 through 24 became involved in a fatal motor vehicle crash in New Hampshire, either as a passenger or as the operator of the vehicle involved.

#### PUPIL TRANSPORTATION UNIT

The Pupil Transportation Unit focuses on the safety standards and training programs that will provide the safest means of transportation for children in school buses.

During the biennium, the New Hampshire School Bus Transportation Rules were updated to be in compliance with Federal Safety Standards and to incorporate many of the National Standards for School Buses.

The Handbook for the New Hampshire School Bus Driver was revised during this period to reflect the new rule changes, and to provide additional information on pupil transportation policies and regulations.

Annually, the Office of Pupil Transportation conducts motor vehicle and criminal record checks on approximately 2,500 school bus drivers to assure they meet state regulations.

Drivers are also required to meet training requirements that must be verified by their instructor and employer.

There are 2,134 school bus approved vehicles in New Hampshire that transport on a daily basis approximately 144,000 students to and from school.

The Unit works with parents, school districts, the school bus industry and other state agencies to ensure that students are transported safely.

New Hampshire has an excellent school bus safety record as a result to the co-operation of all those involved in school bus transportation.