



CANADIAN AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION

International Distracted Driving Conference

Toronto, Ontario

October 3, 2005

Speaking notes for David Flewelling

President, CAA

Welcoming Comments

Good morning to everyone here - and thank you for taking the time to join us for the next three days. I am delighted to see such an extraordinary range of delegates here today from a variety of sectors, something I am sure can only benefit us in reaching our conference goals.

I am David Flewelling, and I am President of the Canadian Automobile Association, which represents 4.7 million Canadian motorists and travelers, through 9 member clubs.

As you know, we have gathered here to bring international attention to the issue of distracted driving. Well, we have done that, and the conference is just beginning!

In recent years, we have seen the issue of distracted driving gain attention from the public, governments, and traffic safety organizations. Initially, much concern was focused on the use of cell phones when driving - but it is only one facet of the issue, which is much more complex.

We can expect the media may continue to focus on cell phones, but this should not detract from our mission here today.

We are starting to recognize that sources of distraction - both inside and outside the vehicle, concrete and abstract - are diverse, and their potential impact on the safe operation of the vehicle is varied.

Along with this growing concern over driver distraction, there has been an increase in attempts to measure and understand the problem to provide a rational basis for action.

we have some key challenges, however: , the data available is still quite limited, as, is our understanding of distracted driving. Third, initiatives to reduce distracted driving have been reactionary at best.

Efforts to deal with the problem - including awareness and educational programs, technological approaches, and legislative and regulatory initiatives - have also increased in recent years.

But are they the right approach? How do we know? And how

will we convince road users what the right approach is when we find it?

This is why both CAA and the Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF) felt it was timely to hold this conference that will provide an opportunity to determine what is currently known about the problem. But more importantly, it also provides a forum to discuss how to deal with it effectively, so traffic safety is improved for all road users.

We wanted to bring speakers from around the world – traffic safety experts, research experts, industry experts – to work with us to gain a better understanding of distracted driving – and finding ways to combat it. In that respect, I think we have been very successful.

We also are pleased to have much time devoted to workshops, where you will be able to meet and share with other conference attendees your experiences, thoughts and suggestions. After all, this is your conference – we need your input to make it work.

We hope you will find our entire program enlightening, unique – and above all, conducive to finding the most appropriate measures and tactics to the issue of distracted driving. I know this conference will be an important step forward.

Before I close, I have a few words of thanks.

First, to our sponsors who have provided us with human and financial resources, as well as in-kind donations to make this event possible. They are [take breath here]:

- the Alberta Motor Association,
- the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators,
- Brewers of Canada,
- CAA Insurance Ontario,
- Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators,
- Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers Association,
- CTIA – the Wireless Association,
- Dollar Thrifty Automotive Group Incorporated,
- Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation,

- Ministry of Transportation for the Province of Ontario,
- the National Association of Fleet Administrators Incorporated,
- Saskatchewan Government Insurance,
- la Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec,
- the Tourism Industry Association of Canada,
- Transport Canada
- and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

I'd also like to offer a special thanks to Dr. Herb Simpson, the President and CEO of the Traffic Injury Research Foundation. Herb and his colleagues at TIRF have been instrumental in developing a great program. Thank you Herb!

And to the delegates, thank you for your time and I wish everyone a productive conference.