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# NEWS

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## **Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood Holds Historic Summit to Tackle Dangers of Distracted Driving** *New Research Finds Increase in Use of Hand-Held Devices Among All Drivers*

WASHINGTON, DC, USA— **U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood** is calling for a cultural shift in how Americans view safe driving. Secretary LaHood challenged more than 250 safety experts, industry representatives, elected officials and members of the public to help put an end to distracted driving. The Secretary's call to action kicked off a two-day Distracted Driving Summit in Washington, DC that is highlighting the under-recognized dangers of distracted behavior behind the wheel.

“Every single time someone takes their eyes or their focus off the road—even for just a few seconds—they put their lives and the lives of others in danger,” said Secretary LaHood. “Distracted driving is unsafe, irresponsible and in a split second, its consequences can be devastating.”

Secretary LaHood announced new research findings by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration that show nearly 6,000 people died in 2008 in crashes involving a distracted or inattentive driver, and more than half a million were injured. On any given day in 2008, more than 800,000 vehicles were driven by someone using a hand-held cell phone.

To watch Secretary LaHood's video blog on distracted driving or the Distracted Driving Summit via live Webcast, visit [www.dot.gov](http://www.dot.gov).

“Since our founding in 1930, the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and our members have been working to reduce crashes through planning, design, operations and management, professional development and the development of standards and recommended practices and by sharing best practice information around the world. We support efforts to reduce driver distraction and other behavioral changes. In order to reduce highway related deaths by 50 percent over the next decade, it will take the support of policymakers, adequate funding and the combined and cooperative efforts of the engineering, enforcement, education and technology transportation sectors,” said Thomas W. Brahm, ITE Executive Director and CEO.

ITE is an international educational and scientific association of 17,000 transportation professionals working in more than 92 countries, who are responsible for meeting mobility and safety needs. ITE facilitates the application of technology and scientific principles to research, planning, functional design, implementation, operation, policy development and management for any mode of transportation. Through its products and services, ITE promotes professional development of its members, supports and encourages education, stimulates research, develops public awareness programs and serves as a conduit for the exchange of professional information. For more information, visit [www.ite.org](http://www.ite.org).