

Truck & Bus Safety Forum

Technical Panel

Thomas Barth, National Transportation Safety Board

Thomas Barth has recently joined the NTSB as a survival factors investigator in the Office of Highway Safety. Dr. Barth has 20 years of experience in occupant seating systems, biomechanics, and crash dynamics for aviation and ground-based vehicles. He has published numerous papers and given multiple presentations at technical conferences. Prior to joining the NTSB, Dr. Barth was the director of research and development at AmSafe Inc., creator of commercial and general aviation air bag restraint systems. He holds a B.S. in mechanical engineering from Colorado State University and a Ph.D. from Cranfield University in Bedfordshire England.

Michele Beckjord, National Transportation Safety Board

Michele Beckjord has been employed at the NTSB since 1996 as a senior survival factors investigator and project manager in the Office of Highway Safety. She has investigated over 45 accidents in highway, railroad, marine, and pipeline modes of transportation, including numerous motorcoach and school bus accidents such as the Mother's Day motorcoach accident in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1999. Ms. Beckjord has been the project manager for major NTSB investigation reports, among which are the Wilmer, Texas, motorcoach fire; the Victoria, Texas, public hearing and report on *non-Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards* motorcoaches operating in the United States; and the 10-fatal tractor-semitrailer accident in Miami, Oklahoma. Ms. Beckjord holds a B.A. in criminal justice from American University and a master's of forensic science from The George Washington University. She is a registered diplomat with the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators.

Dennis Collins, National Transportation Safety Board

Dennis Collins currently serves as a senior accident investigator (human performance) in the Office of Highway Safety. He holds both bachelor's and master's degrees in industrial and systems engineering from Virginia Tech, with the latter degree focused on the human factors of driving. Mr. Collins has worked on over 50 NTSB investigations, including Webbers Falls, Oklahoma; Santa Monica, California; and Minneapolis, Minnesota. He has served as an emergency medical technician and is currently certified as a child passenger safety technician instructor.

Robert Dodd, National Transportation Safety Board

Robert Dodd has worked at the NTSB since 2007 as chief of the safety research and statistical analysis division in the Office of Research and Engineering, managing the NTSB's research and data analysis activities. Dr. Dodd was previously employed at the NTSB from 1986–1988, as a transportation safety program specialist, during which time he completed a safety study on air medical helicopters and participated in a special investigation of operational errors at Chicago O'Hare's air traffic control tower. He received a B.S. in life sciences from the University of Maryland, an M.S. in systems safety from the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, and an Sc.D. in public health from Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Dodd has more than 25 years of experience as an injury prevention and transportation safety researcher.

Pete Kotowski, National Transportation Safety Board

Pete Kotowski joined the NTSB in 1998 and currently serves in the Office of Highway Safety as an investigator-in-charge. Mr. Kotowski brought to the NTSB over 27 years of experience as an investigator, of which 20 years were in accident reconstruction. He has assisted the governments of South Africa, Guam, and South Australia in commercial vehicle accident investigations. Mr. Kotowski has been an adjunct instructor for the Institute of Police Technology and Management since 1984, training hundreds of students. Additionally, he has developed and presented commercial vehicle accident investigation training courses. Mr. Kotowski is the author of many technical papers dealing with the investigation, regulatory oversight, and analysis of commercial vehicle accidents. He has served on numerous committees with oversight responsibilities for all aspects of transportation safety.

Shane Lack, National Transportation Safety Board

Shane Lack is a senior mechanical engineer in the vehicle performance division of the Office of Research and Engineering. He has been with the NTSB for 14 years, specializing in highway vehicle dynamics, computer simulation, and intelligent transportation systems. He has worked on the evaluation of stability control for cars and trucks, the handling of 15-passenger vans, and the analysis of collision dynamics in support of school bus and motorcoach crashworthiness and occupant safety recommendations. Mr. Lack has worked extensively to improve highway vehicle simulation capabilities at the NTSB. Previously, he worked for Research Engineers, Inc., and Exponent, Inc. Mr. Lack holds a B.S. in engineering physics from the University of Arizona. He is the co-author of several papers for SAE International.

Jim LeBerte, National Transportation Safety Board

Jim LeBerte currently serves as a senior accident investigator and motor carrier safety specialist with the Office of Highway Safety. He has been with the NTSB for 22 years. Previously, he studied criminal justice at the University of Alabama

in Birmingham and spent 16 years in law enforcement at the Birmingham and Hoover police departments. While at the Hoover police department, he helped organize the traffic unit and the fatal accident investigation unit. He received training in accident reconstruction for both passenger and commercial motor vehicles at the University of North Florida. He has been involved in several major investigations, including the New Orleans, Atlanta, and Mexican Hat motorcoach accidents. He was also involved in investigation of the Fox River Grove, Illinois, school bus accident. Mr. LeBerte has real life experience driving school buses, commercial motor vehicles, and heavy equipment.

Rafael Marshall, National Transportation Safety Board

Rafael Marshall, the manager of the truck & bus safety forum, has been with the NTSB since 1999. Dr. Marshall has served as the project manager on several truck- and bus-related accident reports, including the bus loss of control and rollover in Dolan Springs, Arizona, and the multiple-vehicle collision in Fairfield, Connecticut. He is currently developing the investigation report for a four-vehicle accident in Gray Summit, Missouri. Dr. Marshall authored the NTSB special investigation on medical oversight of noncommercial drivers. His Ph.D. is in cognitive psychology from George Mason University. He recently earned an M.P.H. in epidemiology from The George Washington University, where he conducted research on upper extremity injuries due to second generation front air bag deployment.

Robert Molloy, National Transportation Safety Board

Robert Molloy joined the Office of Research and Engineering in 1996, where he designed and carried out studies in support of aviation and pipeline safety, including a study of evacuations of commercial aircraft, an analysis of aviation accident survivability, and a study of pipeline control systems. Dr. Molloy is currently chief of the report development division in the Office of Highway Safety. He holds a Ph.D. and an M.A. in applied experimental psychology from The Catholic University of America and a B.A. in psychology from Lehigh University.

Jennifer Morrison, National Transportation Safety Board

Jennifer Morrison is a vehicle factors engineer in the Office of Highway Safety. She has been with the NTSB for 9 years. Ms. Morrison conducts the mechanical assessment of both commercial and passenger vehicles involved in major highway accidents. Her work has included investigations of the truck-tractor semitrailer rollover and motorcoach collision with an overturned truck near Osseo, Wisconsin; and the Bluffton University bus crash in Atlanta, Georgia. She had previously worked as a safety engineer and defects investigator for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Ms. Morrison received her BSE in bioengineering from the University of Pennsylvania. Since joining the NTSB, she has also earned an associate's degree in applied automotive technology and certificates in automotive electrical systems; automotive driveability; and

automotive suspension, brakes, and alignment from Montgomery College, Rockville, Maryland.

Kristin Poland, National Transportation Safety Board

Kristin Poland has worked as a senior biomechanical engineer in the vehicle performance division of the Office of Research and Engineering since 1998. Dr. Poland developed the NTSB methodology for occupant kinematics investigations and has performed occupant kinematics simulations and injury causation analysis for numerous investigations. She is the NTSB technical expert in occupant kinematic modeling (MADYMO, GATB), which is used to better understand occupant motion and injury causation. Dr. Poland has published multiple papers for SAE International and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, one of which was recognized by SAE as an outstanding paper of the year. She holds a B.S. in mechanical engineering from Cornell University and a Ph.D. in biomedical engineering from the University of Iowa.

Jana Price, National Transportation Safety Board

Jana Price has designed and carried out safety studies in the Office of Research and Engineering since 2001, including a study of the risks associated with weather-related general aviation crashes and a study of the efficacy of air bags in small aircraft. Dr. Price co-led the NTSB's 2006 public forum on motorcycle safety and the 2010 public forum on child passenger safety. Currently, she is a senior human performance investigator in the Office of Highway Safety. Her Ph.D. is in human factors from the University of Connecticut, where she conducted research on truck driver work/rest patterns.

David Rayburn, National Transportation Safety Board

David Rayburn joined the Office of Highway Safety in 1985. During his time at the NTSB, he has taken on several investigative roles, including investigator-in-charge, highway engineering specialist, vehicle factors engineering specialist, and human performance engineering specialist. Mr. Rayburn has participated in 42 major investigations and 18 special studies, including the 2008 motorcoach accident in Sherman, Texas; the 2007 Minneapolis, Minnesota, highway bridge collapse; and the 1995 collision between a school bus and a train in Fox River Grove, Illinois. Earlier in his career, Mr. Rayburn was a Texas state trooper and a patrol officer in a municipal police department. He also served 6 years in the U.S. Army and managed the traffic safety unit at Ft. Hood, Texas.

Gary Van Etten, National Transportation Safety Board

Gary Van Etten joined the Office of Highway Safety in 1992, where he currently is a motor carrier specialist. He has worked on numerous major NTSB investigations, including Wilmer, Texas; Victoria, Texas; Huntsville, Alabama; Terrell, Arkansas; Omaha, Nebraska; and Minneapolis, Minnesota. Before coming to the NTSB, Mr. Van Etten was a deputy sheriff with the Los Angeles

County Sheriff's Department for 21 years, specializing in traffic enforcement and traffic accident reconstruction. He has an extensive background as an instructor in radar enforcement, traffic accident investigation and reconstruction, hazardous materials enforcement, DUI enforcement, and motor carrier operations. Mr. Van Etten is a member of the Southwestern Association of Technical Accident Investigators and the National Association of Professional Accident Reconstruction Specialists. He sits on the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance driver committee. Mr. Van Etten holds a B.A. in political science from California State University Los Angeles and an M.A. in religion from Biola University.