



COLORADO

Department of Transportation

Legalized Recreational Cannabis and the Effects on Traffic Safety, Colorado's Story



Glenn Davis

- Colorado Governor's Highway Safety Office (HSO)
- Highway Safety Manager since 2004
- Former Chair, Secretary and current Vice-Chair of Colorado Task Force on Drunk and Impaired Driving
- HSO Representative to Gov. Hickenlooper's Cannabis Cabinet & Cannabis Data Group
- Retired from Littleton Police (CO) 25 years
- Drug Recognition Expert, Instructor,
- Course Manager and Agency Coordinator





Language is Important

- We = The Colorado Highway Safety Office
- Marijuana = Cannabis
- Medical Marijuana = Cannabis
- Recreational Marijuana = Cannabis
- Marijuana User = Cannabis Consumer
- Using Cannabis = Partaking
- Traffic Accidents = Traffic Crashes



Language is Important (Part 2):

- Problems = Challenges
- Opportunities = Issues needed to be resolved
- Police, Troopers, Deputys = Law Enforcement
- Delta 9 THC = the main psychoactive substance found in cannabis
- Cannabinoid = Compound found in cannabis
- Nanogram = 1,000,000,000th of a gram





Positions of the Colorado Highway Safety Office (HSO)

Viewing the situation from “Colorado Lens”

Advocate for Legalized Recreational Cannabis?

Colorado Constitutional Amendment #64

Good Government

Candor!

Realist

NEMAN THE STAR-LEDGER

CENTERS FOR THE STUDY OF THE GLARINGLY OBVIOUS





1. Beware the Tipping Point:

Why? Time to begin mobilization.

Colorado: Management of Amendment #20

Virginia: Virginia Mercury-Marijuana-is-now-legal-in-virginia-advocates-are-already-pushing-for-changes-to-the-law/

2. Position your agency for funding:

Colorado HSO Budgets:

- Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) Program 2014 Budget \$50,000, 2015 Budget \$500,000
- Impaired Driving Awareness (Office of Communications) % of NHTSA 405D, 2015 budget \$950,000
- <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb21-1317>

Why? Other agencies are preparing their budgets.

Cannabis in Colorado is taxed at 2.9% Medical and 15% Recreational (State only)

Cannabis Taxes generates about \$1,000,000 a day. Every quarter collections increase.



3. Be, find or designate the “Expert” for impaired driving-marijuana

Why? Consistency, See Below

4. Advocate for traffic safety. Don’t let it get lost.

Why?

Traffic Safety will not be “hot”.

Public/Legislative misconception of Cannabis/Traffic Safety

Social Issues will be the focus.

Task Forces are often short of traffic safety advocates

Amendment 64 Task Force (ARIDE Encouraged)



5. Seek partnerships early and often!

Why? There are new non-traditional partners involved.

Let me introduce you!

Feel free to compare and contrast with other groups you work with.

Young
Highly Educated
Politically Savvy (Dress appropriately, on time, raise hands, true nameplates, listen, etc.)

Well read (Your documents)

Have an agenda

Very Very well funded

Use “we”

Cannabis is not their hobby it's a





Partnerships and Stakeholders

- Collaborated with 30+ stakeholder partners
- CDOT Drugged Driving Cannabis Conv





Masks

DON'T
DRIVE HIGH

I'LL BE BLUNT.
DON'T
DRIVE HIGH.





Partnerships/State Task Force

Marijuana/Cannabis Industry has two statutory representatives on the Colorado Task Force on Drunk and Impaired Driving.

- Marijuana Industry Group
- Statewide Organization of Retail Marijuana for Consumption Off Premises





6. Focus on what you can change

Why? Keeps message consistent, keeps focus on the issue

7. Look for opportunities to educate

Why? Creditability, promotion (DRE program)

8. Keep focus on impairment (ng-device)

Why? Impairment is not about ng or a device, it is about law enforcement's ability to identify and document indicia of impairment

9. Know your partners positions/MJ industry/State/NHTSA/Gov's Office

Why? Helps in the navigation. Avoids unnecessary communications and meetings. Sets your mission.
Responsibility to Lead, Opportunity to Learn





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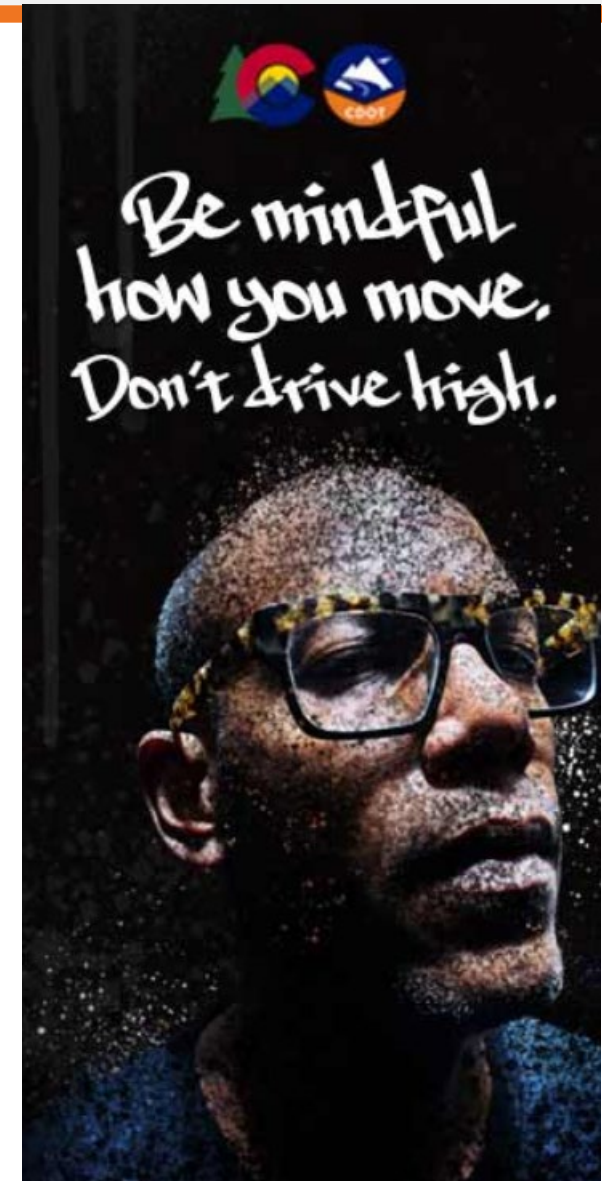
10. Use environment for opportunities:

- Data [DUI HB17-1315 SB13-283](#) **
- Promote DRE and ARIDE
- DRE School “Green Lab”
- Roadside Evaluation
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- [The Cannabis Conversation](#)
- <https://www.codot.gov/safety/impaired-driving/druggeddriving/data>



Reaching diverse audiences

- Mural and print ad with local artist and model
- Avoids feelings of targeting
- Positive, subtle, disarming



THE CANNABIS CONVERSATION



Background + Purpose

Let's hash it out. Together, we can find solutions to driving high.

Multi-year approach to inform future campaigns.

Work with the public to gather feedback together.

Broad-ranging dialogue rather than a traditional, one-way awareness marketing campaign.

Need for a cultural shift in how cannabis consumers think about driving high.





Colorado's Linked DUI Court Case Dataset, 2018





SB13-283 Traffic Safety Findings

Traffic Safety Findings

- The increase in law enforcement officers who are trained in recognizing drug use, from 129 in 2012 to 221 in 2020, can increase drug detection rates apart from any changes in driver behavior.

(DRE increased from 129 to 221, 36% emphasis on underserved)

- The prevalence of marijuana or marijuana-in-combination identified by Colorado State Patrol officers as the impairing substance in a DUI increased from 12% of all DUIs in 2014 to 31% in 2020. The prevalence of citations reported as marijuana-alone increased from 6.3% in 2014 to 8.7% in 2020, while marijuana-in-combination with alcohol or other drugs increased from 5.7% of citations in 2014 to 22.7% in 2020.

(CSP best data source, increase in Cannabis DUIs, Cannabis only DUIs, Cannabis other substance DUIs)

- The number of traffic fatalities where a driver tested positive* for any **cannabinoid** (Delta 9 or any other metabolite) increased 140%, from 55 in 2013 to 132 in 2019.

Traffic fatalities with a driver cannabinoid present up 140%! Cannabinoids are evidence of use not impairment.



- For years Colorado like many states has struggled with impaired driving (alcohol)
- In the 80s, groups like MADD, NHTSA and IACP led the changes with:
 - Advocacy for victims
 - Better Legislation
 - SFST
 - Drug Recognition Expert Training
 - Preliminary Breath Testing
- Colorado has a responsibility to lead and an opportunity to learn and begin to create a culture with Cannabis consumers of responsible use unlike the alcohol culture in the 1980s.



For Information on CDOT Impaired Driving Programs

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