



# **SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON TRAFFIC SAFETY**

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## **SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON TRAFFIC SAFETY**

Mr. Darryl Hickie, Chair  
Prince Albert Carlton

Ms. Danielle Chartier, Deputy Chair  
Saskatoon Riversdale

Mr. Herb Cox  
The Battlefords

Mr. Roger Parent  
Saskatoon Meewasin

Mr. Warren Steinley  
Regina Walsh Acres

Mr. Doyle Vermette  
Cumberland

Ms. Nadine Wilson  
Saskatchewan Rivers

[The committee met at 10:00.]

**The Chair:** — Morning, everybody, and welcome to yet again another all-party Traffic Safety Committee meeting here in the beautiful city, town of La Ronge. Just for the committee again and for our presenters, this is an open kind of an hour where you can present, and we'll have a question-and-answer period after you're finished. During the process we won't engage in debate with you, and all we ask is you don't ask us any questions as part of the process. And if you can, the first time you do . . . When the mike opens up to you, you'll see the red light. Just tell us who you are and the organization you're representing, and then you just freely speak.

But before that begins, I just want to table one more document: TSC 63/27, the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association. It'll be on the portal for the members to look at and review. Having said that, Chief, welcome. It's good to see you again. And the floor is yours.

**Presenter: Lac La Ronge Indian Band**

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Thank you very much. Good morning to the committee. And thank you very much for the invitation, and thank you to the esteemed MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] that are here. I welcome you to the traditional territory of Lac La Ronge Indian Band and look forward to the presentation this morning. And also to the guests that are here and your staff, it's a real honour to be here today to present regarding the road conditions in our area.

This morning we actually lost an elder, this morning about 8:30. He was 93 years old. And I was at the hospital. That's why I was running a little bit late. His name is Elder Colin Charles. And he worked a lot in our languages, keeping our Cree language alive and well. And he spoke the really old Cree because there's actually . . . The Cree has evolved over time. So he takes a lot with him, but he also leaves a lot — a huge legacy — behind.

So the family is still at the hospital. And we were there with them this morning. He's actually my grandpa . . . my dad's, my dad's sister's son. Yes. So I'm related to him closely. He was my uncle. So I just want to offer my condolences to the family at this time.

But on behalf of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, we also have our council meeting happening right now at the council chambers so I left the chair to one of the band councillors to chair the meeting while I'm here, so I told them I'd be here for an hour.

But we do have a lot of concerns about the road conditions in our area. And I know that there's a lot of development that's happening in the North. And we realize too that a lot of money from lands and resources is taken and spent elsewhere, and not too much on our highways. And the road conditions that our people have to deal with would probably be unbearable for some other residents in Saskatchewan, especially when the roads get really dusty and there's a lot of potholes. So I'll name specific some of the things that the councillors had raised for me to bring in this morning.

[Ms. Cook-Searson spoke for a time in Cree.]

So some of the suggestions that I received were on Highway 2, Kathy's Korner. It's a very high-traffic area. So it's right on Highway 2 as you cross the bridge when you come into La Ronge. After you cross the bridge, it's a really high volume. And one of the suggestions that they made is to have a three-way stop there even. Because there's been . . . Actually I don't even know how many fatalities there's been with people crossing the road, where there's been fatalities because of people not being able to see them.

So if there was a three-way stop there at Kathy's Korner, because there's one coming off the . . . our reserve is called 101 Reserve, and then coming in from Bigstone and then the highway, because there's a lot of people that go back and forth there. Maybe even a three-way stop, and it would stop the traffic and then that way people wouldn't get stuck that are coming in from Bigstone or coming in from 101. And then they would really slow down the traffic that flows through the Highway 2. So that's one suggestion that we had.

And then the other one, the other concern that we're bringing forward is the service road that was put in last year. It was on the main highway. Same thing in La Ronge. We have a convenience store that's been cut off so there's only one way to come in. But there was a new service road that was put in, and for some reason there was some miscommunication between the Sask Highways officials and our officials, where the road was totally cut off in one end. It's our Keethanow Gas Bar. So there's a bingo hall, there's our ICFS [Indian Child and Family Services] building, there's our main office, band office building, and then there's — what is it, Shell? — the Shell gas station, and then there's a restaurant there. But then our gas bar was totally cut off. So there was concerns there. So we want to know if we can open up that gas bar area so we can have two access ways to our store and also to the band office and to the ICFS building to the bingo hall. But when you, if whoever it is that's doing the study for you, maybe they can look at that. But there was miscommunication there between our officials and your officials with Highways.

And the lighting on the reserve areas or even the main highway, there's lighting. Like there's no . . . Like in the wintertime, it doesn't get daylight till 9 in the morning, and the kids are waiting for their bus. And it's on the main highway, Highway 2, and then there's not enough lights, street lights. So just for the safety of the kids or people that are crossing the road. Like right now it's okay because there's daylight. But as you know, wintertime comes, and our daylight's really short in Saskatchewan.

So some of the lighting, the lighting in the areas of residential areas, not just in La Ronge, but in the other communities like Hall Lake, Sucker River, Grandmother's Bay, Stanley, in Little Red. That's where Nadine is from, I think. Yes, so Little Red. So just the lighting areas in the more like populated areas. So more lighting on the streets.

And then the gravel roads are a huge concern, especially when there's not enough calcium put on. So the calcium brings the dust down. But it's not always put on, and sometimes you're

behind like a convoy of vehicles, and you don't know what's coming at you or who's in front of you because . . . And then you get, if you meet up with a semi, for example, you can't even see in front of you for a long time. It's kind of like riding down a snowstorm on a . . . even if it's all paved and, you know, you get all covered. So it's like that with the dust.

And then the other suggestion was a pedestrian crosswalk. As you come into La Ronge, there's Fairchild and Far Reserve, so a pedestrian crosswalk there. We have our clinic there. So our Jeannie Bird Clinic is located there. So that's the same on Highway 2. But there's no pedestrian crosswalk there, and there's a lot of people that live in that area, probably about 2,000 people. And then plus the office, our clinic is located in that area. So it's between . . . So it's on Highway 2 between Fairchild and Far Reserve. And then we also have the arena and the community centre that's there, JR hall, JRMCC [Jonas Roberts Memorial Community Centre] and the arena, and then . . . Yes so more lights at 101, Bigstone.

And then the other concern is the road going into Stanley Mission. The potholes are just humongous. They're about maybe that big. Like they're not just little. They're huge and you have to kind of go almost off the road, and it's about 10 kilometres into that Stanley Mission road. So there's about 1,700 people that live in Stanley Mission plus it's a historic site. The oldest building in Saskatchewan is located there. So we've got a lot of tourists that go into that area. But the roads are in really bad shape right now going into Stanley.

And then the other concern that we have is the paved road from La Ronge to Sucker River. The paved road is in really bad condition and it seems like when they fix it, the only thing that they use is shovels just to kind of cover off the paved area.

And I know you said not to ask any questions so I won't ask any questions, but I'll just kind of phrase it in a way so it's . . . I kind of said it in the beginning of my presentation because there's a lot of money generated from the lands and resources, especially with the mining sector, and we just wanted to know how much money is put into the roads for northern Saskatchewan people, considering how much money is going into the revenue and trust fund. So I don't know how to phrase it.

But that's what I have right now for a presentation. So I'm open for questions or comments.

**The Chair:** — Thank you very much, Chief. I think we'll start off with, Ms. Wilson has a comment or question, then we'll go to Mr. Vermette.

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair, Chief Tammy Searson. Thank you very much for your presentation and recommendations, and my condolences regarding Elder Charles. I sympathize for you and your family.

The road conditions for Highway 2 regarding Kathy's Korner, you're talking about the high volume and you're suggesting a three-way stop. Is that correct?

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Yes.

**Ms. Wilson:** — And you're also suggesting number 101, Bigstone, there's some issues there?

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Just the lighting. So that's part of the lighting. So having more lighting where it's populated and then especially where the kids are getting picked up by bus. Because in the wintertime, the daylight doesn't come until after 9 o'clock in the morning and then they're standing at their bus stop and the people that are going by don't see them.

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Chief.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Not just there but in all our six reserves.

**Ms. Wilson:** — So you're talking about either Little Red or Hall Lake or Grandmother's Bay, that the lighting should be improved in those areas.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Yes.

**Ms. Wilson:** — Because it gets so dark in our winters.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Yes. Because even if you were to come into our reserves at night, you would see that we don't have that many street lights. Like not all the streets are lit and not all the . . . Like where people are walking by where the highways are, they're not all lit either.

**Ms. Wilson:** — Chief, you're also talking about the dust impairing vision and pedestrian crosswalks. And the Stanley Mission historical church, you were saying there's a lot of tourists going up there. I believe that's the oldest church in the province.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — That's the oldest building in the province.

**Ms. Wilson:** — So you have a lot of concerns. And I appreciate all this feedback because the traffic committee will take this back and make some recommendations. So thank you very much for your presentation. I appreciate all your comments and I think they're very valid.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Thank you very much. Thank you.

**Ms. Wilson:** — You're welcome.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Vermette.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Chief, it's good to see you here and I'm . . . Of course our condolences go to you and your family and to the community. It's truly a loss.

You've mentioned comments on certain I guess topics that you shared with . . . from the communities that you represent, and it's about safety and pedestrians. And I know our job as a committee is to deal with fatalities and lowering them and injuries, and I think you've hit some areas that truly impact your community and, you know, our community members in the North.

And not only . . . We're hearing it all over, some of the challenges. And I'm glad that you, you know, talked about

some of the issues that are facing community members. One area I want to go on, and you talked about, you know, the road conditions and some of the challenges with the dust and safety, and it is. I know I travel the roads pretty often too and you're faced with sometimes some serious challenges where you're going through, and it's dust, potholes, and just overall road conditions. And I know. So I, like I'm happy that you shared those concerns. Because we had areas where we were supposed to look at, so I'm glad that we could have you bring some of that information to the committee from the North.

But having said that, do you have any areas . . . Like we talk about impaired driving in some of the communities and some of the challenges. Can you talk about that?

And I'd like to hear your comments if you would share with us about education in the communities, whether it's on wearing seat belts . . . Because we've seen that clearly that's been a challenge in the some of the First Nations communities is SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] in some of the reports when there's been accidents and fatalities, a lot of the individuals were not wearing their seat belts. So is there any way, suggestions you can make to the committee that we could make recommendations to the legislature on how we could improve and educate communities that are not using seat belts as much as they should? Any ideas or suggestions you could do would be greatly appreciated.

[10:15]

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Okay. Thank you, Mr. Vermette. Yes. As you're asking me that, I was just thinking, I'm not sure if you do any public campaigns in Cree about seat belts or in other First Nation languages. Because when you say when you buckle up your pakwahtēhon, that means it's like you're putting on your belt. Yes. So maybe something, some more public education, and do them in Cree or Dene or, you know, any of the languages that we have in Saskatchewan.

And then the drinking and driving, same thing. More public awareness. I know there's a lot of ads out there with MADD [Mothers Against Drunk Driving], but maybe some maybe in the different languages that we have in Saskatchewan because it is just more public education. Yes.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Okay. I'll open it up for if somebody else wants to ask questions, but I'd like to come back after.

**The Chair:** — Sure. Okay. We'll have Mr. Parent. No? Okay, you're off. Then Mr. Vermette, feel free. The floor is yours, sir.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Okay. As far as the partnership you have with I guess enforcement and the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], and I know La Ronge Band has its own security, ICSF band security, that works with . . . Can you explain to us how that works and what type of . . . Because it is about safety. I imagine they report impaired driving. And what do you find your guys's response from the RCMP and just dealing with the everyday, we'll say enforcement? And do you think there's enough enforcement on the communities that you represent? And I know it's not just here in La Ronge; it's, you know, all the other communities you represent. If you can give some background on it, I'm just curious to see what your

feeling is.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Okay. Well we have a security program on-reserve, and it's only for La Ronge, Sucker River, and Hall Lake because we have six separate communities with Lac La Ronge Indian Band, but they're administered separately. So we have, like Little Red administers their own administration. Stanley administers their own. Grandmother's Bay administers their own. So La Ronge, Hall Lake, and Sucker River are together.

So the councillors have put money aside, whether it's from our casino money or from our Kitsaki dividends. So they put money aside. So they put about 400,000 aside to do the security program. So we have eight full-time staff — or we had eight full-time staff — and we also have vehicles, uniforms, so the fuel and everything. So everything just . . . That's what the security program covers.

But we found, well I find that it's working good to work with the RCMP, but they don't do any enforcement at all because they don't have any authority to do so. So they're more the eyes and ears. And if they do see anybody speeding through the reserve for example at an excessive speed, at least they can mark it down, get their plate number, and then call the RCMP right away and say this is a concern. Or they can monitor any houses that the RCMP want them to monitor. But it's more of a security, so even our public buildings that they'll do security on. And then they also do . . . If we have big events or if there's traffic that has to be controlled, they'll help with that.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Chief, I know you have a large number of youth within your communities and I think that's important to . . . If you could give us some of the ideas, is there anything you could suggest that we could do to target the youth in your communities on, you know, driving, different ways to improve their safety when it comes to the roads, walking on roads, anything that you could . . . education, any idea that you have that could be helpful or any way you could submit to us any information from your, I guess, the schools or the health of your . . . your health board or your officials that work with health?

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Well it's good to hear that the provincial government's also put money into the driver education program for the on-reserve schools. So that's a good step forward. And I think that, like you said, we do have a high rate of youth. We have over 50 per cent of our population is under 25 years old, and we have almost 10,000 people within our band. So we do have a huge youth population.

But I think that with the way it is right now to get your driver's licence, I think that's a good step because it's very difficult to get your driver's licence. It's not like it used to be. You could just take one road test and you had it. But now you have to wait so many months, and then you have to have . . . So you don't get your licence right away. You have to prove that you're safely I guess on the road before you get your driver's licence.

So those are some of the steps that have been taken. But probably more, you'd have to ask the youth what would . . . what things that they would listen to because they have different things, that they would have their own ideas. And they

would be the best people to ask on what would work for them or what would work for their peers because we think different from youth. And so I just think that would be probably where the goal is, to ask youth what would be the best way to educate them or what messages would they listen to or maybe even something that, a commercial, that the youth can do themselves. But for sure we need to have more education for the youth, especially with the high . . . because there's a lot of youth that . . . You know, when we're all younger, we drive too fast and we're careless, and so . . . not that adults don't drive fast.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you for that. I guess I've got one more area I want to look at. And some of the other communities . . . We were in Pelican, and one of the presenters talked about a lot of individuals maybe not realizing or whatever, and maybe see your suggestion, if it's education . . . How do you think we could make recommendations or suggestions to improve, to making sure that people have registered vehicles on the reserve, that they have a valid driver's licence? Is there any area in that, and if it is a problem in your communities, is there any suggestions you could give to the committee how we would deal with that or suggestions we could make that might be helpful?

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Probably even more awareness that if you're driving without a licence and if you get into an accident, like what the ramifications are for you. And you know, it costs a lot of money plus you could never . . . You know, it'd take you years to get your licence back, or if you ever get your licence back. And even if it's not your fault and you get into an accident and you're there without . . . and you're driving and you don't have a licence, it's automatically your fault. So knowing that you're 100 per cent responsible if you're driving without a licence and, you know, those kinds of awareness campaigns probably just to bring it home for people so they know that it's 100 per cent their fault if they're driving or if they get into a car accident, and if there's a fatality for example, what responsibility lies with that person that's taking that chance.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Okay, Chief. Some of the other suggestions I know the committee has heard from witnesses that have come forward. And recommendations to the committee has been to, when someone's been driving under the influence, not only will they get a 24-hour suspension or, you know, whether it's 72-hour depending on what level of blood alcohol in their system, that also there's seizing of their vehicles for a number of days — to not only give a 24-hour suspension but you seize the vehicle. Do you think . . . What's your feeling on that? Do you think it's something we should visit, especially with the number of communities you represent? Is that something that you would think would be helpful?

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — No. But I think there should be a zero tolerance for drinking and driving because it's been proven over and over again that it's dangerous. It's not safe, especially when we're . . . If you're in your vehicle and you have your young family with you, and somebody that's drinking and driving runs into you and, you know, kills your whole family, those are situations that are happening over and over again. And I think that the laws that they have within the drinking and driving and having the vehicles taken for a number of days, you know, I think there are laws in place already that deal with drinking and

driving. But there should be a zero tolerance for sure because it definitely is dangerous.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Okay. Thank you. If there's anyone else with questions at this point.

**The Chair:** — Ms. Chartier, please. Then we'll go to Mr. Steinley.

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you so much, Chief Cook-Searson. I just want to reflect back to you to make sure that we have the essence of what you're saying here correct.

So when we talk about public campaigns or education — and we've talked about youth; we've talked about being culturally sensitive around language — what I hear you saying is if SGI or any other organization is going to embark upon successful public awareness, they need to not use a blanket approach. It really has to be done in consultation with communities, whether it's the youth, and making sure the message hits them. So I just want to make sure that that's in fact what you're saying, that we have that on the record that it's very important when we have public awareness that it is impacting and reaching the people we need it to reach.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Yes. Correct.

**Ms. Chartier:** — Okay. Thank you very much. I appreciate all that you've had to say. Thank you.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Okay. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Steinley. Then we'll go to Ms. Wilson.

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you very much for being here today, Chief Cook-Searson. One question I have regarding the high schools and the schools in La Ronge and areas, do the RCMP come out and have those education programs? Do they come out and do some . . . I know around the province they bring, they call them the beer goggles, and you can try and drive through an obstacle course after having a couple. And it shows how much it does affect your driving. Are there those awareness campaigns going on between the RCMP and the schools now or between other organizations like SGI and the schools around the area?

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — They do have the driver education program. And they do have RCMP that go into the schools for public education because we have community policing within our community. But I don't know if that's part of the D.A.R.E. [drug abuse resistance education] program because that's part of bullying and, you know, public education. But I don't know if they have the goggles that you mentioned, but I know what you're talking about.

**Mr. Steinley:** — And another thing that comes to mind is the rate of seat belt use. It's something that I would like to see a solution. And your idea of having some education and awareness in Cree and other languages is a very good idea. And I'm wondering, when they're going through driver training as young people, is there, should there be more emphasis put on that seat belt use and that safety? Because the discrepancy between the on-reserve and off-reserve seatbelt use is

staggering. SGI said it's about — what was it? — 50 per cent lower on-reserve, and 90 per cent of the accidents were because of . . . deaths were because of seat belts not being used. And I think that's something simple that we can really fix.

And through that campaign, like you said, through young people, social media, would that be something where young people . . . I think you get a better response from young people through social media. And I don't know. I'm not from northern Saskatchewan. Is there a big social media push with young people up here, and do you think that would be a better way to reach people?

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Yes, for sure there is a lot of people that do social media, especially the young people. And as you're mentioning that and as Doyle was mentioning too what ideas we could have, maybe some kind of public campaign even with using social media where you log in and you get a chance to win an iPhone or an iPad or something like that, you know. And then you'd have more people come and check it out, and you watch this one-minute video. You know, it's like when they want to sell you MasterCards or whatever, they have those videos that you have to watch for a minute. Yes.

**Mr. Steinley:** — Yes. Thank you very much. Thank you for being here. I really appreciate it. You guys have a beautiful community up here, and just thank you.

**A Member:** — The fish are biting.

**Mr. Steinley:** — And the fish are biting.

**The Chair:** — Ms. Wilson.

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thanks, Mr. Chair. Chief Cook-Searson, I really like your idea about the public awareness campaign. I think it would be very valuable for this community and maybe for other communities that have a language barrier in the province. And do you have the Mothers Against Drunk Driving program in La Ronge and area?

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — I don't know if we do or not. No, we don't.

**Ms. Wilson:** — No? Okay. I think in some communities that has been proven very valuable as well.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Yes.

**Ms. Wilson:** — And when the other committee members were talking about working with education in the schools, I think that would be a good idea to start with the youth. What did you say? You have 51 per cent youth in this community?

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Yes, 50 per cent. Over 50 per cent of our population is under 25.

**Ms. Wilson:** — You know, I understand you have a very young and growing community, and I echo my committee member's regards to your beautiful area. I went for a walk this morning and it was so fresh. You live in a beautiful part of the world, and so thank you for your comments.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Yes. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** — Chief, it's my turn to ask some questions I guess, if you don't mind.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Yes.

**The Chair:** — From my background in charge of Municipal Affairs for a couple of years in the government, I do have a couple of questions about your area you're talking about for all these . . . These improvements are, you know, going to be one of those things where if it's a federal responsibility or a municipal responsibility or a provincial government responsibility.

I know a little bit about your community. But on the Highway No. 2 area, when we have highways running through municipalities, municipalities have to assume a lot of the responsibility for signage and lighting. I'm not trying to deflect that at all. But I'm kind of curious: the areas you talked about at Kathy's Korner, is that a . . . Would that be in a municipal reserve area? I mean, would that be the town of La Ronge or Air Ronge responsibility or would that be a provincial highway responsibility?

[10:30]

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — No, it's a provincial highway. It actually, it used to be our reserve, but years ago the band council signed a band council resolution giving that responsibility to the Department of Highways to allow that highway to run through there.

**The Chair:** — Okay. Thank you. Now how about where the . . . You mentioned you want some lighting for the kids in the . . . I know on-reserve it's going to be a little different, I think, because that will be a federal responsibility. But is the area around your area, around La Ronge, are you talking about just off the Highway No. 2 for these children?

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Yes.

**The Chair:** — Okay, so that would be a provincial responsibility again probably, I'm thinking.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Okay, so you're saying the ones on-reserve would be federal . . .

**The Chair:** — They might be. We have to get some clarification, because there is some jurisdictional boundaries where the Ministry of Highways and the government will be responsible for roads. But on some reserves it changes to INAC [Indian and Northern Affairs Canada], I understand. And we don't have that knowledge, but I guess it's one of those things where we have to ask that question. And maybe the band councillors and under your leadership, you might want to inquire that way as well, because I know that the Highways has told me there are chunks of roadway that they're responsible for and other chunks and signage issues that they aren't.

So just on that point, I guess that's just an issue I have to raise with you to, you know, consult with those two different departments first. You might get some satisfaction quicker,

actually, then waiting for us to make recommendations on those points too.

I liked your pedestrian crosswalk, as well, idea. I think that's important that we have some issues there. I think across the province we're hearing, urban and in some rural areas, that there's a higher pedestrian traffic flow and have to cross major thoroughfares. So we'll have to take a look at that as well and see what we're talking about there from a provincial standpoint.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Sorry, there is a pedestrian crosswalk right now between Bigstone and 101, but it doesn't light up. It's just there. And then so the suggestion that I was asked to make was to have a four-way stop there, because some people get congested coming in from Bigstone onto the main highway and then people coming in from 101. And then if you . . . I don't know. You can always look at it, anyway. Or else even having lights there, so when somebody's crossing the street then at least those lights come on.

**The Chair:** — That's an interesting one. You know, I think if you were to talk to the Ministry of Highways about that, and even the municipal government here, they might even do that for you in the interim and we wouldn't have to make the recommendation. Because that seems to be a thing we're seeing across Saskatchewan as well, those lighting areas. The flashing lights for awareness is big as well.

However, I think we've found out that that's going to probably be a recommendation coming forward that there is more awareness to pedestrian crosswalks through lighting and warning areas too, and signage I think.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — The other crosswalk was between Fairchild and our reserve, so was just coming off the main highway from south, heading north.

**The Chair:** — Okay, thank you. And then just a couple of things. In regards to the great questions that were raised by all the members about seat belts and public awareness, SGI did tell us that they do have a staff member that does work in the North and will come to First Nations communities upon invite. They don't impose themselves. So I would ask that you and your councillors write a letter to SGI to have them come up and do a . . . and talk to you, because they will definitely do that upon invite. They'll talk to students. They'll to adults. They'll talk to the communities, as well, about different things in regards to traffic safety and vehicle safety, seat belt usage. But your point about the language would be interesting too, where you might want to have that person have some individuals from your community be able to translate because that's . . . I think there's going to be a barrier there for some individuals and I definitely understand that.

SGI also started, or was supposed to start, going to First Nations communities with the new driver's licence program when we had the . . . [inaudible] . . . Have they come to your community and had public awareness campaigns that they were coming and then having them set up in your town hall or your band office, to actually give and issue new licences?

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Not that I'm aware.

**The Chair:** — Okay, that's good. I want to just suggest you ask for that as well. I think that's one of those recommendations as well from the committee that SGI was supposed to go to the First Nations, and it makes sense. Two reasons. You identified from Mr. Vermette's comment about not having a driver's licence. Some people just don't have . . . They forget about renewing, and these new licences actually have a five-year term which is very . . . which is one of those things where it takes care of that, but also updates the whole system. So you can do that on your own, Chief, but we'll make a . . . I think the recommendation was one of those, as low-hanging fruit, we call it. But it could take time for that to get to fruition, so reaching out from your office, Chief, would probably be a little bit more beneficial and timely I think on that.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — You know what happens when you take a hanging fruit, eh?

**The Chair:** — What's that?

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — What happened to Adam.

**The Chair:** — Good point. Well I'm going to think about that now for a while. It's in my mind. I know that, Chief, you're one of the most progressive chiefs in the province and you definitely have a huge heart for your people, but you also have a great understanding of politics and how things get done.

You know, I was just talking to the staff up here about using the youth. If it was to happen that SGI was to do an awareness campaign through MBC [Missinipi Broadcasting Corporation] and maybe not so much television up here, but maybe more on the airwaves, would you be able to identify a number of youth that would come forward who are of strong leaders and maybe our future or maybe current role models that would be able to take part in a media campaign? Because you know, I think that as a parent, my daughters didn't listen to me too much, but they sure listen to their friends a lot easier. So I have to wonder, that would make a lot of sense to engage the youth and use them in that aspect. I don't think it would cost a lot of money either to run an awareness campaign. What are your thoughts on that?

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — I probably won't . . . I'm thinking that the youth will probably identify themselves, who they are, and then they'd be able to tell us. Or I'm sure they'd be willing to take an opportunity like that.

**The Chair:** — Well great. I know that I would think that we'll definitely be looking to your leadership. There's many chiefs in this province, I think, that have a similar concern for the youth. We know it's a very large demographic up North but I think, around the province, that the chiefs are definitely concerned about the future for their youth and what's going to happen. And safety-wise, you know, it's just about continuous messaging and that might be the way to do it, engaging them.

Any more questions from anyone on the committee? Mr. Vermette, and then we'll go from there. Thank you, Chief.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Yes. I guess I'll give my final comments, Chief, and maybe a few areas to ask you.

I know Highway No. 2 travels and goes through the



community, and you talked about where, through chief and council, they granted permission for the highway to run through the First Nations community, your traditional territory. And having said that, I know that highway that runs along, you have a lot of pedestrians who walk along there and there's . . . I'm curious to see what your feelings are. I know myself I travel there lots, of course being from the community. But the speeding of some of the big trucks and I've watched how . . . And people coming off that main highway, and I do it myself, you're travelling at such, you know, speeds, highways speeds, and then you get into where you're 50 kilometres. Have you heard or do you have any recommendations, any suggestions you could say about how we could lower the speeds on that or if you see it as a concern? I'm curious to see.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Yes. Thank you for bringing that up. We actually raised that concern with the Department of Highways because we had the engineer come in from Prince Albert . . . [inaudible] . . . I think her name is . . . I can never say her name right. But she's an engineer with Highways and she's out of Prince Albert. And we did mention that we wanted the speed limit reduced — especially between the bingo hall to Kathy's Korner — because right now it's 80 kilometres an hour and we had asked it to be reduced to at least 50. And they said because of engineering reasons, or whatever reasons, they couldn't reduce that speed.

But it's a really . . . It's highly populated and people live on both sides of the road, and it's still 80 kilometres an hour. And you're right, it goes down and then especially . . . And then the other concern, as you're mentioning that, I might as well mention it while I'm here. When there's a call for the RCMP, they just fly down that road, like they go like at lightning speed. And there's kids that swim at the bridge, and it's almost like an accident waiting to happen too. So if somehow, maybe the RCMP station can be moved closer to where all the action is even, because they're way over here and then most of our population is on the other side of the bridge. Well, I don't know how they . . . but it's just they drive way too fast through that area. And it's been brought to my attention a number of times, and I've seen it myself, where they're going 100, 120 to get . . . When they have their lights on I know they're going to an accident or to an incident or whatever that's happening.

**Mr. Vermette:** — And the Chair mentioned about SGI and working with First Nations and I think moving with, I don't know, it's an individual hired to work, and I think PAGC [Prince Albert Grand Council] might have somebody actually already. I thought somebody said that. Maybe I'm wrong with that or they're working towards PAGC having somebody working, coordinating with SGI on some of those issues. So that might be an area to check too, as Darryl was talking about, would be good.

I guess, Chief, you also mentioned about the driver's licence, and currently right now I know for ID [identification] and stuff like that, and I just want to see your suggestion. Right now currently on a driver's licence they might have a box number, because we in the North have box numbers. We don't have house delivery like the mail service in the South. So there are challenges. And I know for ID and this is maybe a . . . see your suggestion and we could, you know, even, you know, bring that as a suggestion to SGI. And I know under, and I . . . Elections

Saskatchewan, we're going to be dealing with this too. The driver's licence that has the ID, it shows your box number but it doesn't have your street number.

Do you think it would be a good idea in our communities to have the street number and the box number so that you could use that for ID? Because sometimes they require that you have a street address on there and currently we have a box number. Would that be a good suggestion to help community members with their ID, to have the box and the street address of their community?

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Yes, I think I have my address on my driver's licence. Because I think they ask that. I think it's just a new thing. I'll just check real quick. Oh, I don't have a licence. It's stuck. This wasn't part of the plan. Oh yes, I do, yes.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Both? Okay.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Want to see it?

**Mr. Vermette:** — Yes. That's good.

**The Chair:** — Just hold it up. I want to see that. Just out of curiosity, from a First Nations perspective to see how it's registered. I'd just like to see how it is registered on a First Nation.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — It's just a new one.

**The Chair:** — Okay.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — But not everybody has their licence, because on-reserve we're just starting to get the driver education program from last month, so the opportunities weren't there as they were for everybody else.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Yes, I guess where I was going with that, I know some people have just the box number and they don't have their street address, so maybe we could ensure that, you know, if it's an option, that it may be that SGI needs to be aware that it has to be the actual street and not the box number. Maybe that'll be helpful and I don't know how they're doing it.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Yes.

**Mr. Vermette:** — I know from mine, originally I had to ask to have my street address put on there.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Yes, I got it put on there. So it says, I think, 406, but it has 101 Reserve.

**Mr. Vermette:** — And maybe that's what . . . and that's where I was going with it. Not being it's automatic that they do that, either that put both or your street address on there. It would be a suggestion, is what I was looking at.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Yes. I have really messy hair in my picture there.

**Mr. Vermette:** — I guess my last comments to you, Chief, is clearly you are the largest First Nations band in Saskatchewan, of course. I'll say this because out of your 10,000 members,

some of my grandchildren are members of La Ronge Indian Band and of course it's a young population. And as a colleague was mentioning — Ms. Wilson — that 50 per cent is young. And I just want to say, yes, we all do our part to add to the young population in Saskatchewan.

But having said that, Chief, thank you for coming here today and presenting some of the challenges that your communities face and for your leadership with chief and council and what you guys are trying to do in the awareness. I just want to say as a committee member and being a northern person, I appreciate your sincere thoughts to some of the challenges, but also the good suggestions that you bring forward to the committee so we can make recommendations that will help, not only down south but in northern Saskatchewan and all First Nations and residents of our province. So I just want to say to you, thank you for taking the time and, you know, condolences again to your family and, you know, with the utmost respect I have for you and the community. Thank you for presenting.

**Ms. Cook-Searson:** — Thank you very much, and thank you for reminding me to come here. And thank you for the opportunity to meet with the committee. And welcome again to our traditional territory. I hope you take some time to enjoy the weather because it's really nice out there. And I wish you well for the rest of your deliberations. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Thank you very much, Chief. And to all the committee members, thanks for the great questions today. And you know what, Chief? Again from the Chair's position, condolences to you and your family for the loss of an elder that was very instrumental to educating the youth and maintaining the traditional ways and language.

On that note, we will take a recess until the next presenter at 11 o'clock. Thank you.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

**Presenters: Clarence Neault and Dr. James Irvine**

**The Chair:** — Welcome back, committee members. We're here to have our second presentation. We'll start just a little earlier because the presenters are here. Just for the presenters' sake, when you do present for the first time, please just ensure that you tell us who you are and the organization you're representing when the red light comes on in front of you on the mike. And after your presentation, there'll be some time for questions and answers back and forth. We won't debate you on a particular point you raise nor can you ask us a question. Just as process, you can't do that.

So having said that, the Chair . . . From my position to you, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Neault:** — Good. So do I have to hit the button here?

**The Chair:** — No. It's all ready.

**Mr. Neault:** — It's ready to go. Good. I don't represent any particular organization. I will ask you how you'd like us . . . We do have similar presentations, northern presentations. That's why we're here with Dr. Irvine, James. He's the . . .

**Mr. Irvine:** — Medical health officer.

**Mr. Neault:** — Okay. Do you want me to do mine first and ask questions and then his? Because there is continuity but . . . and they're the same . . .

**The Chair:** — Just go back and forth with that. You guys just each present, and once you present the presentations, members are making notes throughout it, so they will have a direct question to either of you, or maybe it could be to both of you or to one of you individually. So, yes.

**Mr. Neault:** — So present, present, and you can just . . . So just go ahead and . . . [inaudible].

So my name is Clarence Neault. I represent at this point no particular organization. I represent myself and possibly my own part-time business from the hospitality trade called Northern Hospitality Services, where I do training for the retail and tourism sector and actually even for the health sector in customer service and staff communications. So that's who I am.

[11:00]

My presentation today, my area is about the responsible service of alcohol. I've not only taken the course; I've taught it. I don't know if you're familiar with it, but it's there in front of you, the SIRS [Serve It Right Saskatchewan] online. You may have run across it. In terms of industry, I understand that you've had some familiarization with it. So I, even though I am of the industry, I don't . . . I may not necessarily share what they had to say.

This is my own effort, separate as an individual having been in the profession for over 35 years serving mostly in alcohol situations, either managing departments or actually as a bartender on line when I started . . . or front line. So I speak from that, having done it personally, professionally on hand and taught others. And now I'm at the point of again teaching others what good customer service is and also training on the service, which is now available online, best service of alcohol, which is called the SIRS. My presentation will be about that, be fairly oral, not well rehearsed. After 35 years I should probably have it right.

I also do . . . I want to qualify what I do or who I am. I also have been in the North for about since '95, and 10 of those years were at the hotel right here, managing and assistant managing, working first-hand, and before that, 25 years previous, in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and BC [British Columbia] working mostly with alcohol. I do have my journey person food and beverage server where it's required that I take that course. Not only did I take it, but it's required. And I was on the apprenticeship board representing the hospitality and other sectors that are represented at the board for industry in 2004 for one year before I moved out of province. They seemed to have a rule against being on the Saskatchewan board if you're elsewhere, which was fine. It was a pleasure to work with them, and I became a journey person after. So that's who I am.

I'm here today to speak about the responsible service of alcohol and to mention to you, if you don't already know, it's law in varying ways in almost every province in Canada where

anybody that serves alcohol to the public in licensed establishments and in some cases in private clubs, in temporary licences, and even at weddings where they get some type of licence or are known to serve alcohol . . . I'm not here to decide which of those is the best. It's just so long as there's a large effort and it's made mandatory. Because I've seen first-hand in the work I do as a server . . . And I feel fairly bad I wasn't informed when I came into the industry that many years ago, and then I watched the people that worked for me that weren't trained and what it was, what it meant for them. These are the people that are controlling a substance. Alcohol is a substance. Not classed as a drug perhaps, but that's what it is. It has the same effects.

Realizing that, a lot of the staff that are serving now, first of all, don't think they can . . . They may get reprimanded or lose their job. If they even have the right idea without any training, they often will not do anything for fear of losing their job. Imagine having the skills, but turning their head and ignoring what they know is better because . . . And that is common. And quite often in the North, because a lot are permission based, taking orders, it's younger people a lot of times or people who are used to doing that. Not in all cases, but 10 years ago it was certainly the fact, and I'm sure it certainly is. So they're scared to lose their job. They're scared to go against the boss, and they don't exercise because they don't feel they can.

What the course tells them is not only they can; it tells them how to do it effectively. It becomes now not just a moral thing, but there's actually some skills in how to identify, on how to manage, work with your co-workers, and when to move away from it, and when to call the police. Whatever it takes. And they also have permission. Because in the case of most people, having been a manager for most of my career of people that serve alcohol or who serve people . . . giving them the empowerment or the permission to do so.

It goes beyond that. This particular course lets them know that they have personal liability if somebody is served alcohol, besides having to face a judge, if somebody gets hurt or killed. That would be devastating if we haven't given them the course, the training, and the notion that they actually could be called up and could be fined. Plus their employer of course can be fined. In real life when that happens — and it's not good when it does, we all know that — in real life when that happens, it usually falls to severally liable, and it will go for the organization or institution with the most money.

I'm moving over to the employer's side now, how it looks to the employer. Large employers are climbing on board automatically. Delta Hotels I'm sure is one of them, and many more. Boston Pizza I believe is another one. Because they know it affects their insurance rates. But also they know, at the top, if a person has a drink here, a drink there, a drink here, and a drink there, that when it comes time for court, they're probably historically going to be, the ones with the deepest pockets are the ones that are going to receive the biggest court case and have to pay the most because before they go with the little guys and waste their time, they go to severally liable. Everybody's responsible incrementally and if they can put it on a larger corporation . . . So that's how that mechanism largely works in real life.

So the smart companies, the big companies are figuring this out pretty quick. They don't have to wait for mandatory. They're on it already. And I don't have any stats or proof. This is just an industry person. But I will answer some questions, and I feel I can answer them reasonably.

The other thing is it's in between. And I know right now, and I'm glad of it, that the liquor establishments, liquor licensing is opening, and that's a good thing in terms of more alcohol available, making it less of a sort of a bad thing to do, and maybe more chance for people to learn how to drink more reasonably. But I am worried about all these new establishments, these new vendors. They don't have any training. And I know what it's like in small business. When push comes to shove and you really care but the rent's due, sometimes you just keep on serving, or it's a friend. You don't know. Mistakes are made, not always because of greed, because of not knowing what your liability is and what's the best thing to do.

So these new licensees, I see them and that's great. But I see more people serving alcohol, to people, that don't have any training and that concerns me. And it's not for personal reasons because my training I recommend to people now they take it online because it's cheaper, quicker, more accessible for their staff. I can serve them in other ways by the way. So I want to maybe claim that.

I think that those are the highlights of what I wanted to speak about, but I have one picture I didn't send around of the person that serves us, people we know. This is from the Tourism Education Council. The certification I have in front of you, those are just notes I made from what they told me from Tourism Education Council who administrate it. But this is one of their brochures or one of their advertisements. And they do have a great product. I will answer some questions on it or refer you to STEC, Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council, who administer it. But this is a picture of the young person — it could be some of your family — who's serving people. Do they know how to serve somebody alcohol responsibly? And do they know what to do about it? And that's my question. A lot of times people . . . just because they don't have permission.

And even after they received . . . And I'm going to go a bit off to the side here in a couple of . . . to even add more light to it. After the service of alcohol, and we even delivered it to them, we didn't do it on the problem gambling. And I want to go on there, but I want to use an example. They were cutting people off and kicking them out because I had them trained, but they weren't refusing them to play gambling because it wasn't in the rules. They really do apply what they learn.

And there was questions. Well can we serve somebody who is still gambling? I said, well no you shouldn't be. You know, that's again . . . There was no rules on it. So I'm not moving into gambling. I'm just trying to say there was a real dependence upon training by the people that I trained and my staff first-hand in not knowing what to do, coming back to the boss for what's right and what's wrong.

So let's now put this person in a position of having to stand before a lawyer because they didn't know, or getting fined. I'm not too sure what the fine is, but any fine is too much — any

large business, any business at all — from having to, you know, suffer a court case or of course, in the end, somebody that we lose or gets maimed.

I know because I've been on that chair, and I've served that drink. And I thought wisely, and I had the training. Having known that, it was one of the ones that escape you. But I sweated. It worked out okay, I mean the final one.

So I've been to all those places. I understand it from the floor and also from the managerial position and now as a hospitality trainer, trained by STEC and do work for them, on a larger scale what it's about. So I speak to it as a professional in the industry I think in terms of that part.

But I'll segue now into a question I want to leave you with, and of course into Dr. Irvine.

First of all a question that I don't need an answer, but a statement. If, when we're talking about the deaths — and I know it's important, and that's what we're about today is a number of people have died — I'm wondering if in the future I can get an answer from somebody, not here, if we also include the near deaths, the rollovers on our highways that are due to alcohol or anything else that may have come up in your different meetings with people. I'm just wondering. I'm thinking about the near deaths because I've had a rollover on these roads and I wasn't drinking at the time. So I think it's important to consider in the data, when we talk about the danger of responsible alcohol service or alcohol at all, that we talk about the near deaths and include that in our stats.

That was my sort of remaining last side comment. But I want to hand it over now to Dr. Irvine, who will introduce himself. And it's about in the same area about alcohol related.

**Mr. Irvine:** — Well thank you very much. I'm James Irvine. I'm the medical health officer for the three northern health authorities, so roughly the northern half of Saskatchewan, and a professor at the University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine.

I was really pleased to see the committee being organized and the leadership that's been shown in going around the province, and particularly your northern visits that you had.

The discussion that I wanted to share was very similar to Clarence's discussion in terms of the concerns of alcohol as one component of traffic safety, but I wanted to share with you some of the information about northern Saskatchewan as it relates to injuries. Injury is the number one cause of death in northern Saskatchewan. It's about 23 per cent of the deaths in the North from injuries. That compares to the province as a whole as the fourth leading cause of death at only about 6 per cent. So it's a phenomenal impact on our northern communities, our northern families.

If we look at things like motor vehicle accidents, that makes up about 16 per cent of the deaths from injuries in the North. Also if we look at the involvement of alcohol for motor vehicle deaths, it's about 67 per cent in the North. So 67 per cent of the deaths involve motor vehicle incidents, have engaged with alcohol involvement with the driver. That compares to about 30,

35 per cent in the province as a whole, so it's a significant difference.

[11:15]

I think, from the questions that I've heard you ask Chief Cook-Searson already, you have a sound understanding of the complexity of traffic safety. Going much more than just enforcement or changing roads, it's a real complex issue. And in the North we see that really, truly. Education, awareness, lighting, road conditions, timeliness of response to emergency. You know, the two medical conditions that the timeliness of response are so important are injuries and cardiovascular events, and then the involvement of alcohol and the complexities of addictions.

There's been a lot of research internationally regarding the approach to safety and traffic safety and what sort of responses there can be. And the more I read and the more I look, it really shows that it takes a multi-pronged approach, that single actions really are not going to make a huge impact on alcohol and injuries as a result of traffic accidents or traffic injuries.

So it's really an approach looking . . . And commonly we look, from a public health perspective we often look at the five or six Es of injury prevention. And you've already been looking at some of them. One of them is education. But often education by itself . . . I'm very much humbled by the effectiveness of education by itself and how it really does take an approach beyond just simple pamphlets or posters, that it's really a social marketing issue.

The other E would be equity. You've touched on that this morning already. We know in public health that if we direct a message at the general population, sometimes the general population improvements will occur, but specific populations such as different cultures, groups with different languages, different age groups will not benefit from that education message. So actually sometimes our public health education campaigns result in a widening of disparities. And so your discussion this morning about really aiming education messages where it's so important, I think, was valuable.

The other E is engineering. And that's, the more we can do so that it's . . . that it doesn't take action on an individual's perspective — putting seat belts in cars, putting traffic safety signs and standards on roads — I think is really important.

The other aspect is the economics or employment. The issues of injuries, motor vehicle accidents, alcohol, and addictions really involve a solid, multi-pronged approach beyond just telling people not to drink and drive. It needs to be . . . People living in certain circumstances, it takes significant efforts to look at what their priorities of life are when they're dealing with other life circumstances.

And the final one is enforcement. There is a role of enforcement following education. Education by itself is sometimes ineffective, but if it's leading into enforcement or engineering campaigns, then that's useful.

So I think I wanted to leave with the idea that I appreciate the complexity of the issue of traffic safety, and I appreciate the

involvement of this committee travelling around the province to gain ideas. And I know that already you've started to look at the ideas of the complexities of these things: that it's not straightforward, that injuries involve multiple factors. And it's going to take multiple solutions engaged with specific messages for various parts of the province. So thank you.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, gentlemen, for your presentations. Both very timely of course and very much on our minds as we go forward to . . . as we get close to the conclusion of this. Ms. Wilson had a question first and then Mr. Vermette.

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, gentlemen. That was a very valuable and informative presentation. I appreciate your recommendations. Now you were talking about complex issues, stating education as a social marketing issue or engineering or enforcement. And I understand all of those are very valuable, and it is a very complex issue as we travel the province.

Also, Clarence, you stated that you feel a provincial public awareness campaign would address the traffic safety issues and alcohol impairment. Do you have any other recommendations that you could give us at this time? I would really appreciate your comments. And thank you both for the presentation.

**Mr. Neault:** — Actually I wasn't . . . My guess is, maybe straightforward is . . . Public awareness is one way. But in other provinces — all but Saskatchewan, and I believe one or two in the Maritimes — it's law. It's a liquor . . . part of the liquor Act. So I would personally recommend that if that seems to work in a lot of other areas, that you ask them how it's working. Right here you have British Columbia and their Act for you to review. So if you think you can achieve the same outcomes through public awareness, that would be fantastic. It would be better because people would actually pay attention and use it. That would have to be a decision.

What does . . . The real point I'm making is, if every person serving alcohol does have this training, you will see a significant change in the amount of injuries and deaths due to people drinking and driving. It will show. And I'm sure they will have the stats. And if you, if the committee recommends an enforcement and there's different ways of how it happens, then . . . I'm not here to say how it happens. I'm just here to tell you that it works. First-hand, I've seen it. And I'm sure your counterparts in the other provinces will explain to you why it works. I don't believe in enforcements but when you need it, you need it.

**Mr. Irvine:** — James Irvine. I think, in the experience in the tobacco, the sale of tobacco to minors, the sale of tobaccos to people who are, you know, 11 years old, there was a education campaign. But the real benefit came with enforcement.

From that same issue, I think with seat belt use, education was preceded but there was the enforcement route that really resulted in more behavioural change in the use of seat belts.

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, gentlemen. I see you have a bit of a different approach, and that's great because we bring everything together for our recommendations. So I do appreciate your comments. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Vermette, and then we'll go to Ms. Chartier.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Again, thank you to both of you presenting to the committee and trying to give some recommendations and some awareness on ways we can reduce death and injuries. And I think, Clarence, you talked about . . . And I want to be very clear, I think it's also we're looking at fatalities in the province but also injuries. And I think it's important that we're looking at all that, and I think we've talked about that where you can lessen the fatalities but also injuries. So it was good when you mentioned that.

I think the committee role would be to make sure that our highways are safe for everyone. So I just wanted to answer you on that and thank you for your presentation.

I've got a few questions to Dr. Irvine. And it was interesting today and Chief Cook-Searson talked about the language barrier. And you represent, you know, quite a large area and jurisdiction in the North, with the different languages and stuff. And I'm curious if you could give us some, your feeling on the language barriers. And is there a recommendation you could give or suggestions that you could give to the committee that we could make recommendations on ideas on how we could address some of the language barriers? If you could share a little bit on that.

**Mr. Irvine:** — I think there'd be two aspects of it. One is the message itself, having the message done in a way that's appropriate to the group, whether it's to a different cultural group or different age group. And you've had some discussion already this morning about engaging youth to make sure that that message is correct. The same thing would be with different cultures and where they come from.

The other part of it is the words we use. And that can be the words we use and the way we say it. So that can be a component of different languages of Cree, Dene, Michif, and other languages within the province, but it's also literacy aspects as well. And so utilizing educational approaches with Aboriginal languages is very effective. And Missinipi Broadcasting approaches has been suggested already, and we've used that a lot and find it very valuable.

But the other part of it is that whole literacy aspect of it, making sure for everyone within the province that the messages are such that they're easily recognizable by the population. And so that's one strong component of social marketing, is making sure that the type of message and the method of the message is appropriate to the group that you're most concerned about.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you. And part of it, I know you talk about the five Es, and it's interesting the way you . . . It's not just one area we have to look at it. It's taking different, I guess, strengths that we have to work together to make sure education, awareness, and the resources are there and conditions are there. And you talk about, I guess, even engineering. And we look at . . . And I want to talk about this because it's kind of interesting.

We've heard different things and, I mean, some of the witnesses that have presented talk about, you know, conditions and dust. And we've talked about that. I know that does cause fatalities and cause injuries in the North. I know that. That was one area,

Chief talked about that. And I think others have talked about that as we've gone . . . hearings .

You talk about engineers and roads, and I know it has been talked about. And yesterday's . . . And I just want to get your view on that because you probably witness a lot of it or hear some of the fatalities, injuries that are caused by some of the conditions that, you know, it's not done to . . . When we're looking at all aspects of safety — impaired — there's different areas. But truly, and I think you expressed this, and you talk about engineers looking at maybe roads and stuff like that. And I just want to say that because sometimes the roads make it I guess easier or, unfortunately a sad situation, can cause some of the fatalities, injuries that are here. Compared to years ago, engineers worked on them, and today the engineers and technology have changed. And we had people talking about the road might have been wavy or go through a community that's heavily populated now where back in the day there was small population. So you have . . . And we've heard that. If you could give a little bit of background on that and see just where your thinking is with that with your experience in northern Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Irvine:** — Certainly. The engineering part of injury prevention is probably the most solid approach to injury prevention. We've seen even in examples the town of La Ronge with . . . or the highway to and through the town of La Ronge, and the change in lighting along the road has really made a significant improvement. It could certainly be significantly more as Chief Tammy Cook-Searson mentioned this morning.

But I think when we look at roads themselves, looking at them through the eyes of safety lens or traffic safety lens, to be looking at the way bridges are, the way the curves go, the way traffic or pedestrian traffic is meant to cross, looking at it from dust angles, dust in the summertime, or in the wintertime blowing snow which is significant as well. Across the North we do have some paved roads, but we have a lot of gravel roads, and that does make a significant impact. So visibility can be an issue with dust, with snow flurries as well. And so those are all components I think that are important to look at.

I think we do a lot of, when we have new developments as it relates to a new mine or a new industrial development, we do an environmental impact assessment. And so one of the components of an environmental impact assessment is looking at it from a public health perspective. And I think the same thing as we construct roads or make alterations to roads — to have an individual or an organization look at that from a safety perspective as well, for the public as well as the drivers.

[11:30]

**Mr. Vermette:** — My last question to you would be your experience and maybe you could make a recommendation as far as our priority. And if I was to say if there's anything that you could suggest, one or two things that you think would help in lessening the fatalities and injuries in northern Saskatchewan, if you could share that, what you think would be helpful. I mean maybe all the suggestions you make or we hear can't come through. But if there's any area you think, one or two, that would help to lessen fatalities and injuries, could you share that with us if you would.

**Mr. Irvine:** — I think partly because of the stats that we have in the North, with that 67 per cent of the motor vehicle deaths as a result of alcohol, is to really make an impact on drinking and driving. And that would take several steps in itself.

It would involve the discussion that Clarence shared this morning in terms of the importance of serving alcohol, things like availability of alcohol. There's been very little evidence that changing hours of serving makes a difference in Ontario or in New Zealand, in England. In northern Saskatchewan it might make a difference. There is evidence that changing alcohol availability has an impact on assaults and violence, but in areas that the studies have been done . . . [inaudible] . . . had a great impact on drinking and driving.

But I think that whole area of engaging communities, enabling communities, supporting communities through education and moving forward to some legislation would be very valuable. The idea of assisting communities . . . In some parts of the province, MADD, or Mothers Against Drunk Driving, have had a significant impact. And I think the more we can engage in supports like that in the northern part of the province would be very valuable as well.

So if there was one thing that your group could do in terms of making an impact, in terms of reducing the involvement of drinking and driving would be a very significant public health safety issue for the North.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Okay. Thank you very much to both of you for your presentation and truly to bring some of the I guess the problems but also some solutions. And sometimes that's very helpful to hear the concerns and the issues that we face in northern Saskatchewan, but also you bring forward some recommendations and solutions that we can move forward with. So I thank you very much for your presentation.

**The Chair:** — Ms. Chartier. Then I'll go to Mr. Steinley.

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you very much, Dr. Irvine and Mr. Neault, for your presentation today. The Serve It Right program, this is our second opportunity to hear about this. And I'm a graduate of the program myself in 1992, so a very long time ago. So I know the effectiveness as a server myself, how having some of the tools to serve alcohol properly was very helpful. And so I appreciate your comments on being one of the only jurisdictions that doesn't have mandatory training for servers. So thank you very much for that.

And, Dr. Irvine, I think one of the questions . . . We've talked a lot here about the complexities of addictions, and you'd mentioned this in your comments. One of the recommendations that several presenters have come forward with is mandatory interlocks. Some of the other sanctions, in BC they have three-day impoundments if you're in the administrative penalty area, which I think helps for those who perhaps aren't alcohol addicted and does serve as a deterrent. But mandatory interlocks I think often come into play when there is some . . . there are addictions issues.

But one of the things that we've heard is the mandatory interlocks are also paid for by the offender, which I could see being a challenge in some communities. So I'm just wondering,

your thoughts — I don't know if you're familiar with mandatory interlocks or not — but looking at some of the challenges that might come into play where an individual who doesn't have a good income might be in a place to not be able to put a mandatory . . . not put the interlock on their own vehicle.

**Mr. Irvine:** — I don't have a lot of knowledge and experience with the mandatory interlock programs, but I think there's a couple of angles of that that I think from other aspects could help, in that yes I think there's a variety of different people. There's some that could afford the interlock program, and it would be a very valuable addition. There'll be those that it would impact them negatively in terms of if they were the working poor, it might have an impact on jobs or things like that. So we'd have to be careful in terms of what sort of inequities it would result in, in terms of different economic sectors or a community.

The other thing that I'd be concerned about a little bit is for those types of things there's always ways around it. There's challenges that we face with times in which people are driving without a licence, even after multiple episodes of drinking and driving. And so that would be the other issue, is how do people get around it by using different vehicles or driving different vehicles rather than their own interlock program.

**Ms. Chartier:** — I think one of the very good things we've heard about mandatory interlocks in different jurisdictions is that it's not just a stick, but it can be a carrot for helping people to get back their licence earlier. So you're learning how to separate alcohol from driving. So there's lots of positives I think on that side. I mean you do have to serve your . . . Regardless, you do have to serve your three-month federal prohibition from driving regardless of what might be in place provincially. But any thoughts or suggestions obviously on how you might address some of the disparities between those who could afford an interlock and . . . Any thoughts or ideas on how one might make . . . If you're going to use mandatory interlocks as a positive step to helping people get their licences back and drive, how you might address the cost difficulty for some.

**Mr. Irvine:** — I think for some forms of enforcement and sort of corrective action after criminality, if people go to corrections or to jail, that's at the cost of the public and at huge cost to the public. And maybe this is something that would need to be looked at is that there may be a component that it's a self-paid program. Or there may be some individuals that we'd need to be looked at, at terms of saying in order for them to maintain their capacity for driving, maintain their job, etc., is that if it's an issue of finances and personal capacity, maybe that is something that can be paid for through the public. We certainly pay other forms of penalties and things like that through public coffers. And I think that's a good statement in terms of saying, you know, that it is something that needs to be provided. If it's for one group of people, then we need to look at ways by which we can have that capacity for others.

**Ms. Chartier:** — Well thank you very much to the both of you for being here today. Your input's very appreciated.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Steinley, you're next.

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you very much, Dr. Irvine and Clarence. I appreciate you guys being here today. A couple of quick questions for Dr. Irvine. One is 23 per cent of the deaths in the North are due to injuries. That's an interesting figure. And I'm wondering if . . . And I'm making a leap here and you could correct me if I'm wrong. Some of those injuries, and especially from the motor vehicles, 67 per cent have alcohol as one of the factors. Would you wager another factor to be the seat belt use or lack thereof of seat belt use?

I think that in the 23 per cent of injuries, some of those motor vehicle accidents that weren't alcohol related, possibly those accidents would have been worse because of not using seat belts. And I think there should be a focus and a campaign focus and awareness on seat belt use and how much that reduces injury and potential death in certain situations, and if you could comment on that, please.

**Mr. Irvine:** — I think there's an interaction between alcohol and seat belt use. Sometimes some of those deaths I'm sure would have been due to no seat belt without alcohol involvement. If there's alcohol involvement, you wonder in terms of, does that increase the risk of people not using their seat belts? So I think there's probably a compounding factor that alcohol may increase the non-use of seat belts just because of the circumstances they're under. But yes, you're right in terms of seat belt use as a . . . goes along with those . . . the same stats be incorporated within those same 23 per cent.

**Mr. Steinley:** — In some of those deaths that are caused, the remaining 33 per cent, would some of those be caused, with motor vehicle accidents, due to not having seat belts? Could you wager a . . .

**Mr. Irvine:** — I don't have the evidence, the statistical information on that. But certainly anecdotally from experience there's a significant number of deaths that we know of without any seat belts involving no alcohol situations. Yes, you're right.

**Mr. Steinley:** — I'm going to just make a guess, like, would we be able to say probably about, of the motor vehicle accidents that has happened in the last little while, 67 per cent alcohol, could you say maybe 20 more per cent didn't . . . no seat belts?

**Mr. Irvine:** — That would be very much of an anecdotal, educated guess on it I'm afraid.

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you very much. I appreciate you guys being here.

**The Chair:** — Any more questions from the committee members at all? Very well. Seeing none, I want to thank you gentlemen for your presentations today. They're, like I say, they're as timely as the chief's was this morning for us to consider issues in the North and regarding the injuries and fatalities.

I know one thing that came to mind is I'm going to ask SGI when we see them on the 26th, do they rate a fatality if a person's injured in the hospital and passes away after a number of days? Or if the fatality happens after in the hospital, is it just off the record? I'm kind of curious about that as well for motor vehicle accidents. So thank you.

And to the committee members, I need a member to make a motion to adjourn. Mr. Vermette. All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — So moved. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 11:40.]