

Law Enforcement Agencies Learn How to Use Crash Data

Tom Smith



Lt. Thomas Bates, of the Alabama State Troopers, receives help from Randy Smith, of the Center for Advance Public Safety at the University of Alabama, with the CARE Data program that helps law enforcement officers look at crash information and traffic patterns.

MUSCLE SHOALS - Assistant Red Bay Police Chief Jana Jackson said Wednesday's class on using crash data is going to be beneficial in making travel in Red Bay safer.

"Using that information, you can find out the date, time and location of most of the crashes in the city, or a particular street," Jackson said. "That allows you to put on extra patrols to try and eliminate the accidents."

Jackson was one of 20 law enforcement personnel who took part in a seminar Wednesday on using the Critical Analysis Reporting Environment (CARE) Data that is provided by the University of Alabama.

The seminar was hosted by Northwest-Shoals Community College and sponsored by the North Alabama Highway Safety Office in Tuscumbia.

"Any department, or for that manner, any individual can download this information from the Internet," said Eddie Russell, coordinator of the highway safety office. "Wednesday was a chance for local departments to get a better understanding of this tool."

The officers spent more than six hours getting a crash course in using the CARE Data by Dr. Randy Smith and Angie Watkins, specialists from the University of Alabama.

"The CARE Data has been available for about 10 years," Russell said. "Initially, the Alabama Department of Public Safety was the only department using it. Seminars like this one is a chance to show local departments how they can use it to provide another level of traffic safety."

Russell said the CARE Data is valuable.

"It will show what kinds of crashes, how severe," he said. "It provides them with information they need so they will know how to allocate their department's resources in an effort to correct the problems."

Jackson said she was impressed with the capability and the amount of information available.

"I was truly impressed, and I believe it's something that can help police do a better job of traffic safety," she said.