

## Emerging Technologies Advisory Committee Meeting Summary, September 12, 2005

The Joint Commission on Technology and Science's Emerging Technologies Advisory Committee held its third meeting of the 2005 Interim on September 12, 2005 in Richmond. The focus of the meeting was on event data recorders and other data-gathering devices installed in vehicles, and the use of cell phones while driving. Both of these issues were referred to JCOTS for study by the 2005 Session of the General Assembly.

After JCOTS Director Lisa Wallmeyer provided the committee with a brief overview of event data recorder issues, Scott Palmer, Chief Executive Officer of Injury Sciences, addressed the committee. Mr. Palmer gave an overview of the technology behind event data recorders, and explained how data is retrieved and what information is recorded. A copy of Mr. Palmer's presentation is available on the JCOTS [website](#).

Rey Becker, Vice President of Commercial Lines and Claims at the Property Casualty Insurers Association of America, followed Mr. Palmer's presentation by discussing how event data records can be used in claims. His comments highlighted the need to balance privacy concerns with legitimate business needs and uses of the data. A copy of his comments may be viewed on the JCOTS [website](#).

Rebecca King, Direct Project Manager for Progressive Insurance and member of the Advisory Committee, shared some of Progressive Insurance's innovative uses of data recorders. Progressive has established a voluntary program whereby an individual insured with Progressive installs a post-factory data recorder in his vehicle, and is able to download information about his driving habits onto his computer. This customer may voluntarily forward this information to Progressive to receive rate discounts; however, there is no penalty for not doing so. Details of this proposal are available on the JCOTS [website](#).

The final presenter on this topic, Michael Gladstone with the Virginia Association of Defense Attorneys, provided an overview of the general issues presented by the use of event data recorders, and highlighted issues that the committee may wish to discuss in light of any potential legislation, including a model bill. Mr. Gladstone's presentation is also available on the JCOTS [website](#).

After a short lunch break, Staff Attorney Patrick Cushing provided a summary of the oral arguments for the Dulles Gateway case involving the under grounding of transmission lines that took place earlier that morning at the Virginia Supreme Court.<sup>1</sup> Patrick also gave a brief introduction to HB 1830 (2005) that would restrict the use of cell phones while driving, and a report issued by the National Conference of State Legislatures involving cell phone use while driving.

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<sup>1</sup> Dulles Gateway Associates v. SCC (Virginia Supreme Court Case Number 050273).

Dr. Tom Dingus, Director of the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute presented preliminary findings from their 100-Car Naturalistic Driving Study. Dr. Dingus' presentation is available on the JCOTS [website](#).

Robert Brietenbach, the Director of the Transportation Safety Center at Virginia Commonwealth University presented a study that used police reports to help differentiate between different types of distractions in vehicle accidents. Mr. Brietenbach's presentation is available on VCU's website at:

<http://www.vcu.edu/uns/Releases/2003/march/030703b.html>

Bud Oakey of Advantus Strategies presented the industry perspective of HB 1830 on behalf of his client, NEXTEL. Bud introduced the driver education program that NEXTEL has developed for use in public schools. Bud's presentation is available on the JCOTS [website](#).

The meeting concluded with a discussion about possible ways to reduce the dangers of driving while using a cell phone. One of the ideas presented involved car manufacturers equipping new cars with true hands free devices. Currently, the option is an expensive one and not available on new models.