

Flimsy protects the flesh

Weak, temporary work zones need to come to an end



Bill Wilson
Editorial Director
bwilson@sgcmail.com

2001, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2012
Construction Writers Association
Robert F. Boger Award for Editorials

2002, 2008 (2), 2011
Construction Writers Association
Robert F. Boger Award for
Feature Articles

2011, 2012
Construction Writers Association
Robert F. Boger Award for Videos

2015
Neal Award Finalist
ASBPE Regional Bronze

2016
ASBPE National & Regional Silver
TABPI Silver for Feature Series
TABPI Bronze for Editorial Column

in its current state. The demand was to install a temporary concrete barrier.

In my opinion barrels, cones and horses should all be thrown in a shredder. Distracted driving is at an all-time high in the U.S., and any buffer zone created with plastic and wood does not stand a chance. However, at the same time a lot of the agencies out there have embraced this “less convenience to the driver” crusade. This is why accelerated bridge construction continues to move at full speed, and why many choose to create these a.m./p.m. work zones out on the road. This paper lion approach creates a fluid situation; projects tend to disappear during the most traffic-intense times of the day, but at what cost? Is it more important to save 85,000 drivers five or 10 minutes, or a life that has hopefully 40 or more productive years left on this Earth? Agencies would rather look like heroes in front of the 85,000. Maybe Huska could lend me his pool noodle so I could soak it down and slap those decision-makers in the face at 65 mph. **R&B**

Dry pool noodles do not stand a chance against high winds. Bungee chords help level the playing field a little.

Toronto’s Warren Huska pedals 18 km between his home and office just about every day, and he has always been a little shaky about the cars whizzing past and/or hugging him close. He believes people get insulated inside their vehicle . . . a comfort zone that is too dangerous for bicyclists or pedestrians. So the green commuter took the traffic by the horns and tied a yellow dry pool noodle to the back of his bike. Installation involved a couple of bungee chords, which were wrapped around his chariot’s frame. Now drivers see Huska and this floppy “safety” device, and it actually works.

“The edge of the noodle [helps drivers] gauge space instead of them trying to judge where my elbow was,” said Huska.

Cars will change lanes to avoid tangling with the yellow pool noodle, and some of the travelers even slow down and give Huska words of encouragement. In Toronto, peddlers could use any advantage they can wrap their spokes around, because according to police there were 864 bike vs. car collisions from January through September in 2016.

Construction barrels are about as flimsy as floating devices, but commuters respect them enough to stay clear of them . . . most of the time. However, when someone does puncture a work zone it usually is deadly. Such was the case in mid-October, when an SUV traveling on I-65 in Indiana flattened a barrel and slammed into 35-year-old Brandon Beau Dewayne Fiscus from E&B Paving. Fiscus died at the scene. Police say the SUV was traveling north on I-65 in the Hobart area when it moved to the center lane behind a semi before changing lanes again into the work zone. After striking a barrel, the driver continued moving through the project area when she hit another barrel before reaching Fiscus, who was saw-cutting a joint for a patch in the pavement.

The Indiana DOT expected it to be business as usual and did not immediately install any additional safety reinforcement at the jobsite. Highway workers, represented by the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 150, said they would not return to the work zone



Editorial

Associate Publisher/Editorial Director Bill Wilson
bwilson@sgcmail.com 847.391.1029

Managing Editor Brian W. Budzynski
bbudzynski@sgcmail.com 847.391.1052

Associate Editor Tim Bruns
tbruns@sgcmail.com 847.391.1037

Graphic Designer Dan Soltis
dsoltis@sgcmail.com 847.391.1014

Storefront Coordinator Mike Meyer
mmeyer@sgcmail.com 847.954.7940

Management

Sr. Vice President Rick Schwer
rschwer@sgcmail.com 847.391.1048

Vice President/Group Publisher Ryan Hanson
rhanson@sgcmail.com 847.391.1059

Creative Services Assistant Manager Holly Dryden
hdryden@sgcmail.com

Director of Audience Development Doug Riemer
driemer@sgcmail.com

Marketing Director Michael Porcaro
mporcaro@sgcmail.com

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Display Advertising

Associate Publisher (West) Brandon Williamson
bwilliamson@sgcmail.com 512.739.2102
Fax: 847.390.0408

Integrated Media Consultant (Midwest) Mike Swanson
mswanson@sgcmail.com 847.391.1020
Fax: 847.390.0408

Integrated Media Consultant (East) Bill Black
bblack@sgcmail.com 215.880.4251

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Fax: 847.390.0408

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Fax: 847.390.0408

For list rental information, contact Jeffrey Gardner at
845.201.5331; jeffrey.gardner@reachmarketing.com.