

Opening Session
NSC Congress & Expo
10 minute speech

Five decades ago, John F. Kennedy shared his own bold vision of putting a man on the moon.

Earlier this year, President Obama announced an audacious plan to cure cancer 'once and for all.'

And once upon a time, our keynote speaker Terry Bradshaw, had a dream to play in the NFL and to become one of the greatest quarterbacks the game has ever seen.

These were all moonshots. They came when someone said, "I do not care how hard it is – we are going to do it anyway."

A moonshot is when you look at something important and decide, it's not impossible – it just hasn't been done yet.

Recently, the National Safety Council announced our own moonshot.

We will eliminate preventable deaths in our lifetime.

We know this is a bold idea, but it's one we cannot ignore.

We are at an all-time high for preventable deaths. Over 130,000 people die every year from something preventable – a fall, a car crash, a drowning. 4,000 of those happen in the workplace -- that's like losing everyone in this room every year.

At the National Safety Council, we believe there is no such thing as an accident. We believe all 130,000 deaths are preventable.

So let me ask you, do you believe it is possible?

If you think it's possible to eliminate preventable deaths in our lifetime, please stand up. If you think it's possible to eliminate preventable deaths at your company, please stand up. If you think you can eliminate preventable deaths in your department, please stand up. ...in your team, stand up.

Look at the people around you. Shake someone's hand. Give them a high five. We *can* get to zero. Thanks everyone, you can all sit down now.

If each of you focuses on that one moonshot for your team, we can eliminate preventable deaths in our lifetime. You don't have to solve the big number. You just have to solve *your* number.

February 25th, 2006 was the day I became painfully aware of my number.



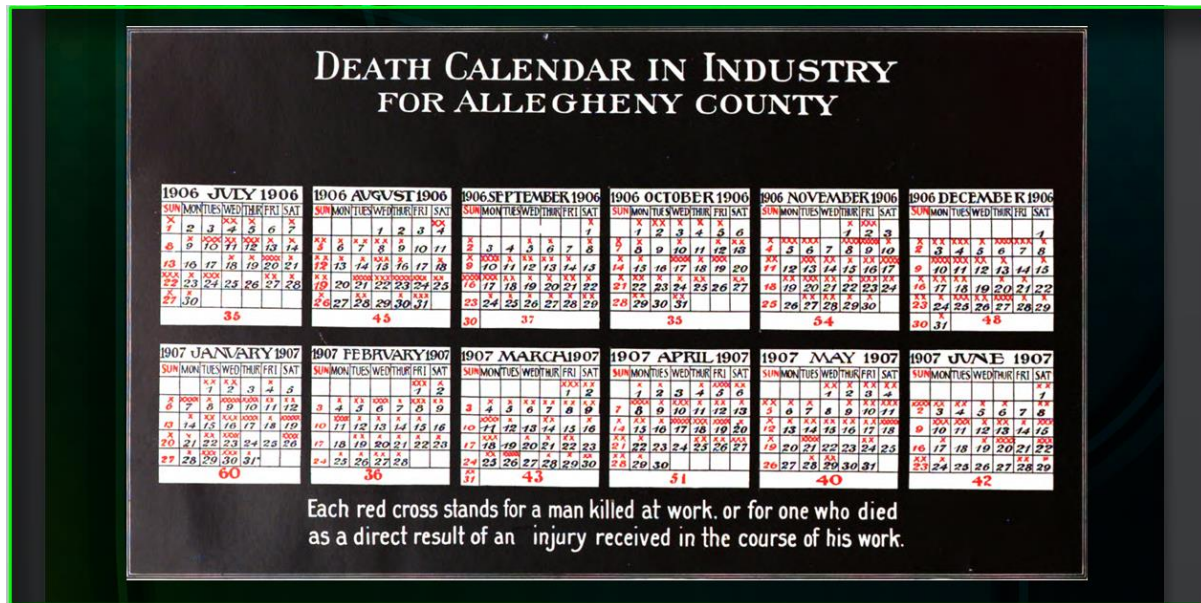
Brian Fiffick was my colleague at the National Transportation Safety Board. He died at the age of 33 in a car crash. Although the crash didn't happen on-the-job -- it affected me, his colleagues and the entire organization -- as if it did.

For anyone who has gone through something similar... you know ... the day your number becomes a name is the day your organization changes. You want to do everything possible to prevent another death from happening. So who is *your* Brian and where do we start?

I suggest we start with data.

At the turn of the century, workplace deaths were so accepted that injury and fatality data wasn't even collected. That is until a woman named Crystal Eastman started recording workplace incidents and revealed the magnitude of work-related deaths and injuries in Pittsburgh.

In just twelve months, by keeping a death calendar,

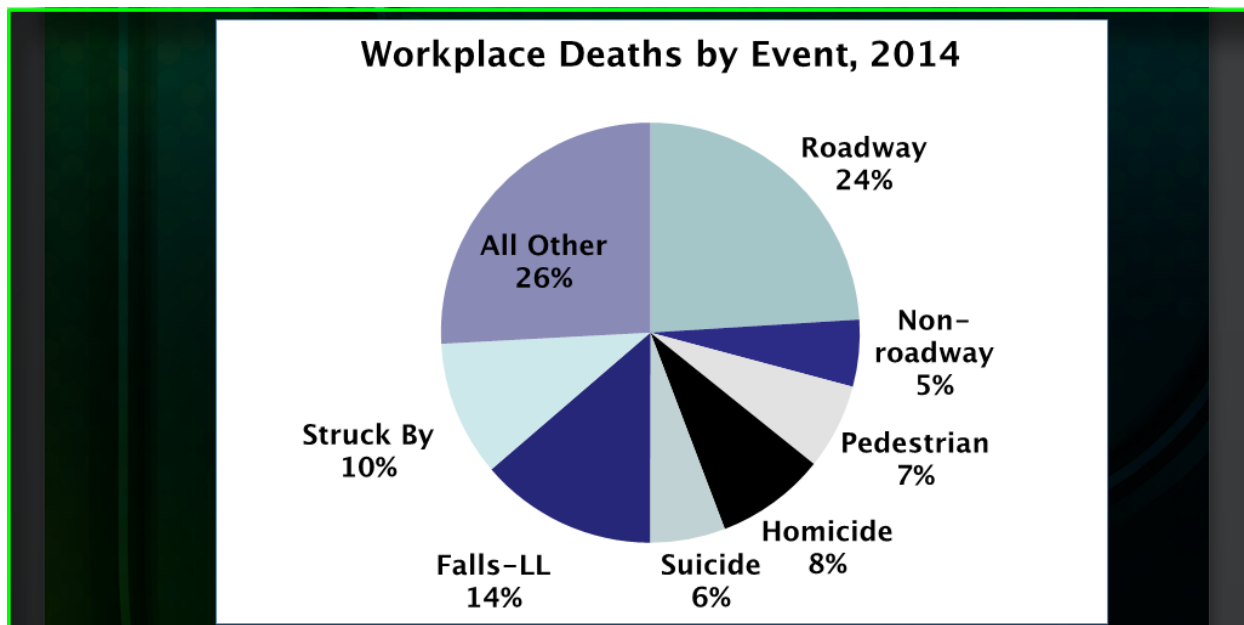


Eastman found that more than 500 people died at work and thousands suffered injuries. 500 deaths in one city in one year! Compare that to 2014, when there were 4,000 occupational fatalities for the entire United States.

Look where we are today. We are 9 times more likely to die off-the-job than on-the-job. On any given day, the workplace is the safest place we are going to be.

Back at the turn of the century, do you think any company in Pittsburgh thought it was possible to go a month, a year, a decade without an occupational fatality? They proved it wasn't impossible; it just hadn't been done yet.

How is data helping us get to zero today?



Take motor vehicle crashes, the leading cause of death in the workplace.

For many, that still comes as a surprise.

But by knowing crashes are killing our employees, we can put policies in place to ensure our employees are alert, attentive and sober while driving. Although we didn't know whether cell phone use was involved in Brian's car crash, when I later became Chairman of the NTSB, we put a cell phone policy in place to strengthen our safety system.

What's your *number* when it comes to motor vehicle safety?

How many of you have a policy at your workplace prohibiting cell phone use behind the wheel? For those of you that do, thank you. You are helping us get

that much closer to zero. If you don't, check out our website. You can download our Toolkit to help develop and roll-out a cell phone policy at your facility.

What if I told you that you could invest in technology that would save lives and prevent injuries? You'd invest in it wouldn't you? Or at least make the case to your boss.

According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, one million car crashes could be prevented if vehicles had just two technologies in them --- automatic emergency braking and forward collision warning.



Earlier this year, twenty car makers announced that they will add automatic emergency braking as a standard feature in new cars by 2022; this will mean more than 99 percent of the new cars hitting the market will have this potentially life-saving feature.

The technology is available today, how many of you will be the early adopters?

Look at your data. What are the other leading causes of injury at your facility? In your team? Put your energies into solving those issues. Remember, by focusing on *your* number, we can all get to zero.

Let me share with you another example of how data is driving solutions.

As recent as the 1980's, occupational electrocutions were happening at an alarming rate. In 1980, there were 577 electrocutions – that's more than one a day. And 80% of the fatalities were happening in just five industries – construction, repair services, grounds maintenance, transportation and agriculture.

But just a decade later, by the early 1990's, electrical fatalities declined 54%.

What caused this dramatic improvement? It was a combination of public awareness and legislation. The National Fire Protection Agency passed stronger codes to help companies protect their workers against shock and electrocution. And power companies launched large-scale awareness campaigns.



I would bet everyone here knows to call 811 before you dig.

Well, we are not at zero electrocutions yet. In 2014, there were still 154 workers fatally electrocuted; 154 people who did not go home to their families. That's still far too many. But the solutions that were put into place a decade ago are bringing us that much closer to zero every single year.

In our homes and communities, data told us that poisoning was killing more people than car crashes. When we looked deeper, we found that it was opioids – painkillers like Percocet, Vicodin and Oxycontin – fueling that number.

The truth is that the most fatally abused drug may be sitting in your employees' medicine cabinets. When we surveyed Indiana employers, *eighty percent* of them said they had been impacted by prescription drug misuse at their companies.

There are many things you can do; expand drug testing to include opioid painkillers; train employees on how to spot signs of abuse; and use Employee Assistance Programs to get employees back to work after treatment.

Companies like Cummins, John Deere and ExxonMobil are already putting these policies in place, and are proving that it's possible to eliminate opioid abuse in the workplace.

The solutions to your safety issues probably already exist. That is why you are here this week. To learn from others and their experiences. To apply those lessons learned to *your* number.

Because at the end of the day, it is going to take committed people like all of you to own *your* number and make zero a reality.

There are two people who have been to Congress every year for the past twelve years. And each year, they inspire us to recommit to safety. Asking each of us what we can do to keep each other safe.

The first time I heard Charlie Morecraft and Scott Geller speak, I was moved to tears. And I am not alone. Year after year, their sessions are standing room only. We never tire of their message because their message is timeless: We all have a role to play in making our workplaces safer.

This is Charlie and Scott's last year at Congress. I want to thank them for their selfless efforts to challenge all of us to ask what more can we do?

Charlie and Scott, will you come up here?

Charlie and Scott, *your* number is 100,000. That's the number of people who have been inspired by you over the years. Now it's time for us to pay it forward. So I'd like to ask each of you, focus on *your* number and the big number will follow.

Because getting to zero is not impossible, it just hasn't been done yet.