

## Placer County Individualized Traffic Safety Report

Across the nation, rural areas are experiencing tremendous growth and transformation. Where once rural roads were used mainly to transport goods to market or to move farm machinery from location to location, rural roads now must accommodate commute and leisure trips that may clash with traditional transportation patterns. This influx of nontraditional traffic presents a major safety concern for rural road users.

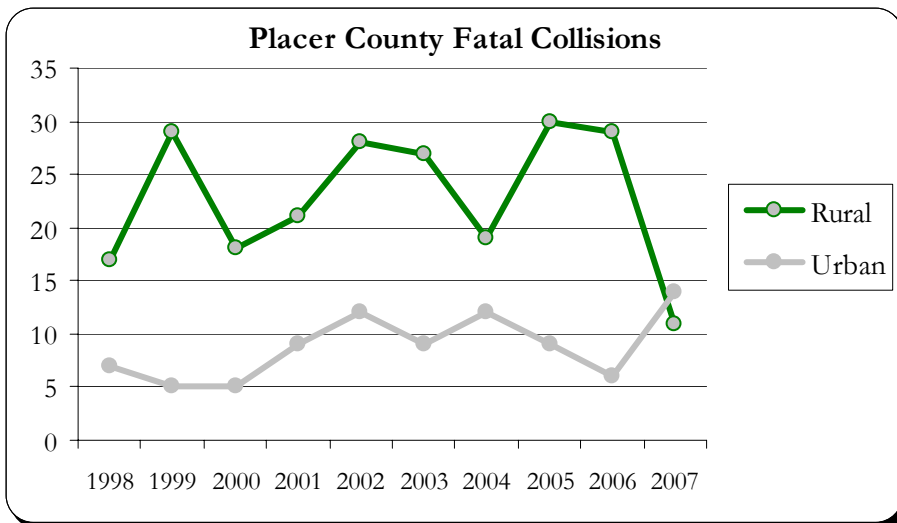
Nationally, 23 percent of the population lives in rural areas; yet, in 2006, 56 percent of the 42,642 traffic fatalities nationwide occurred in rural areas. In addition, the fatality rate in rural areas is over 4 times as high as the fatality rate (measured as deaths/100,000 persons) in urban areas. Preventing severe collisions is especially important in rural areas because statistics show that victims are more likely to die at the crash scene in rural areas than in urban areas. Of the 27,323 drivers killed in 2006, 66 percent of rural drivers and 51 percent of urban drivers died at the scene of the crash, and rural drivers represented 72 percent of drivers who died en route to the hospital. On a positive note, rural traffic fatalities did decrease 7 percent from 1997 to 2006, but the fact remains that rural areas account for a disproportionate number of fatalities. California safety statistics reflect a similar phenomenon. In 2006, only 7 percent of the population lived in rural areas, but rural areas accounted for 37 percent of the state's 4,236 traffic fatalities. See Table 1 below for more detail.

Having national and statewide data can help start discussions about roadway safety in rural areas, but more detailed safety data is necessary to find safety solutions at the local level. The Sacramento Area Council of Governments, as part of its Rural Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS) planning effort, has compiled sample safety statistics (using the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System) for each county in the region in the hopes that these "safety reports" can be further customized to help bolster grant applications and inform public policy decisions that will make our rural roadways safer.

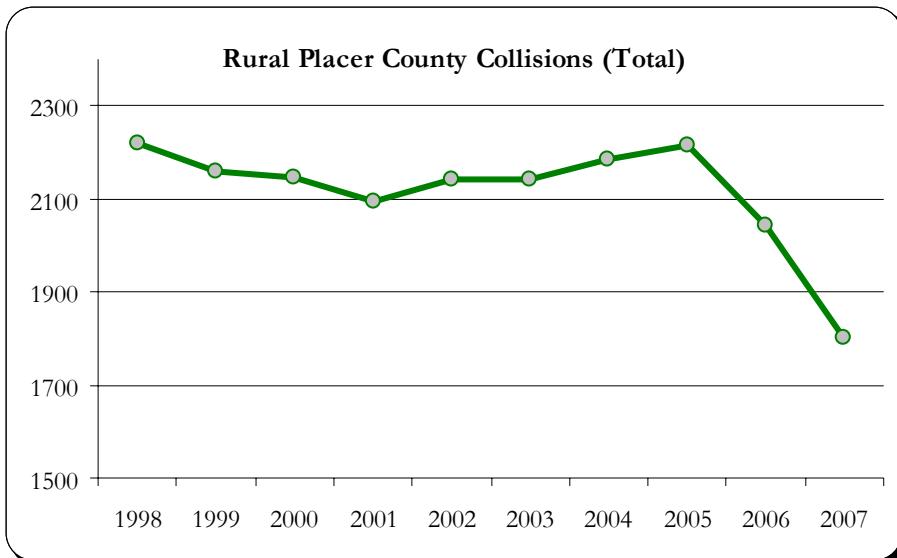
As it is part of the RUCS project, this safety report focuses on the rural areas of Placer County. Unless otherwise stated, only fatal, rural crashes are included in the following safety statistics.

### Placer County in Perspective

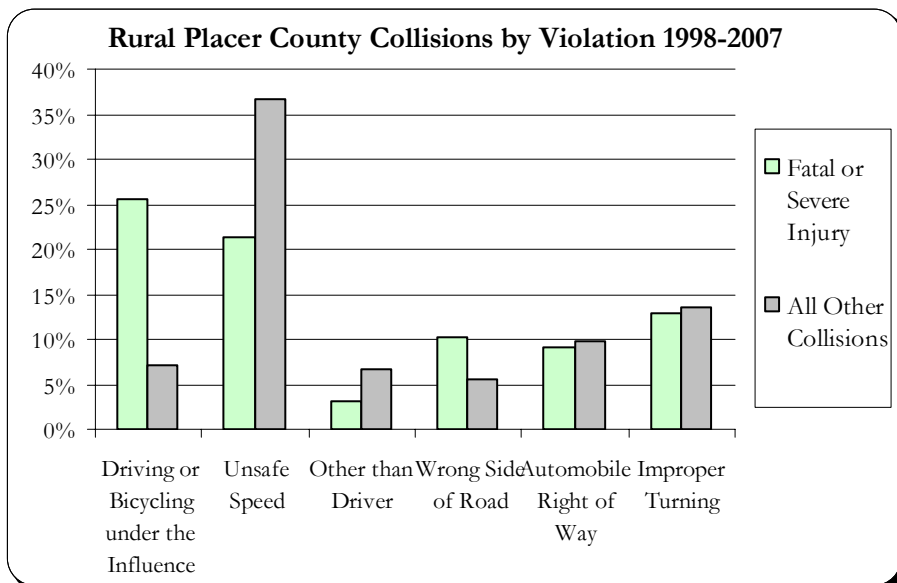
	Table 1: Summary Safety Statistics <sup>1</sup>							
	US		California		SACOG Region (2000)		Placer County (2000)	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural <sup>2</sup>	Urban	Rural
<b>Population (2006)</b>	231,897,219	67,501,266	33,844,533	2,613,016	1,750,054	185,952	195,538	52,861
<b>% of population</b>	77%	23%	93%	7%	90%	10%	79%	21%
<b>Fatalities (2006)</b>	18,359	23,339	2,659	1,576	66	165	5	19
<b>% of fatalities</b>	44%	56%	63%	37%	29%	71%	21%	79%
<b>Fatalities/ 100,000 persons</b>	7.9	34.6	7.9	60.3	3.8	88.7	2.6	35.9



- Fatal collisions in rural Placer County have varied greatly the past 10 years, peaking in 2005 with 30 fatal collisions. 2007 saw the fewest fatal collisions with only 11.
- Despite rural areas having only 17 fatal collisions in 1998, there were 2,219 total collisions, the highest total in the 10-year period.

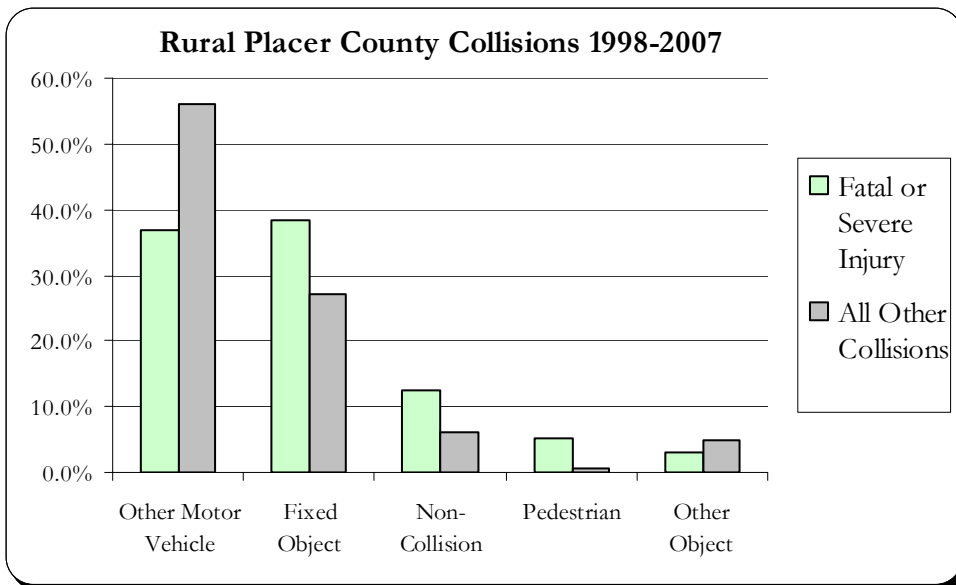


- Overall, total collisions have been far steadier than fatal collisions, ranging from 2,100 to 2,200, with two exceptions in 2006 and 2007 when total collisions dipped to 2,043 and 1,801 respectively.



- The majority of fatal collisions in rural Placer County are caused by driving or bicycling under the influence. Comparatively, in all other collisions<sup>3</sup>, unsafe speed and improper turning account for about 50 percent of collisions, while driving or bicycling under the influence accounts for 7 percent.

	Table 2: Rural Placer County Detailed Collision Data						
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Placer Total	Region Total
<b>Total Collisions</b>	2,143	2,186	2,216	2,043	1,801	<b>10,389</b>	<b>86,307</b>
<i>Property Damage Only (PDO)</i>	1,343	1,450	1,456	1,358	1,137	<b>6,744</b>	<b>55,049</b>
% PDO	62.7%	66.3%	65.7%	66.5%	63.1%	<b>64.9%</b>	<b>63.8%</b>
<i>Injury</i>	773	717	730	656	653	<b>3,529</b>	<b>30,447</b>
% Injury	36.1%	32.8%	32.9%	32.1%	36.3%	<b>34.0%</b>	<b>35.3%</b>
<i>Fatal</i>	27	19	30	29	11	<b>116</b>	<b>811</b>
% Fatal	1.3%	0.9%	1.4%	1.4%	0.6%	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
Pedestrian Killed	1	3	2	4	1	<b>11</b>	<b>116</b>
Bicyclist Killed	1	1	0	1	0	<b>3</b>	<b>22</b>
Motorcyclist Killed	3	2	5	6	0	<b>16</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>Fatal Collisions</b>							
<i>Alcohol Related</i>	8	6	6	12	3	<b>35</b>	<b>295</b>
<i>Speeding Related</i>	6	6	7	3	3	<b>25</b>	<b>95</b>
<i>Truck Collision</i>	2	1	4	2	2	<b>11</b>	<b>67</b>
<i>Hit Object Collision</i>	9	10	11	12	6	<b>48</b>	<b>278</b>
<i>Head-On Collision</i>	5	2	6	6	1	<b>20</b>	<b>117</b>
<i>Broadside Collision</i>	5	1	3	3	1	<b>13</b>	<b>141</b>
<i>Overtaken Collision</i>	2	2	2	2	0	<b>8</b>	<b>79</b>
<i>Occurred on a Weekday (M-Tb)</i>	14	7	18	13	8	<b>60</b>	<b>376</b>
<i>Occurred on a Weekend (F-Su)</i>	13	12	12	16	3	<b>56</b>	<b>435</b>
<i>Occurred during Daylight</i>	15	6	20	17	7	<b>65</b>	<b>420</b>
<i>Occurred after Dark (with or without street lights)</i>	12	12	8	11	3	<b>46</b>	<b>360</b>
<b>Fatal Collision Location</b>							
<i>Route 80</i>	6	7	8	5	3	<b>29</b>	<b>*</b>
<i>Route 65</i>	4	0	5	2	1	<b>12</b>	<b>*</b>
<i>Route 49</i>	2	1	2	2	0	<b>7</b>	<b>*</b>
<i>Route 28</i>	1	0	2	3	0	<b>6</b>	<b>*</b>
<i>Auburn-Folsom</i>	2	0	0	2	2	<b>6</b>	<b>*</b>
<i>Intersection Collision</i>	3	2	2	3	0	<b>10</b>	<b>98</b>
<i>State Highway</i>	20	10	20	13	5	<b>68</b>	<b>335</b>
<i>Not State Highway</i>	7	9	10	16	6	<b>48</b>	<b>476</b>

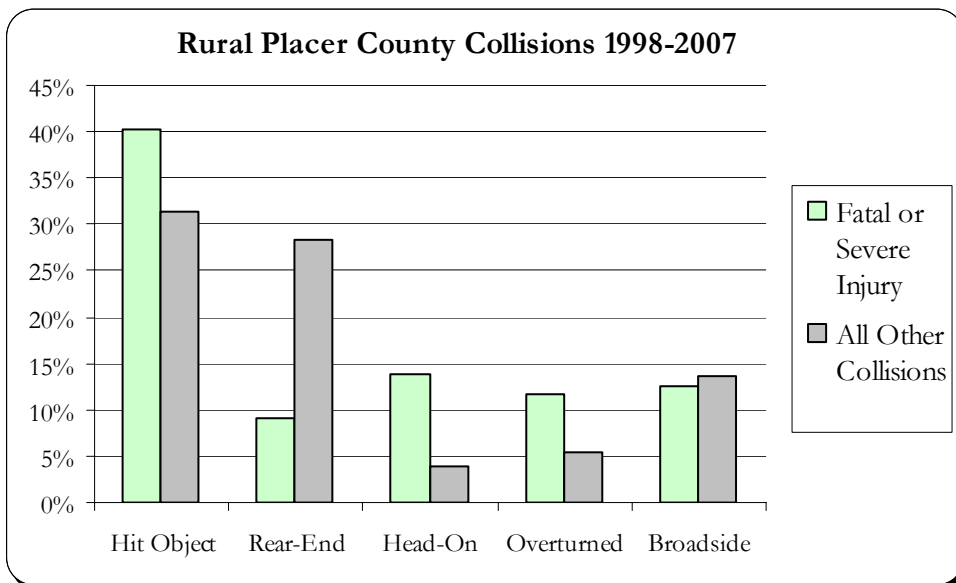


- In fatal or severe injury collisions, the collision is most likely to occur with a fixed object, rather than with another motor vehicle. In “all other collisions,” motor vehicle collisions are most common, accounting for over half of all collisions.

- Hit object are by far the most common type of collision.

- Head-on and overturned collisions account for 14 percent and 12 percent of fatal or severe injury collisions respectively. They account for only 4 percent and 5.5 percent of “other collisions.”

- Rear-end collisions are the second most common cause of “other collisions,” but are rare in fatal and severe injury collisions.



### Further Study

This safety report highlights only a small portion of the data available for future analysis. SACOG believes this type of detailed data can make our region’s safety projects very competitive in federal and state safety programs such as the High Risk Rural Roads (HR3) program. For more information about the data used in this report or to request technical assistance for your agency, please contact Christine Scherman at [cscherman@sacog.org](mailto:cscherman@sacog.org) or by phone at 916-340-6262.

<sup>1</sup> In Table 1, U.S. and California safety data were taken from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). NHTSA used the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) to collect the data. Population data were taken from the American Community Survey (ACS) census file 1. County-level rural/urban population data were not available for 2006, so 2000 data were used for Placer County and the region. Placer County and region fatalities (for year 2000) were taken from SWITRS.

<sup>2</sup> “Rural” as defined by the 2000 census is all territory, population, and housing units located outside an urbanized area or an urban cluster. An urban cluster is a densely settled area (1,000 people/sq. mile) with a population of 2,500-49,999 and any surrounding areas with 500 people/sq. mile. “Rural” as defined by the SWITRS database is any unincorporated area and areas with a population of fewer than 2,500 people.

<sup>3</sup> “All other collisions” refers to collisions resulting in complaint of pain, other visible injury, and property damage only.