Since 1932, the Minnesota Trucking Association (MTA) has been a powerful voice for the trucking industry. Today we continue to influence policy, support education, and advance the success of Minnesota’s trucking industry. We are committed to developing innovative and research-based policies that promote highway safety, educating policymakers and the public about the essential role that trucking plays in the economy, and promoting responsible policies that advance the trucking industry’s environmental goals. Today the MTA currently has over 630 members from all segments of the transportation industry and from all parts of the state.

What does safety mean to your company?
The mission of the Minnesota Trucking Association is to serve as the voice for a safe and successful Minnesota trucking industry, and safety is a core value of trucking companies. Here at the MTA we consistently work to promote safety throughout the industry and be recognized as a safety-focused organization. A few of the ways our association emphasizes safety include our Safety Council, annual Safety Conference, as well as our Share the Road program. Additionally, we also support safety-focused legislative initiatives, which includes supporting the recent “hands-free” cellphone bill. Although the bill did not reach the Governor’s desk this year, the MTA played a key role in helping to progress the bill through the legislative process.

Describe a defining safety moment.
One of the most impactful and important ways the MTA works to improve highway safety is through our Share the Road program. Share the Road is a national highway safety program and MTA Safety Council initiative that has continued to teach high school students and the general public how to share the road safely with large trucks over the past several years. The program’s goal is to change driving behavior so that we can save lives. MTA member companies attend our Share the Road training and then team up to visit high schools throughout Minnesota to educate future drivers. Students who participate in the Share the Road program get the opportunity to sit inside a semitruck to get a first-hand view of a truck’s blind spots and its limitations, as well as its merging and stopping distances.

You can talk at students all day long about blind spots, stopping distance, and following distance in a classroom and make some progress. You can even use graphics and videos. But put a student inside a truck in the driver’s seat and the light bulb really turns on. The magic resides in the rearview mirrors. To perform your magic trick, you must first conduct a walk around before putting the student in the cab. They see the cars parked all around the truck. They know for a fact they are there. But put them in the driver’s seat, shut the door and poof! The cars disappear. You can just see in their eyes the newfound knowledge and respect they have for the blind spots. The MTA’s Share the Road program has educated countless students over the past several years and has already visited three Minnesota high schools this spring, with plans to visit more this fall.

What advice would you give to other safety leaders?
Safety is universal and should be a top priority no matter the industry. As a leader, it is imperative to always make our commitment to safety known and clear within our organization and industry, as well as with the public. When it comes to safety, there will always be factors outside of our control that we may not be able to change or prevent. It is important to focus on what is under our control, keep moving forward with those efforts, and keep doing them well. Additionally, as safety leaders we should always lead by example, continue to be forward-thinking with our safety initiatives, and never become complacent.

As for our industry, the MTA will continue to tell trucking’s story and our commitment to safety through innovative and research-based policies, safety seminars, and programs such as Share the Road. But it’s also important that every one of us do our own part to help create a safer environment on the roads as well. When it comes to highway safety, one fatal crash is one too many.