Sioux Center wins safety award

Tom McDonald, Safety Circuit Rider

The City of Sioux Center received the Iowa Traffic Control and Safety Association’s (ITCSA) first annual Achievement in Transportation Safety Award for a local improvement of significant importance in highway safety.

In response to concerns for pedestrian safety, excessive vehicle speeds, and crash history, the City of Sioux Center took the innovative step of converting an approximately one-mile section of U.S. 75 through the central business district from four to three lanes (with a center left-turn lane) in 1999.

Reducing the number of lanes to improve safety is certainly innovative and, in the past, might even have been considered illogical. Despite some skepticism locally, the city undertook this improvement and achieved excellent results. Vehicle speeds and crashes were reduced and, after completion, public opinion was very supportive.

The cost of such a conversion is relatively low because it primarily involves repainting pavement markings and installing descriptive signing.

ITCSA, an association of engineers, educators, law enforcement, and emergency care professionals with a dedicated interest in highway safety, developed this award to recognize notable achievement through physical improvements or programs which enhance public safety on Iowa’s streets and highways. Criteria include efficiency, positive impacts on the community, innovation and originality, and local acceptance and involvement.

The City of Sioux Center is certainly to be congratulated for undertaking this innovative improvement to enhance public safety in their community!